CULVER CITY
Downtown
BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
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LEADERSHIP

DBA STAFF

Darrel Menthe
Executive Director

Denise Kha
Event Manager

Sonya Sharp
Social Media Director

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEMBERS

President
Kevin Lachoff
President, D&T Investment

Vice President
Eric Sims
Center Theater Group

Kevin Lachoff is a Commercial Real Estate leasing & sales professional with the NAI Capital office in West Los Angeles. A Culver City resident for over 15 years, he has represented both landlords and tenants in office, retail, and redevelopment projects from Downtown Culver City and throughout the community. Kevin has served as President of the Culver City DBA, Chair of the Culver City Chamber of Commerce, and as Chair of the Planning Commission. With 2 kids in CCUSD schools, his family is an annual supporter of CCEF, AYSO 19, and is active in the Culver City Historical Society.

Eric Sims has been with Center Theatre Group since 2005 and is currently responsible for overseeing presentations at the Ahmanson and Kirk Douglas Theatres. Previously, he served as the co-chair of the Ovation Rules Committee and produced the Ovation Awards from 2016–2019. He is also a past Board Member for the Culver City Arts Foundation, and was among the volunteers who founded and ran the Feed Culver initiative in 2020, providing over 50,000 hot meals to those in need from local restaurants during the COVID emergency. He is a Past President of the Downtown Business Association and a proud Board member since 2009.
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEMBERS

Treasurer
Kathryn Lundeen
Lundeen's Gifts

Kathryn is the owner and manager of Lundeen's Gifts in Downtown Culver City, a one-of-a-kind gift store that always has exactly that perfect gift. The exquisite gift wrapping provided to each patron is recognized everywhere in town. Kathryn has been a member of the DBA Board of Directors for ten years, and currently serves as the CCDBA Treasurer.

Ryan Floyd
33 Taps

Born in Talladega County, Alabama, Ryan has been passionate about carving his own path since a young age. An entrepreneur from the start, Ryan was the first in his family to attend college and obtained an M.A. in Accounting, leading to a successful decade in the world of Finance before setting off to open his own restaurant, 33 Taps. Working as Chief Financial Officer for one of Los Angeles' influential hospitality groups taught him the inner workings of running a restaurant, and he sought to build a community-driven place for people to gather. Since founding the first 33 Taps in 2013, Ryan has grown the brand to three locations in Silver Lake, Culver City, and the soon-to-open Downtown Los Angeles outpost. Ryan is passionate about giving back and creating opportunities through 33 Taps for their local communities to donate to local food charities and dog shelters. Ryan currently lives in Los Angeles with his partner Quinn and two dogs, Josie and Mr. Big.

Michael Racine
Hackman Capital Partners

Mike is an Executive Vice President at Hackman Capital Partners. He is a member of the California Bar having received his J.D. from Pepperdine University. He maintains a California real estate brokers license and received his Bachelor of Science from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. He is a former board member of the Culver City Chamber of Commerce and Culver City Education Foundation. He currently sits on the Board of Directors for the El Segundo Economic Development Advisory Council.

Marie Lloyd
Amazon

As Amazon’s Head of External Affairs and Community Engagement for California and for the company’s Global Media and Entertainment businesses, Marie drives positive change through partnerships that span the public, private, philanthropic and non-profit sectors. With experience as an independent consultant, an executive at a leading public affairs firm, and as a spokesperson for the Mayor of Los Angeles, Marie brings to her work a focus on outcomes and an emphasis on collaboration. Marie earned a BA with concentrations in Urban Planning, Anthropology and Industrial Economies from Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, and later earned a post-baccalaureate certificate from the University of California, Berkeley College of Environmental Design. Marie lives in Los Angeles with her family.
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEMBERS

Karl Kuhn
Sage Law Partners, PC

Karl has over twenty years of legal experience in corporate, finance, real estate, and commercial transactions. He started as an associate at Bingham McCutchen’s Los Angeles office and is currently a shareholder with Sage Law Partners, P.C. in Culver City. He works with businesses and business owners in various industries on startup, ongoing operations, mergers and acquisitions, equity and debt financings, reorganizations, corporate governance, business and estate planning, and other general business matters.

