



*Creative Connect exists to connect, support, promote and educate the creative community.*

Creative Connect was founded in 2003 as a way to build community and connection among creative people. It serves to facilitate communication, collaboration and cooperation within the creative community. Since its inception, Creative Connect has brought together thousands of people in an authentic and trusted manner. This is accomplished through small-group gatherings, closed-group roundtables, and one-on-one meetings, and through its Founder as a Connector and Facilitator.

The connections that have been made through Creative Connect continue on in the form of personal, social and business relationships. People have made friends, they've

found jobs, located office space, created new business and businesses, found homes, and even met spouses.

According to author Richard Florida, "The Creative Class are a key driving force for economic development of post-industrial cities."

In a paper entitled "Fostering the Creative City," Carol Colletta states: "Creativity and cities are natural partners. They can strengthen each other. It is important to recognize how careful investments in a city's creative resources, especially its people, can be used to bring into being the creative city that benefits all members of the community."

*Creative Connect has been a catalyst in making Phoenix, Tempe, and Scottsdale a better place to live, work and play.*

## An Example of How Creative Connect Works

Writer **Joey** meets Stylist **Lisa** at Creative Connect ▷ **Joey** marries **Lisa** ▷ Keyboardist **Charles** is **Joey's** best man  
**Joey** meets Host and Writer **Russ**, and Photographer **John**, at Creative Connect ▷ **John** and **Joey** pitch a book idea together  
▷ **John** creates Boundless<sup>1</sup> ▷ **Russ** hosts Boundless at his gallery ▷ **Joey** writes the biography for Boundless  
**Joey** meets Photographers and Writers at Creative Connect ▷ **Joey** creates 26 Blocks<sup>2</sup> ▷ **John** participates in 26 Blocks  
▷ **Russ** connects **Joey** to the Phoenix Community Alliance<sup>3</sup> ▷ PCA sponsors 26 Blocks  
▷ **Russ** hosts 26 Blocks ▷ **Russ** creates a 26 Blocks App  
**Joey** forms a Creative Roundtable<sup>4</sup> ▷ Photographers **Tony** and **Brandon**, and Illustrator **Jon** join the Roundtable, and give **Joey** work  
▷ Production Manager **Cindy** joins the Roundtable and gives **Lisa** work  
▷ Industrial Designer **Lauryn** joins the Roundtable and reconnects with **Charles**, her piano teacher from 15 years prior

<sup>1</sup>Boundless — Fine Art Photography Show

<sup>2</sup>26 Blocks — Project that showcases 26 Blocks in Downtown Phoenix, as captured by 26 Photographer/Writer teams.

<sup>3</sup>Phoenix Community Alliance — Community Development Organization focused on Downtown Phoenix.

<sup>4</sup>Creative Roundtable — Closed Groups for Creatives. In this case, Individuals who own various Creative Businesses.

## Founder

Dan Semenchuk was born in Augsburg, Germany, and raised in the blue-collar factory town of Passaic, New Jersey. He lived in a three-generational household, which included his two brothers, his parents, and his grandparents, who immigrated from Belarus.

Russian families and their communities were usually very tight, and Dan's family was no exception. A trip to the grocery store was a social event. Dan's grandparents never owned a vehicle, and either walked or took public transportation.

When Dan's family relocated to the Principality of Monaco as missionaries, the living situation was high-density, with a great number of people residing in a small geographic area. The five members of the Semenchuk family themselves lived in a two-bedroom apartment. Their building housed a bookstore and a hair salon, and was surrounded by other mixed-use buildings. The multicultural atmosphere and diverse socioeconomic mix of the Principality attracted people from all over the world, and created a positively-charged community.

Dan assimilated into the Monagaseque culture and society, and became part of its community. He struggled with his family's decision to return to the United States and settle in Lakewood, Colorado, a suburb of Denver.

Not long after they married, Dan and his wife set out to create a new life for themselves in Phoenix. Dan realized that its metropolitan area was unusually widespread, which made building community and connecting people a challenge. At the time, Downtown Phoenix became a ghost town at the end of the day when everyone went home to the suburbs.

Dan became part of the revitalization of the downtown area, and was part of the Phoenix Futures Forum, sitting on the Urban Form Committee. This, in part, led him to create a community in a unique and different way, a way that had never been done before.

