



Press Contact:  
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## Colorado Restaurant Association and Foundation Announce 2022-2023 Board of Directors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 31, 2022

Denver, CO – **The Colorado Restaurant Association (CRA)** and **Colorado Restaurant Foundation (CRF)** are pleased to announce each organization’s Board of Directors for the 2022-2023 fiscal year, including the CRA Board’s newly elected chair, **Daniel Ramirez**, Co-CEO of Ramirez Hospitality Group, who has taken over the role from Beth Gruitch, co-owner of Crafted Concepts restaurant group, also in Denver. The CRF’s new leadership includes **Chris Weil**, Regional Manager for FOODMatch, Inc.

After the past two-plus years of operational challenges, it is exciting to share the new governing leadership of the CRA and CRF, an outstanding group of hospitality industry professionals who will work tirelessly with the CRA and CRF to support and advance the restaurant industry across Colorado.

**The voting 2022-2023 CRA Board of Directors roster includes:**

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

- Immediate Past Chair: **Beth Gruitch**, Co-Owner, Crafted Concepts (Denver)
- Chair: **Daniel Ramirez**, Co-CEO, Ramirez Hospitality Group (Centennial)
- Vice Chair, Government Affairs/Chairman-Elect: **Marc Steron**, Managing Partner, Shanahan’s Steakhouse (Denver)
- Vice Chair, Convention & Events: **Dana Query**, Owner, Big Red F Restaurant Group (Boulder, Denver)
- Vice Chair, Membership: **Carrie Hart**, SVP, Accounting & Finance, Snooze an AM Eatery (Arvada)
- Vice Chair, Communication: **Rayme Rossello**, Owner, Comida (Aurora)
- Vice Chair, At Large: **Jason Gumer**, Corporate Vice President and General Counsel, Monarch Casino & Resort, Inc. (Black Hawk)
- Vice Chair, At Large: **Aileen Reilly**, General Manager/Proprietor, Apple Blossom, Coperta (Denver)
- Colorado Restaurant Foundation Vice-Chair: **Chris Weil**, Regional Manager, FOODMatch, Inc. (Centennial)
- Controller: **Laura McGinley**, CFO, Wahoo’s Fish Tacos (Boulder)
- Treasurer: **Sam Aghbashian**, CFO, Watercourse Foods, City, O’City (Denver)
- Secretary: **Andy Quarm**, EVP, Republic National Distributing Co. (Littleton)



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### ELECTED DIRECTORS:

- **Mark Brinkerhoff**, Co-Founder/Owner, Brinkerhoff Hospitality (Centennial)
- **Matt Browning**, President, Performance Foodservice (Henderson)
- **Todd Clark**, DOO/Partner, Matsuhisa Colorado (Aspen)
- **Catherine Cooney**, Director of Recruiting, Cooney Consulting & Recruiting (Denver)
- **Christopher Davis-Massey**, Owner/COO, ChoLon Restaurant Concepts, LLC (Denver)
- **Adam Deutschmann**, General Manager, Bargreen Ellingson (Denver)
- **Ryan Fletter**, Owner & Wine Director, Barolo Grill (Denver)
- **Jason Ganahl**, Founder, GQue BBQ & Ice Cream Farm (Lone Tree)
- **Peter Hogleund**, COO, Frasca Hospitality Group (Boulder)
- **John Imbergamo**, President, The Imbergamo Group, Inc. (Denver)
- **Heidi Klein**, VP On-Premise Sales, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits of Colorado (Aurora)
- **Jason Lessnau**, Owner/Operator, SOMIP inc. DBA McDonalds (Aurora)
- **Kenneth Monfort**, Director/Business Dev, Monfort Companies (Denver)
- **Franco Pisani**, Chef/Owner, Paravicini's Italian Bistro, Sopra Antipasto Wine Bar (Colorado Springs)
- **Rob Rita**, Area President, US Foods (Centennial)
- **Rich Schneider**, Owner, Raquelitas Tortillas (Denver)
- **Mark Stanley**, President, Phantom Partners Corp. (Culver's; Colorado Springs, Aurora, Thornton)