Alan Schulman
Akasha Restaurant

Alan Schulman was a clothing manufacturer from and import clothing manufacturing agent prior to working with his wife Akasha Richmond. They started with a catering business, but opened Akasha Restaurant downtown in February 2008. Alan has been a DBA Board Member for 15 years and a member of the CCEF board for 6 years. Alan is also one of the founding directors of the “FEED CULVER” program which was created during the pandemic to help feed families in need. Alan also promoted the expansion of the “garden program” to all the CC elementary schools thru CCEF and Growing Great.

Stuart Freeman
Freeman Properties

Stu Freeman has been a longtime resident of Culver City. His parents opened Freeman’s general store in Culver City early in the 20th Century. Stu is a founding member of the Downtown Business Association and was a founding member of the committee that transformed the DBA into a Business Improvement District. He is also the Past President of the Culver City Historical Society, and possesses a wealth of information about the days before Downtown Culver City became an international media and innovation hub.

Macks Collins
Piccalilli

Macks Collins is the co-founder and Executive Chef of modern Asian-fusion restaurant Piccalilli in downtown Culver City. Born in South Carolina but raised in New Jersey, he has been cooking for close to two decades. After training in New York City and operating a successful food truck here in Los Angeles, he opened Piccalilli right on the corner of Main Street and Culver Boulevard in early 2020 and has been happily cooking there ever since. He’s the proud father of two amazing kids and practices Brazilian jiu jitsu in his spare time.
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEMBERS

Monika Mallick
The Culver Hotel

Monika Mallick and her family have owned the Culver Hotel for almost twenty years. In that time, through extensive renovations, a storied property has been brought back to its premiere status as the indispensible building in the Heart of Screenland. Monika grew up on a macadamia nut farm in Hawaii and still thinks of Hawaii as another home. She has a german shepherd named Lulu and lives in Downtown Culver City.

Andrew Weissman
Arkin & Weissman

Andy is a lifelong resident of Culver City and one of the founders of the Culver City Downtown Business Association. He was a member of the Culver City Council from 2008–2016, twice serving as Mayor of Culver City. Andy has been a member of the Board of Managers of the Culver-Palms Family YMCA since 1978. Among his many other roles in Culver City, Andy has served a Planning Commissioner, a Civil Service Commissioner, a Commissioner on the Human Services and Parks Commission, and past president of the Culver City Tournament of Roses Association. He was also Chair of the Culver City Charter Review Committee that led voters to adopt sweeping changes to the City Charter in 2006.

Darrel Menthe
Executive Director

Darrel Menthe moved to Culver City in 2007 and opened his law office here in 2011. Darrel joined the CCDBA in 2014 and served as the CCDBA President from 2017 to 2022. He is now the Executive Director of the DBA. Darrel earned a B.A. in Comparative Literature and Political Science from UCSD, and studied abroad at the Alexander Herzen St. Univ. in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1992. Darrel received his M.A. in Political Science from UCLA and his J.D. from Stanford Law School. Over the past 25 years, he has worked as a litigator in private practice. Darrel has served as the Vice President and Treasurer of the Culver City Centennial Celebration Committee (2014–2017), Vice Chair of the Culver City Finance Advisory Committee (2018–2023), and is now a Planning Commissioner for Culver City. Darrel lives in downtown Culver City with his wife Sarah, and their two teenagers Vivian and James. He is an avid Dodgers fan and makes literal (not metaphorical) sausage in his spare time.
Dear Culver City Downtown Business Improvement District:

In February 2023, I assumed the role of Executive Director for the CCDBA. Prior to that, I had been the volunteer President of the CCDBA for six years. I was fortunate, therefore, to have as insider’s knowledge of the workings of the CCDBA. Even so, there has been much to learn.

This past year saw many changes in our community. The departures of Angela Vianello (Novecento) and Ken Kaufman (Rush Street and City Tavern) were a loss to our community. At the same time, many new businesses have joined us, including 33 Taps, Erewhon, Jameson’s Pub, Esme, and Parmizza.

The CCDBA put on six major events this year, including Culver City High School Senior Day, Third Wednesday events in June, July, and August, Hip and Historic Halloween, and the Holiday Tree Lighting, and made significant investments in each of these events for years to come.

The DBA's most visible accomplishment was the installation of new festival lights on Main Street in June 2023. Less visible but equally vital has been the unity of our Downtown community in seeking modest changes to downtown traffic patterns while supporting the combined bus/bike mobility lane. Cut-through traffic backs up earlier and longer than ever before, and the difficulty of turning on and off the single lane means many former patrons now avoid the Downtown altogether. In April 2023, nearly every storefront signed a statement seeking modest changes to the existing pilot project to improve navigability, and the City listened to our needs. At our request, the City agreed to re-open Main Street on weekends, while installing bollards that will allow us to attractively close Main Street for special events.

