

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR MNCREW PRESIDENT

As I was prepping for my year as MNCREW President, I was told that January would be the busiest month and then things would start to slow down. This proved to be true in my experience, and what a journey it has been! As many of you know, my husband and I had our first baby in 2022. We delivered our Matilda in June, I went back to work in October, I spent two months figuring out how to be a working mom, and in December, I began my MNCREW preparation. In some ways, 2022 moved incredibly fast. But in other ways, it was an amazing year of change, reflection, and new possibilities.

January brought the MNCREW leadership orientation, the first Board meeting, the kick-off January program, and the first CREW Network Leadership Summit in Albuquerque. I feel like I blinked, and here we are nearing the end of Q1 for 2023. One thing is for sure – I could not be more proud of our organization and how much we've accomplished even in these first few months.

My feelings about change and reflection resonate through our MNCREW plans for this year. Our Board recently spent a weekend working on our Three-Year Strategic Plan, facilitated by the fantastic CREW Network staff member, Jenny Weisenbach. Many hours were spent reflecting on our past accomplishments. But alongside that, we identified opportunities for

growth, change, and adaptation to meet the needs of today's membership. We are very excited to roll out our vision at various events and communications in the upcoming months, stay tuned!

I also want to recognize the success of our first MNCREW Annual Meeting that took place at the beginning of February. Even now, a few weeks later, I can't help but smile when I think about how fun and energizing it was to bring so many members together at once. We took time to hear from all committees and the events for the year in an effort to educate our membership that currently is 50% new members that have joined since 2020. Read that again, that's HALF of our members are new in the last three years! If you are one of the newer members reading this now, WELCOME! I am so happy that you're here.

One of my goals for 2023 is to increase awareness of [CREW Network](#) on a global scale with resources and events all of our members have access to but are underutilized. Throughout the year, you will hear from me often about Convention, Leadership Summits, webinars, educational programs, and much more!

I could not be more proud of our organization and how much we've accomplished even in these first few months.



2023 MNCREW PRESIDENT

[Abigail Heime Peterson, CHC](#)

Project Manager,  
Business Development & Strategy  
Gardner Builders  
612.790.6755



I appreciate the hard work of our Board, Committee Co-Chairs, and Committee members. We are all volunteers, and your dedication is what makes MNCREW such an amazing organization to be a part of.

**Cheers to 2023 – I can't wait to see what Q2 will bring!**

## THE VALUE OF OFFICE TOWER DAYCARE CENTERS: ARE THEY THE KEY TO BRINGING EMPLOYEES BACK TO THE OFFICE?



**Dannielle Peterson**

Tenant Services Administrator  
Shorenstein Realty Services, LP  
763.205.7254



With office occupancy still running low and downtowns feeling lonely, I wonder if we are trying to bring people back to the office. We know four things; the workforce doesn't want long commutes, COVID concerns are still out there, wages have not gone up enough to justify the cost of gas and childcare, and some employees even state that they don't feel safe in certain areas. **So, what can we, as owners and managers, do?**

Some of you may remember a time when large office buildings had onsite daycare centers. For many people who were caring for children, the daycare made it possible to work and still have enough money to live on. This is because tenants (companies) in the building helped to subsidize the cost. I don't know what led to the removal of this benefit, but this writer believes it was so gyms could be put in all these buildings.

According to a 2020 article from *Workest* by Zenefits, the average cost of having a child in daycare was \$211 per week, and many US families spent \$10,000 or more per year on childcare. For a family with a significant income, this may not be an issue, but for many people, that amount can be daunting or even mean the difference between affording basic needs and not having them. I would add, as someone who works with many people younger than myself, people don't want to be away from their kids the way we were willing to not so long ago.

Since the pandemic, the workforce has lost an inordinate number of female employees. There are a few factors at work here. One is that the cost of childcare is accessible when someone stays home to take care of the children. Another factor is that many daycares and other childcare facilities closed during the pandemic and never reopened. In some instances, the jobs these women were doing just did not pay enough to justify staying with mounting costs from childcare and inflation.

So, what is causing us not to try this approach? Many owners and managers may still be bought into the idea that there would be disruption from the children. Or that the licensing, staffing, and building

of a facility is cost prohibitive. As well there are always detractors who believe the parents will keep running down to see the kids and not get any work done. And, of course, nobody wants a bunch of kids in the carefully curated Class-A building lobby.

Is it possible the benefits might outweigh the perceived disadvantages? Some positives for the employers who assist in subsidizing these daycares are lower absenteeism and higher employee morale. When childcare is provided, then you don't risk someone calling in because they have someone to care for the child. Also, if the children can travel to work and back with the caregiver, they can spend more time together. The big standout benefit is, of course, that entry-level employees would be able to manage much better without the cost of expensive childcare.

Some other things to look at are; the possible tax benefits of subsidizing care, having less turnover, and a larger talent pool, so it is easier to promote from within. An article in *Bloomberg Businessweek* cites a study showing two large companies saving between \$150,000 and \$250,000 in wages by providing care for their employees. Another example of success comes from a BOMA International article that tells us about an office park near Minneapolis that partnered with a provider to add daycare which has allowed them to attract more big corporate office tenants.

The big question here thought is, "who is going to be first"? Nobody wants to splash out money, time, and effort on something that might not work. Are we willing to have this conversation with our tenants? Do we poll the tenants? Poll their employees? Do a long-term study? Dig around on the internet for some reliable statistics. Nobody has the answer, but I do believe someone needs to try it and see. Who knows, maybe it will bring people back!



