

Ed-Ventures, Inc.



Key Personnel

Larry Larsen, Owner and CEO of Ed-Ventures

A former mathematics and German teacher, Larry first traveled with his own students in 1974. In 1977 he helped found a European tour company and there was no turning back. Larry has a B.A. in German from Concordia, Moorhead, Minnesota, and a M.A. in German from Mankato State College. He has guided the growth of Ed-Ventures, reaching out to travelers from most of the 50 states. His spare time activities include church and community leadership. Larry has been married to his wife, Joanne, for 48 years and has 5 children, 14 grandchildren and 1 great grandson.



Paul Larsen, Vice President of Sales and Finance

Paul brings a German minor from Concordia College along with 20 years of previous financial expertise to the company. He worked as a CPA and in the commercial real estate and transportation industries. He has spent six years with Ed-Ventures traveling and developing relationships in Central Europe, Egypt, Israel, and Central America. Paul currently serves in a variety of leadership roles in his neighborhood, community and church. He specifically enjoys projects that break down walls and bring people together. Music-based tours, service/mission tours and tours that build cross-cultural friendships are some of the ways Paul uses tours to help people experience significance.

Mark Larsen, Vice President of Operations

Mark was originally hired by Ed-Ventures, Inc. in 1992 while he was a computer science major at Winona State University in Winona, MN. Later, he graduated from DeVry University with a B.S. in Technical Management. His knowledge of computers, German language skills, and a lengthy travel history were exactly what the company was looking for. Between his personal travels, deployments with the U.S. Army, and his travels with Ed-Ventures, Mark has been to more than 30 countries. In his spare time, he serves on the local Diversity Council, on the National Tour Association leadership team and enjoys time with his family. His greatest strength is his knowledge of all the Scandinavian countries. His many travels and tenure in the business make him a good person to help you with any tour.



Ed-Ventures, Inc.



Key Personnel continued

Shannon Larsen, Tour Coordinator and Airfare Purchaser

Shannon attended Mankato State University where she graduated with majors in International Business and Marketing along with a minor in Spanish. She is actively involved in the community, including Rochester **Water Ski Shows and Vet's Visits on TV, a program dedicated to helping veterans and their families.** Shannon additionally had the benefit of growing up in a family steeped in travel and tour tradition. She has served with the U.S. Army in multiple settings, and has traveled extensively. Between the Army, involvement with Ed-Ventures and family experiences, Shannon has traveled to more than 30 countries. Her greatest strength is her knowledge of Britain, Scotland, Ireland and **Spain. Shannon's extensive travel to multiple European countries** provides helpful resources and insights.



Amanda Wright, Tour Coordinator

Amanda started working with Ed-Ventures in 2006 after working several years in the hospitality industry. She works primarily on tours traveling to Central Europe with a focus on German-speaking countries. Amanda has had a love for the German language since a young age when her family took a trip to Europe and visited distant relatives living there. She has been to Germany multiple times and has had the privilege of getting to know the people and culture well. She graduated from Dordt College (Iowa), with a double major in German and Communication and a minor in Spanish. She enjoyed her semester abroad in Germany where she studied at the Goethe Institute. Amanda loves to travel and learn about different cultures and languages and likes to help others make their travels a rewarding experience.

Jessica Gaedke, Tour Coordinator

Jessica can answer your questions regarding Costa Rica, Spain and Italy tours. She is a graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, where she studied Spanish and Communications. Having lived and studied in Spain and Mexico, she is fluent in Spanish and well acquainted with these cultures. Jessica first became interested in the travel industry through an internship with Grupo Posadas, the largest hospitality company in Latin America that is based out of Mexico City. While working there she gained valuable knowledge of Latin American tourism. Jessica has been coordinating tours for six years, and in the last few years has added Italy to her repertoire. Having travelled to Italy several times recently, she has gained valuable insight into the country and the people.



Ed-Ventures, Inc.



Key Personnel continued

Gordon Hoffert, Sales Representative

Gordon has worked for Ed-Ventures for 8 years. He frequently travels to Europe, both with his German-born wife, Ulrike, for family visits and also to lead tours. He lived and worked in Germany for 3 years, one as an exchange student and two as an English teacher at a German high school. Before coming to Ed-Ventures, Gordon taught German, French, and English, then changed careers, went to seminary, earned a Master of Divinity degree, and served as a full-time pastor for 11 years. He still preaches and teaches regularly at his church.



Rick Christenson, Airfare Purchaser and Tour Coordinator

Rick is a graduate of the University of Minnesota where he majored in Middle Eastern Studies and completed his degree at the American University in Cairo, Egypt and also traveled to Israel, Lebanon and Syria. He later moved to France where he taught English at a French engineering school for 10 years before returning to the U.S. in 2001. He speaks fluent **French and has an insider's knowledge of France and is particularly fond of Strasbourg and the Alsace region.**

Ginnie Laschkewitsch, Office Manager

Ginnie received her B.S. in Elementary Education. After 18 years of teaching children about places and cultures, Ginnie was anxious to see some of these places first hand. When the opportunity to join the travel industry presented itself 8 years ago, she took it and has been learning ever since. She assists the staff wherever she can. Her work consists mainly of graphics design, organization of travel materials and coordinating projects for the support staff. Ginnie has been married to her husband, Clint, for 37 years and has 3 children and 3 grandchildren.



Ed-Ventures, Inc.



Key Personnel continued

Merlyn Solberg, Administrative Assistant

Merlyn handles billing and insurance questions. Before coming to Ed-Ventures, Merlyn was a math teacher in Iowa and Rochester, MN. He also worked for IBM in Rochester for over 20 years as a software developer and as a project and development manager. He has a B.S. degree in math from South Dakota State and an M.S. degree in computer science from Colorado State. When he is not working, Merlyn loves playing golf and sailing. He enjoys travel and being a dad and granddad.



Jenna Gilles, Assistant Tour Coordinator

Jenna is the newest member of Ed-Ventures, starting in January 2008. Jenna assists the tour coordinators and helps develop new marketing materials for Ed-Ventures. She is a recent graduate of Winona State University in Winona, MN, where she graduated with a major in Recreation and Tourism and a minor in Adventure Tourism. Jenna has always been a fan of traveling, but really took interest in the industry during her study abroad in Costa Rica. There she participated in a ten year study with Winona State concerning the tourism developments of a small, coastal town in Costa Rica. While working at Ed-Ventures, Jenna has grown to love the industry and plans to continue with her travels.

Jean Ostgulen, Administrative Assistant

Jean has a background in clerical and design which she finds has helped in the transition to the travel industry. She enjoys designing brochures for wonderful tours, preparing travel packages for clients, and supporting the tour coordinators and sales staff in various ways. She loves assisting clients with a care-free vacation. **Having a part in making people's lives happy is her best reward.** Jean loves being Grandma and is also involved in her church.



Ed-Ventures, Inc.



Key Personnel continued

Paul Anderson, Accountant/Bookkeeper

Paul has been the accountant/bookkeeper at Ed-Ventures for the past 8 years. He graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and worked as a bank examiner. Upon retirement, he joined Ed-Ventures putting his vast banking knowledge to good use. Paul is very involved with his church, Community Bible Studies and charity work. He enjoys fishing and loves being Papa to his grandchildren.