DBA leaders walk the entire downtown with City staff every month, photographing graffiti and addressing problem areas to ensure the Downtown stays in good shape.

I am proud that the Culver City Downtown Business Association is living up to its mission to ensure that Downtown Culver City is the economic, social, cultural, and innovative center of the Heart of Screenland. I will continue to work to ensure that central role for the Downtown as Culver City continues to develop on all corridors.

-Darrel Menthe
MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES

CHRYSALIS - DBA CLEAN TEAM
In 2023, the DBA expanded its cleaning service with Chrysals to be 7 hours each day, six days a week. That includes sweeping, picking up trash, and emptying trash containers. We also increased power washing of sidewalks to take place weekly, the highest level of service ever in the Downtown. You will see our Clean Team from Chrysals wearing these hats.

Chrysals’s Mission Statement: Chrysals serves people navigating barriers to the workforce by offering a job-readiness program, individualized supportive services, and paid transitional employment. We empower our clients on their pathway to stability, security, and fulfillment in their work and lives.

Picture Below from the Spring 2023 General Membership Meeting featuring CCPD Police Chief Jason Sims, Culver City Economic Development Director Elaine Gerety Warner, and Culver City Housing Administrator Tevis Barnes
FINANCIAL REPORT

Cash on hand December 31, 2023: $289,943.40
Net change from year-end 2022: $3,420.48.*

*Note: Actual cash deposits on hand. Excludes checks received but not deposited at year-end 2023

BUDGET:
Total income from all sources 2023: $527,675.33
Total expenditures (all items): $516,690.88
Net: $10,984.45

ACTUAL:
Total income from all sources 2023: $618,186.85
Total expenditures (all items): $614,766.37
Net: $3,420.48

Note: the difference between the budget and actual is largely in timing of payments and expenditures deferred from 2022 to 2023.
Assessments from members comprise more than two-thirds of the revenue for the CCDBA. The CCDBA raised assessments by 4% for 2024, the first increase since 2020.

- Expenditures on all maintenance, lights, and sidewalk cleaning and powerwashing in 2023: $278,142.66
- Expenditures on marketing, social media, and events excluding CCDBA allocated labor $97,627.67.

Culver City Declares November 25, 2023, Small Business Saturday
SOCIAL MEDIA, MARKETING, & COMMUNICATION

Having worked with the DBA on social media since 2019, Sonya Sharp took on the role of Social Media Director for the Downtown Business Improvement District in Spring 2023. She undertook to create original video content for Instagram, collaborate on content with member businesses and influencers, and expand public information duties, being available seven days a week to answer questions from local shoppers and businesses.

Sonya created more than 30 pieces of original content and dozens of stories. She also arranged for more than 20 collaborations with member businesses, the City of Culver City, the Culver City Education Foundation and local “micro” (mostly 10K or less followers) influencers.

By year end, the DBA increased Instagram followers by 50% and our content reached more than triple the number of people (+300%) over the prior years’ highest monthly reach. From 10.9K people reached in Dec 2022, we grew to over 36.6K people reached in Oct 2023. In 2024 Sonya plans to build on our success with more partnerships among members and we have the opportunity to build a larger following by increasing original content and exploring paid opportunities such as boosted posts and influencers.
Sonya Sharp took on the role of Social Media Director for the Downtown Business Improvement District in Spring 2023. She undertook to create original video content for Instagram, collaborate on content with member businesses and arrange for more than 20 collaborations with member businesses, the City of Culver City, the Culver City Education Foundation and local "micro" influencers. She also created more than 30 pieces of original content and dozens of stories. She has the opportunity to build a larger following by increasing original content and exploring paid opportunities such as boosted posts and influencers. By year end, the DBA increased Instagram followers by 50%, reaching 35K people. (In 2022, the highest viewed video of the year had 6K views). The 20 most watched Instagram videos last year, 13 were original content, including the most watched video that reached a phenomenal 35K people. (In 2022, the year had 6K views).