### Isabelle Schwarz

Owner  
Spotted Dog Marketing  
612.5909028



## ISABELLE SCHWARZ

### Who or what brought you to MNCREW?

A former manager and mentor of mine (S/O Ella Carlsson) introduced me to MNCREW in 2018 when our company was a sponsor. As I was new to “this side” of the industry, it was the first time I instantly felt comfortable. The panels were so enlightening, the lunch provided was delicious, and the company was so welcoming! So, all in all, it was the people and the food 😊

### Describe your involvement in MNCREW

Currently, I’m serving as a Co-Chair on the Communications Committee (we lovingly call it CommComm for short!). I love attending and documenting the MNCREW events. I think it comes from my love of storytelling and sharing my passions with everyone! Who doesn’t love blending learning with a little fun?

### Hobbies/Activities

Sounds unhealthy, but honestly, my work. I love graphic design, marketing, working on projects behind the scenes, building brands, and sharing stories. Outside of work, I love spending time with my dog, Bridger, and my husband, Pete. No matter what we do together, we always find a way to have fun. We’re HUGE outdoors people and love camping, road-tripping, going for long walks, hikes, attending football games, skiing, mountain biking, and gardening. Last year, I grew carving pumpkins, cantaloupe, butternut squash, zucchini, tomatoes, and plenty of flowers.

In addition, I love cooking. Almost every night, my husband and I take a break from work to decompress by cooking together. We honed in on our cooking skills over the last couple of years. We love making homemade pasta and pizza, smoking meat, cooking soups, and exploring recipes from around the world together. Bridger is always there to help us clean up 🐶

### Travel

My favorite places I’ve traveled include; Italy, Costa Rica, India, and in the US, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Florida, and Tennessee. Traveling around the world is great, but my favorite place to escape for the weekend is the North Shore.

### Education/Career Path

I always knew I wanted to run my own business. All my life, I observed business owners within my family; my father, who owned and operated his salon (Salon Sa Bel) for many years until retiring, my grandfather (who took over the business from my grandmother’s uncle) and uncle, who ran St. Paul Corrugating Co., and my grandmother who was an artist and ran her own jewelry making business. So, the decision to start Spotted Dog Marketing was a scary one, but something I knew I could do.

I was introduced to the commercial AEC world in college via interior design. I loved it so much that I pursued a degree in it at St. Catherine University. Thanks to some incredible mentors, employers, and my grandfather, I switched to a more “versatile” degree in Business Administration, with a concentration in Marketing and Management. I still worked in the interior design world, keeping myself connected to my passion, all the while learning about marketing and blending the two along the way.

After school, I worked as an In-Home Color Consultant for Sherwin-Williams, at a start-up sign manufacturer in sales and marketing, then as a marketing assistant at Anderson Companies (where I first became introduced to MNCREW for the first time!). Throughout all my training and professional experience, I now know that every experience has prepared me for the next; and I cannot wait to see where the next 10 years will take me!

## BILL HARRIS



### Bill Harris

Commercial Business  
Development Manager  
In-Focus Systems  
612.581.2507



*You never know who you will meet and how we can help each other grow our network.*

### **Who or what brought you to MNCREW?**

Jenn Lindgren, Isabelle Schwarz, Christine Holman, Scott Gilbertson, Heather Weerheim.... Should I keep going?? The great group of people that come from all areas of commercial real estate. You never know who you will meet and how we can help each other grow our network.

### **Describe your involvement in MNCREW**

Started out of the gate and joined the Communications Committee, looking to broaden my involvement by joining other committees as well.

### **Education/Career Path**

I went to a technical school, which is nothing even remotely related to what I do now. My career path is continuously evolving, I really never imagined five years ago that Business Development was a viable career. But I love it, and who knows where it can take you!

### **Travel**

Wherever there is sun and heat. Way more international travel on the horizon. Bucket list: Isle of Man TT races!

### **Hobbies/Activities**

I'm a certified nerd gearhead that loves anything on two wheels with a motor. I have a collection of vintage motorcycles that I'm always riding or tinkering with. If my garage door is open, there's always something happening in there! Cooking and home improvement are always something I'm doing too! Recently, the travel bug got me as well, so I recently acquired my dual citizenship in the U.K.

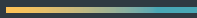
### **Career Advice/Favorite Mentor**

1. Listen, listen, listen.
2. Be open to meeting anyone and everyone, you just never know who you're gonna meet.
3. Help others struggling in their professional journey.
4. Learn from your mistakes and grow.
5. Stay humble and always be open to learning everything you can take in.



# CALLING ALL WRITERS AND ASPIRING CONTRIBUTORS

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Have an article you've written?

Want to share your insights and advice  
with the MNCREW community?

Love to write about industry trends  
and thoughts around CRE?



**Send your articles to Communications Committee + Newsletter Crew:**

Christine Holman, Co-Chair, [ChristineHolman@cushingterrell.com](mailto:ChristineHolman@cushingterrell.com)

Isabelle Schwarz, Co-Chair, [isabelle@spotteddogmktg.com](mailto:isabelle@spotteddogmktg.com)

Kimberly Sandbulte, Newsletter Editor, [Sandbulte@newhistory.com](mailto:Sandbulte@newhistory.com)



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**Contributions?  
Questions or comments?**

Please contact the Communications Committee Co-Chair:

**Megan Livgard**  
612.335.2774

