



# AQUILA

★ CENTER FOR CRUISE EXCELLENCE ★

## BETH KELLY HATT

Beth Kelly Hatt founded Aquila in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada in 1982 as a seasonal company offering city tours to visitors, and in the years since, Beth has grown Aquila to include providing shore excursions to all of the cruise lines that call on the port of Saint John and training in cruise destinations around the world.

Beth has been recognized with numerous awards and accolades, including being named one of 25 People to Watch in Atlantic Canada and one of the Top 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada (Woman's Executive Network and the Richard Ivey School of Business), being recognized as RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur's Trailblazer Finalist for Atlantic Canada (2016), and receiving the "Iconic Women Creating a Better World for All" award at the Annual Women Economic Forum in New Delhi, India (2017).

Beth says she learned the travel business through the school of hard knocks and through mentors in the industry, but she believes that Aquila's success is due to her greatest asset, her team, whom she also calls her work family. The work environment and culture established at Aquila is a rare and powerful experience. If managers operate on the physical or material resources of an organization and leaders operate on the spiritual side, Beth is a true leader, as she has taken hold of the organization by its very soul. Much of her time is spent on mentoring, coaching and succession planning to develop people as leaders, and she is an intuitive teacher.

In addition to her leadership role with Aquila, Beth is a leader in the tourism industry and business community. She has been a Director on various Boards in her community and in the tourism industry, locally and nationally, and she has volunteered for various Advisory Committees and other roles, including being a Big Sister with Big Brothers/Big Sisters. She is currently the chair of the Fort La Tour Development Authority, overseeing the construction of Place Fort La Tour, a new interpretive attraction on Saint John's Harbour Passage. An active and innovative visionary, Beth is frequently requested to share her strategies for success as a speaker at events within the tourism and cruise industry as well as the business community. And while she is having too much fun to retire any time soon, she is working with her partners Danielle and Melanie on a succession plan for Aquila, and she feels the legacy she is leaving is in very good hands.

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## DANIELLE TIMMONS

Danielle Timmons is Aquila's Director of Cruise Operations, and she has been a partner with Aquila for more than 20 years. She is known as an innovative leader in the tourism industry, and particularly in Aquila's homeport of Saint John, on the Bay of Fundy, in New Brunswick, Canada.

She is responsible for all components of Aquila's shore excursion operations, which is Aquila's "Living Lab", where all of the lessons are learned that contribute to the training the Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence conducts all over the world.

Danielle's efforts led Aquila to be awarded "Leading Tour Operator in Canada New England" from Carnival Cruise Line in 2019. In addition to the operation's sales & marketing, financial management, trolley fleet management, human resources, and training, Danielle plays an active day-to-day role in cruise operations, leading the team as well as acting as one of the Cruise Managers for the ships that call to Saint John each year. She compares conducting a shoreside operation with its numerous components to conducting an orchestra, where many instruments come together to create a beautiful piece of music.

Danielle is also integral to the Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence, the division of the company that offers training programs to cruise destinations, tour operators, tour guides and front lines around the world. She is responsible for ensuring the lessons learned in Aquila's "Living Lab" are incorporated into the variety of training programs they develop and deliver. Additionally, stakeholders benefit from her vast knowledge and expertise when she delivers workshops and training in cruise destinations around the world, which she does with a skilled approach to facilitation and collaboration that contributes greatly to their success.

Danielle is actively involved in the tourism industry and business community. She has served as Director on various boards such as Economic Development Greater Saint John, and currently, the Atlantic Canada Cruise Association, and she is the Manager for the Board of the Saint John Hotel Association. She has shared her expertise as a panelist at events such as the Canada New England Cruise Symposium, and the Women Economic Forum in Delhi, India.

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## MELANIE COLPITTS

Melanie Colpitts has been with the Aquila Team since she went looking for her first summer job in 1992, and landed the role of a Tour Guide. In the years since, Melanie has been involved in every aspect of Aquila, from the motorcoach and travel learn markets to Aquila's initiatives in the cruise market, and more than 10 years ago, she became a partner in the company.

Melanie was integral in the founding of Aquila's Center for Cruise Excellence and the development of Aquila's training programs, most notably Aquila's Tour Guide Excellence International Certification. In her role as Director of Aquila's Center for Cruise Excellence, she develops and delivers training programs for Tour Guides, Tour Operators, and Cruise Destinations around the world to help them deliver excellence to the cruise industry. She puts her vast knowledge and expertise to work designing and leading workshops and consultations with tour operators, ports and destinations around the world, and she leads the delivery of Aquila's International Tour Guide Excellence Certification Program and ACE Tour Operator Designation. Engaging with the stakeholders and frontlines to deliver excellent service to guests is her passion, and she has delivered training to frontlines onboard expedition ships, on cruise line private islands, and in cruise destinations around the world.

Melanie has also been a leader in Aquila's own initiatives in the cruise market, and she has been instrumental in the development of Aquila's successful operational and sales strategies that have resulted in significant growth for Aquila in their "Living Lab" that is their homeport of Saint John. She developed Aquila's innovative Tour Guide training program, which has resulted in their guides being named best in the world by Dream World Cruise Destination magazine on five occasions. Her influence has also reached beyond Aquila. Melanie's involvement in the Bay of Fundy Cruise Partnership and her knowledge about increasing destination awareness – from involving all distribution channels to aligning the development of new tour products – led to significant cruise growth for the Saint John region, and she has actively been involved in the development of a number of niche ports in the region.

Melanie is actively involved in the tourism industry, as well as in her own community, having served as Director on a variety of boards including the Atlantic Canada Cruise Association and the Stonehammer UNESCO Global Geopark, and volunteered for a variety of organizations, including currently serving on the board of the Harbour Lights Campaign in support of the region's food banks.

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