- **Increased Reach:** Summer events content (June - Sept) reached 57.1K people, an increase of 75.1% over the prior 3 month period. Fall/Winter content (Oct-Dec) reached 59.3K people, an increase of 26.2% over the previous 3 month period.
- **Establishing deeper relationships with member mktg teams:** We collaborated on content with 15 DBA members, the CCEF, influencers, event related businesses (and bands with large followings).
In June 2023, the DBA installed festival lights over Main Street. These four-inch globes form graceful arcs above Main Street. More than 360 RGB lighted globes in weather-resistant and anti-fade plastic were specially manufactured for the DBA. They are an updated version of lights that can be seen spaced farther apart on streets in West Hollywood. These lights can be changed to different colors or patterns for holidays and special occasions, but are typically left in a “soft white” setting to match the twinkle lights in the trees.
Begun in 2021, Downtown Culver City Senior Day celebrates Culver City High School Seniors with a special event. On Sunday morning, over 500 individual pennants are placed around the downtown each with the name of a graduating Culver High School Senior. In the afternoon, graduating seniors locate their pennant and then receive a souvenir bag with a special gift and tickets for free treats at certain generous businesses.

The CCDBA’s Third Wednesday Events are among the most popular and well-attended events that bring over a thousand people downtown for a summer evening.


In 2023, CCDBA partnered with the Culver City Department of Transportation for a special event sticker. Those who rode the free downtown circulator bus received a unique sticker for their passport that entered them in a raffle for a pre-selected awesome gift basket from Lundeen’s.

The CCDBA puts on these events on the Third Wednesday of June, July, and August. Each participating restaurant, bar, or shop provides a free alcoholic or non-alcoholic drink sample. Each attendee receives a free “passport” listing all the participating businesses and drinks, and they can pick up the passport at any participating business. The attendees move around the downtown sampling drinks receiving stamps and stickers from each visit. Then at the end of the evening they cast their vote for the best drink of the summer. Live music and DJs entertain our downtown community.
Downtown Culver City inaugurated its current Halloween event in 2017. Each year, on the last Sunday before Halloween, trick-or-treaters take over Downtown Culver City. With live music, photo opportunities, and “Scarolers” (a cappella music group singing Halloween-themed tunes), the event really brings the community into the Downtown. Over 30 downtown businesses and the Culver City Fire Department participated this year. Afterward, many families stay downtown for dinner at the restaurants and taverns that have dinner specials and children’s specials.
On Town Plaza in front of our Holiday Tree, hundreds of students from all five elementary schools of CCUSD, from CCMS, and from CCHS, performed before a crowd of thousands. A KCAL9 Helicopter broadcast the moment of the tree lighting live, and KNBC4 ran footage as well. Over 25 tons of real snow were created for five sled runs on Town Plaza enjoyed by over 1800 children. An estimated 4,000-5,000 people total attended the Tree Lighting. This year, the Foshay Lodge (Free and Accepted Masons) provided a crew of twelve to escort student performers to and from the stage.

The Culver Holiday Tree has a new stand! Until this year, the tree sat on the ground. The tree is now raised by about 3 feet with a custom-made steel laser-cut stand featuring the Culver City seal and the Logo of the Downtown Business Association.

The annual Holiday Tree Lighting is a collaborative effort with Culver City, Parks and Recreation, and many downtown institutions. Thanks to the Culver Steps and Culver Studios for providing the lighting, stage setup, and security.
On Town Plaza in front of our Holiday Tree, hundreds of students from all five elementary schools of CCUSD, from CCMS, and from CCHS, performed before a crowd of thousands. A KCAL9 Helicopter broadcast the moment of the tree lighting live, and KNBC4 ran footage as well. Over 25 tons of real snow were created for five sled runs on Town Plaza enjoyed by over 1800 children. An estimated 4,000-5,000 people total attended the Tree Lighting. This year, the Foshay Lodge (Free and Accepted Masons) provided a crew of twelve to escort student performers to and from the stage.

Every year Downtown businesses contribute snacks and treats for goodie bags given out free to hundreds of participants. The treat bags are filled by members of the DBA Board of Directors and handed out by them to the attendees when the tree is officially lit. The event has expanded dramatically over the years to a snow-filled celebration of the entire City.

The Culver City Council assembles at the tree and the Mayor lights the Tree after a countdown. This year, Dog-Man from the recent show at the Kirk Douglas Theatre was here to help Mayor Albert Vera, Jr., light the Holiday Tree!