To test his idea, Dan gathered two dozen representatives from various creative industries in a photo studio in Tempe. It was November of 2002 and for the first time, many of these individuals from the Phoenix metro area met in person. Dan arranged another gathering two months later, and the concept was confirmed. Creative Connect launched the following month – February 2003.

As a creative person, Dan intimately knew the basic requirements of creative people, and how to appeal to them. Creative people by nature are not joiners, which is why the gatherings were created to be organic and grassroots. The tagline became "no agendas, no egos, no kidding."

Monthly gatherings continue to take place as a way for creative people to stay connected in real life and to build creative community, and are now the smallest part of Dan's full-time work as a vocational Connector and Facilitator.

## Littlefield rules out mayoral bid

3-term Councilman Bob Littlefield says an "overwhelming majority" of supporters didn't want him to give up council seat.

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Performance, visual arts show define show

Australia's Chunky Move dance troupe coming Saturday to Scottsdale Center for Performing Arts.

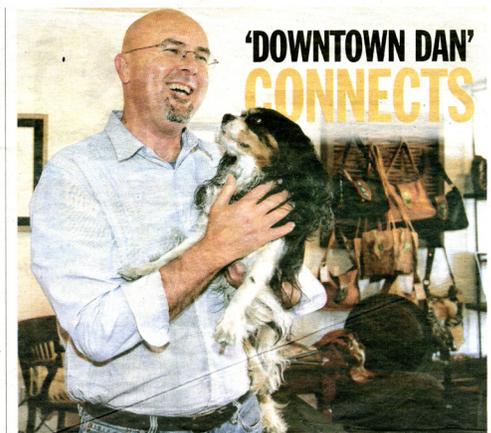
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## 'DOWNTOWN DAN' CONNECTS

German-born Dan Semenchuk is an advocate and unofficial spokesman for Scottsdale's downtown and founder of an organization that brings together creative people for communication and collaboration.

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Dan Semenchuk — "Downtown Dan" to many business owners in downtown Scottsdale — visits the Buffalo Connection at Scentic Mesa store where store "massoc" Charlie greets him.

DEBORAH HANBLITH/REPUBLIC

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"I call him 'Downtown Dan.' His 'office' is in a downtown coffee shop where everyone knows his name and he knows theirs. **He builds relationships and works with downtown business people to preserve and enhance everything that makes downtown special.** Dan is a tireless advocate and downtown businesses are lucky to have him in – and on – their corner." *Linda Milhaven, Councilwoman - City of Scottsdale*

"I've known Dan for quite some time now, and as we somewhat have gone through some transition in the downtown, he has been instrumental in pulling people together. **He's not political, but a lover of downtown ... every aspect of it. He is everywhere there is activity in the downtown and he is a promoter of downtown.** We're really blessed to have Dan take the interest that he does." *Jim Lane, Mayor - City of Scottsdale*

"When I first met Dan several years ago, he told me that he was interested in connecting with people who wanted to affect positive change in Downtown Scottsdale. Now he has become one to lead that movement in the downtown area. I'm glad that he as a Scottsdale resident has chosen to shift his focus from Downtown Phoenix, and headquarter his organization Creative Connect in Downtown Scottsdale. **I can see the difference that he and his creative connections are making, through downtown community-building, greater dialogue between businesses sharing similar goals, and better understanding and appreciation for our downtown history.** Additionally, I appreciate Dan's support and promotion of our art programs here at Scottsdale Training and Rehabilitation Services (STARS)." *Virginia Korte, Councilwoman - City of Scottsdale*  
President/CEO – Scottsdale Training & Rehabilitation Services

"Downtown Scottsdale is one of our city's greatest amenities. While it takes a lot of people to create the synergy needed for a successful downtown, **Dan has been a driving force in bringing key parties together to craft innovative ideas to support**

the positive growth and energy of our downtown."

Rachel Sacco, President/CEO - Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau

"If patience is a virtue, then Dan must be one of the world's most virtuous men. Downtown Scottsdale is a better place because Dan patiently and selflessly works to put people together, and he manages to do so without applying political or judgmental filters. Dan is perhaps the rarest of all things, a well-grounded dreamer - one of the very few who perennially uses creativity to find opportunities for other people's success." Rick Kidder, President/CEO - Scottsdale Area Chamber of Commerce

### The Creative Center of Scottsdale

"A former Scottsdale shooting-supplies store with an underground shooting gallery is on its way to becoming a creative-arts center designed to bring artists together in a common space.