### CRA CHAPTER PRESIDENTS:

- Boulder County: **Alicia Harmon**, Executive Asst. & Office Manager, Frasca Hospitality Group
- Breckenridge: **TJ Messerschmitt**, Fatty's Pizzeria
- Durango: **David Woodruff**
- Mile High: **Patrick Hartnett**, Food & Beverage Director, Denver Museum of Nature & Science (Denver)
- Northern Colorado: **Robert Duran**, Regional Manager, Blue Agave Grill (Fort Collins)
- Pikes Peak: **Rebecca Taraborelli**, Owner, Rasta Pasta of Colorado Springs
- Steamboat Springs: **Nick Sharp**, Director of Operations, Rex's Family of Restaurants
- Telluride Section: TBA



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**The voting 2022-2023 CRF Board of Directors roster includes:**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

- Chair: **Daniel Ramirez**, Co-CEO, Ramirez Hospitality Group (Centennial)
- Vice Chair: **Chris Weil**, Regional Manager, FOODMatch, Inc. (Centennial)
- Vice President, Fundraising: **Ashley Hoffman**, VP of People and Culture, Restaurants of America (Centennial)
- Vice President, Education: **Rich Schneider**, Owner, Raquelitas Tortillas (Denver)
- Vice President, Health & Wellness: **Melissa Brooks**, VP Human Resources, Breckenridge Wynkoop (Denver)
- Vice President, At Large: **Josh Niernberg**, Chef/Owner, Bin 707 Foodbar, Taco Party (Grand Junction)
- Controller: **Lauren Roberts**, President/Owner, Watercourse Foods, City, O'City (Denver)
- Treasurer: **Emily Biederman**, COO, Secret Sauce F&B (Denver)
- Secretary: **Mallory Cullen**, Proprietor, Outback Steakhouse (Colorado Springs)
- Executive Director: **Sonia Riggs**, President & CEO, Colorado Restaurant Association (Denver)

**ELECTED DIRECTORS:**

- **Justin Adrian**, President of Operations, Vibe Concepts (Denver)
- **Truett 'Blaine' Bailey**, Executive Director, In the Weeds (Durango)
- **Kevin Burke**, Director of Hospitality, The Culinary Creative Group (Denver)
- **Audra Dunleavy**, Hospitality & Tourism Pathway Lead, Cherry Creek Innovation Campus (Centennial)
- **Jenifer Freeman**, Director, Public Relations & Gov't Affairs, Swire Coca-Cola, USA (Denver)
- **David Goetz**, Executive Vice President, SSA Group, LLC (Denver)
- **Nikki Kolakowski**, Co-Founder, Eclectic Activation, LLC (Denver)
- **Karen Kristopeit-Parker**, The Butchery (Arvada)
- **Heather Lundy Nelson**, Founder & CEO, Khesed Wellness (Denver)
- **Dr. Eric Olson**, Interim Dean, School of Hospitality, Metropolitan State University of Denver
- **Luis Ramirez**, Co-CEO, Ramirez Hospitality Group (Highlands Ranch)
- **Julie Stone**, Executive Director, Work Options (Denver)

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**About the Colorado Restaurant Association**

The Colorado Restaurant Association (CRA) is dedicated to the enhancement and success of Colorado's foodservice industry. Founded in 1933, the CRA is the leading trade organization for



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the state's dynamic restaurant community. The CRA represents, educates, and promotes a \$14+ billion industry comprised of more than 12,500 eating and drinking establishments and 240,000 workers. [corestaurant.org](http://corestaurant.org)

**About the Colorado Restaurant Foundation**

Established in 1987 as the 501(c)3 philanthropic foundation of the CRA, the CRF's mission is dedicated to enhancing the industry's training and education, career development, and the overall well-being of the industry and its workforce. The CRF supports individuals in the restaurant industry as they advance and thrive. [corestaurant.org/foundation](http://corestaurant.org/foundation)