



BOARD OF DIRECTORS – BIOGRAPHIES

Brian Blesi | Active: 2020-Present



Brian Blesi grew up on a farm near Albertville, Minnesota, the second of five kids. When they weren't working on the farm, he, his brothers, and friends spent their time fishing, exploring, and having adventures along the Crow and Mississippi Rivers. Family trips to Taylors Falls made an impression on him, and he vowed that one day he would live in the St. Croix River Valley. After high school, Brian earned a degree in biology from St. Cloud State University. His college years gave him the opportunity to travel and experience history firsthand, including time in Massachusetts, Philadelphia, and England.

In 1988, he got his chance to move to the St. Croix Valley when he entered the corporate world with an environmental engineering job in Stillwater. Settling in Marine on St. Croix, he quickly put down roots. By 2001, he and his young family moved to St. Croix Falls, where he became deeply involved in local public service.

Brian was elected to the St. Croix Falls City Council in 2007, and later served three terms as Mayor, beginning in 2012. During his tenure, he helped drive several major projects, including the construction of a new wastewater treatment facility, development of the city's first capital plan, cross-training public works staff, and overseeing the reconstruction of major streets, sewers, water mains, and storm sewers.

In 2020, Brian retired from a 32-year corporate career and took on a new entrepreneurial venture. He and his wife opened and operated a fine jewelry store in St. Croix Falls before passing it on to their daughter in 2025. They now represent an American-made fine jewelry line, working with independent jewelers throughout the Midwest. As a member of the St. Croix Health Foundation Board, Brian remains committed to the continued growth and well-being of the region.

Elizabeth Ebensperger | Active: 2020-Present



A pharmacist by day and cat mom by night, **Elizabeth Ebensperger** loves supporting her community both in and out of work. She grew up in Balsam Lake, Wisconsin, and graduated from Unity High School.

After receiving her Bachelor of Science degree in biochemistry from Carroll University, she attended pharmacy school at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. She has been a pharmacist with St. Croix Health since 2010. Elizabeth is happy to give back to the community that gave so much to her.

As an active member of the Foundation, Elizabeth is especially passionate about its scholarship program, which provides funding for local students pursuing careers in healthcare. She values the opportunity to help future healthcare professionals take their first steps toward meaningful careers. Elizabeth enjoys being involved in the Foundation's mission and looks forward to finding new ways to contribute. In her free time, Elizabeth can be found reading or working in the garden.

Meg Koenig | Active: October 2025-Present



Meg Koenig joined the St. Croix Health Foundation board in October 2025. As a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones, Meg brings valuable knowledge and experience to the board, helping the Foundation make thoughtful investment and financial decisions that support its mission.

Meg grew up in Clear Lake and now calls the Osceola area home. She appreciates the peace and beauty of rural Wisconsin and enjoys getting outside to hike, kayak, and explore the parks and natural areas around her. When she's not outdoors, Meg enjoys reading, baking, and spending time with family and friends. She and her adult daughter especially enjoy a good weekend binge-watching session or a trip to the theater.

Meg earned her degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls as an adult learner, an experience that gave her firsthand insight into both the challenges and rewards of pursuing an education later in life. Her professional background includes customer service and human resources—experiences that helped shape her desire to serve others and contribute to her community.

"Serving on the Foundation Board gives me an opportunity to use my financial experience in a way that directly benefits the community I call home," Meg says. "I'm excited to be part of a group that is committed to supporting St. Croix Health and helping ensure that our community has access to the care and resources it needs."

In addition to her service on the Foundation board, Meg volunteers on her HOA board. Through her professional experience and commitment to serving others, she brings both financial expertise and a strong community-minded perspective to the Foundation Board.

Alec Mortel | Active: 2018-Present



Alec Mortel is the General Manager of Lakeland Communications, a critical infrastructure provider and community pillar institution providing essential broadband and voice services to much of Polk County. He believes that volunteering is a vital responsibility and sees giving back as an essential part of a thriving society. In addition to his role with the St. Croix Health Foundation, he serves on the Board of Directors for both the Polk County Economic Development Corporation and the Wisconsin State Telecommunications Foundation.

Alec holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Management from the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minnesota. He resides in rural Luck, Wisconsin, with his wife and their four sons.

Fortunate to have a career that allows him to make an impact, Alec is committed to using his expertise to support the St. Croix Health Foundation. He recognizes that meaningful change starts with action, and as the Foundation enters a new chapter, Alec is motivated by its momentum and passionate about its evolution, ensuring that it remains a strong force for community well-being. “This foundation has a long history, and I am excited for what the future has in store as we continue to evolve and pursue our mission.”

Joan O’Fallon, APR | Active: 2022-Present



Joan O’Fallon serves as the director of communications for Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative and is a member of the co-op’s senior leadership team. Passionate about the power of connection, she leads efforts to share the cooperative’s story and build meaningful relationships with both internal and external audiences.

She holds a bachelor’s degree in public relations from the University of South Florida and a master’s in strategic communication from the University of Minnesota, where she also teaches as an adjunct professor. Joan has also earned her Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), a mark of distinction in the field.