Dan Semenchuk, a downtown advocate and unofficial spokesman for the area, helped persuade Biely to house the creative center at the location. He is founder of Creative Connect, an organization that brings together creative people for communication and collaboration. 'I was certainly interested because for the past 10 years, as long as I've been doing Creative Connect, I've felt like there's been a need to have a space for creative people,' he said. 'I spend my days in downtown Scottsdale... there's so much cool stuff happening down here'"

<http://archive.azcentral.com/community/scottsdale/articles/20120927art-space-entrepreneur-aims-historic-gun-shop.html>



<http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/arts/how-a-former-scottsdale-gun-shop-became-a-creative-co-working-space-8274552>

### Broken Bullet Boutique & Gallery

Dan salvaged boxes of gun shells from the basement of Mandall's Shooting Supplies and Range as it was being converted into The Creative Center of Scottsdale. He gave a box of shells to artist Sam Gray Wake, who creates jewelry and key rings out of those shells, and keeps history alive.



### Adaptive Reuse and Endangered Buildings



Dan has become known as a proponent of adaptive reuse and as a preservationist.

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2016/05/13/phoenix-areas-most-endangered-historic-buildings/84186862/>

### Downtown Scottsdale Bike Racks

With the purpose of supporting increased bicycle ridership in Downtown Scottsdale, Dan has been salvaging crowd-control barricades, painting them bright colors, and repurposing them as bike racks.



He also works with merchants and the city to install city bike racks. Unfortunately, their beige color makes them blend into their beige surroundings. Dan was able to get permission from the city to have a public artist "yarn bomb" their racks. The installations were intended to be temporary, but the yarn bombing increased the visibility of the racks and the installations became semi-permanent. As a result of this project, the artist received a commission from Scottsdale Public Art, and her studio is located at The Creative Center of Scottsdale.



### Downtown Scottsdale Murals

With the objective to "de-beige" Downtown Scottsdale, Dan conceives and facilitates the creation, production and installation of public art murals.

<http://archive.azcentral.com/community/scottsdale/articles/20130301colorful-murals-downtown-scottsdale.html>

"We were glad to be part of Dan's first demonstration project to "de-beige" Downtown Scottsdale by bringing a different approach to creating relevant public art, and covering up beige

paint along the way. His concept to paint the water valve assembly and create a mural alongside it has brought attention and business to Citizen Public House. The project has been so successful that we commissioned the artist to create murals at our second restaurant, The Gladly. It was great to find out that the artist's parents were also Downtown Scottsdale business owners.”  
*Andrew Fritz - Proprietor, Citizen Public House*



“The mural has worked out better than we expected! Since we occupy the historic White Hogan building, we liked the idea of celebrating the history of Downtown Scottsdale. Dan was instrumental in helping us through the process, and recreating a couple of vintage Gil Elvgren cowgirl pinups in a tasteful manner. People are constantly taking pictures in front of the mural and it draws attention to our business and the downtown area!”  
*Robert Black & Doreen Picerne - Proprietors, Fashion by Robert Black*



“I was glad to accommodate Dan's request to paint a giant baseball mural on the side of the Pink Pony. Scottsdale has a rich history in baseball, and the Pink Pony's original owner, Charlie Briley, was influential in bringing Spring Training to Scottsdale. In fact, Charlie and business partners put up their own money to get the original Scottsdale Stadium built. The downtown

community continues to benefit from Charlie's efforts, and the mural pays homage to him.”

*Tim Smith – Proprietor, Pink Pony Building*



### Downtown Scottsdale Voices

Dan formed Downtown Scottsdale Voices as an objective, creative, and community-based group, with the purpose of creating and supporting authenticity, relevancy and sustainability in Downtown Scottsdale.

<http://www.downtownscottsdalevoices.org/>

### Creative Connect Scottsdale Community College

Creative Connect SCC is a registered club at Scottsdale Community College which facilitates connection-making and community-building among creative-studies students on campus. Creative Connect serves as the connection between students and graduates, and the local community and marketplace.

<http://www.facebook.com/CreativeConnectSCC>

Dan serves on the Graphic Design Program Advisory Board at Scottsdale Community College.

<http://www.scottsdalecc.edu/academics/departments/fine-arts/art/graphic-design>



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