A proud resident of Siren, Joan feels blessed to serve both her local electric co-op and the St. Croix Health Foundation board—two organizations that make a meaningful difference in the community. She’s proud of recent work by the Foundation to align its name and purpose with the mission of St. Croix Health. “Strategic alignment strengthens our opportunities to improve community well-being and our local quality of life,” said Joan.

Joan has been a patient at the Webster Clinic for most of her life. “I appreciate the quality of care St. Croix Health provides to my family, neighbors, and friends in Burnett County,” she shared. “Five years ago, the staff at the Webster Clinic helped me become a living kidney donor. It was a super amazing experience and I’ll forever be grateful!”

In her free time, you can find Joan enjoying water skiing and downhill skiing!

Jeanette Rochford | Active: 2021-Present

Mike Rochford | Active: 2014-Present



Jeanette Rochford has a strong commitment to service and community engagement. In the 1970s, she contributed to the U.S. space program, wiring rockets for the Space Shuttle Enterprise. A Milltown native, she has always been deeply connected to her community and dedicated to making a meaningful impact.

For nearly 20 years, Jeanette has served as Treasurer for the American Legion Auxiliary in Milltown, helping support veterans and their families. She also spent 18 years working at a quilt shop in St. Croix Falls.

Jeanette is actively involved in the Wisconsin Old West Shootists club, where she helps organize events that bring people together. A testament to her natural skill and competitive spirit, she has earned state champion titles in single-action cowboy action shooting for her age bracket multiple times. She also contributes her talents to fundraisers for the St. Croix Health Foundation and other local initiatives, where she shares her enthusiasm and attention to detail to help make each event a success.

With three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, Jeanette values time with family and enjoys quilt retreats where she can immerse herself in her craft. She believes deeply in the power of giving back, stating, "I like to help; it makes me feel good." Living in Dresser, she remains an active and engaged member of her community.

Mike Rochford has spent his life serving others, whether through emergency medical services, addiction recovery support, or community involvement. Born in California and raised in the Twin Cities, he moved to Dresser, Wisconsin, in 1970 to help with his family's recently purchased ski resort, Trollhaugen. That same year, he became one of the region's first EMTs, helping to shape the local emergency medical system at a time when most people relied on funeral home services for transport to the hospital. He was part of the community's effort to bring the first ambulance service to the area, a movement that gained momentum with his father as the first person to donate funds toward purchasing an ambulance. His commitment to emergency care has continued for over 50 years, driven by a desire to ensure strong, reliable healthcare services in the community.

Mike is a natural storyteller, and his life is full of experiences that have shaped his outlook. One of the most defining moments came in 1980 when a near-death experience left him with a renewed sense of purpose. That perspective became even more profound in 1984 when he achieved sobriety, a turning point that changed his life in ways he never expected. He went on to work at Hazelden for 25 years as a licensed drug and alcohol counselor, where he helped others navigate their own journeys of recovery. His time there reinforced his belief in patience, resilience, and the ability to change. Mike has remained committed to his own recovery, attending AA meetings every week since 1984.

Outside of his professional life, Mike has a passion for craftsmanship and history. For over 20 years, he has been a dedicated knife maker, blending skill and tradition to create handcrafted pieces. He has a deep appreciation for well-crafted and antique items, including tractors, knives, and collectible and sporting arms—many with unique stories behind them. A longtime participant in cowboy action shooting, he enjoys the sport's combination of precision, history, and camaraderie.

Through his service on the St. Croix Health Foundation Board, Mike remains dedicated to strengthening healthcare access and ensuring that the community continues to thrive.

Darrell Sandeen | Active: December 2025-Present

Darrell Sandeen joined the St. Croix Health Foundation Board in December 2025, bringing more than 30 years of experience in healthcare finance, compliance, business risk management and consulting.

Born in Duluth and raised in southeastern Minnesota, Darrell and his wife, Margo, now enjoy living in Siren, Wisconsin. After visiting Margo's third-generation cabin in Siren over the years, they are excited to be able to enjoy their retirement in a community they have come to love.

Throughout his career, Darrell worked in a variety of finance, regulatory and consulting roles with healthcare organizations. His experience includes healthcare budgeting and finance, compliance, audits, business risk management and large capital projects. That broad perspective is an important asset as the Foundation works to strengthen its support of St. Croix Health and the communities it serves.

“Serving on the Foundation Board is a meaningful way for me to give back to a community that has become an important part of our lives,” Darrell says. “I’m particularly excited about the opportunity to support the next generation of healthcare professionals through scholarships while also helping strengthen access to quality healthcare close to home.”

Darrell hopes to help increase awareness of the Foundation and encourage more people to invest in its mission. He is especially passionate about continuing to grow the Foundation’s scholarship program and supporting the healthcare workers of the future. He also believes in the importance of maintaining and strengthening access to high-quality local healthcare so community members can receive the care they need close to home.

With his extensive healthcare experience and commitment to giving back, Darrell is excited to help the Foundation build on its impact and support the future of healthcare in the community.