

2024 Samena Board Candidates

Ida Wicklund

Samena Member: 11 years

Occupation: Account Manager

Skills & Experience: Nonprofit/Board, Community Development, Marketing/Public Relations, Governance

Volunteer Experience: Previous Samena board member, VP of Development on the Executive Team for the Jewish Day School, Trustee at KidsQuest Children's Museum, previously Board Trustee for The Perfect Push Foundation

Samena Involvement: When we first joined, my kids we actively involved as campers for many years. I worked out with a trainer and in the gym as well as taking some of the fitness classes. One of my boys did swim team for a summer. Since the pandemic, I had only been mostly involved on the board level and am trying to get back into the gym on a more regular basis. We of course love the pool in the summer :)

Candidate's Statement: I enjoyed my time as a member of the club as well as on the board. I would like to become more active again in both! Honestly, it fills my bucket to give back to a community that has given so much to my family and those in the community in which I live in.

Jackie Zawalski

Samena Member: 6 years

Occupation: Talent Management Leader and Consultant focused on strategic planning and implementation of employee focused initiatives, manager and leadership development, and digital transformation

Skills & Experience: Extensive experience in Talent Management and Development, Human Resources, Organizational Effectiveness, Project Management, and Team Leadership in diverse global industries, having held positions at leading companies such as Nestlé, Yahoo!, Facebook/Meta. Skills include human centered design, agile product development, change management, program analytics, and process efficiency.

Volunteer Experience: PTA Board Member at Puesta del Sol and I regularly volunteer with Center of People with All Races in Seattle. I've travelled globally to volunteer with various organizations such as Nutrition Education International in Afghanistan and Heart to Heart International in Guatemala.

Samena Involvement: My children have had the opportunity to attend summer camps, take swimming lessons, and benefit from the planned activities throughout the year, such as the St. Patrick's Day runs and underwater egg hunts. Our youngest daughter attended the Pre-K and 3-5 programs, where she became an excellent swimmer and found joy in learning thanks to the excellent crew of teachers. As a family, we enjoy the pools and playground together, and I regularly use the gym.

Candidate's Statement: Since relocating to Bellevue six years ago, I've been deeply appreciative of the sense of community and diversity of programs at Samena. I would like to contribute to Samena's continued success and growth, and support all members and employees. As a former fitness instructor and wellness coach, I feel very aligned to Samena's mission.

My career spans over 25 years of progressive responsibilities within diverse global companies, specializing in culture initiatives, talent strategies, and Human Resources management. I am well-versed in developing and executing strategic initiatives that not only support the employee experience but also empower leaders and managers to create a collaborative and accountable team environment. I am known for my strategic insights, collaborative spirit, and leading high-performance teams with a focus on setting a clear vision, communicating clearly and often, and providing mentorship and coaching.

Currently, I support business clients in strategic planning and implementation of talent initiatives through my consulting firm, Talent Accelerators Consulting. Additionally, I am deeply passionate about digital transformation. I assist clients in planning for the future of work and implementing digital tools to address business needs or opportunities.

I hold a certification in Project Leadership from Cornell University, am a Gallup Strengths Performance Coach, and recently completed the Digital Transformation course from Stanford University's Executive Program.

James (Jim) Palmer

Samena Member: 16 years+ time on my parent's account as a child

Occupation: Retired Boeing Operations Manager, Samena Children's After School Program Van Driver

Skills & Experience: Strategic Planning, Finance, Marketing/Public Relations, Operations Management

Volunteer Experience: Previously 11 years as Boy Scouting Scout Master & Den Leader, Little League Football Coach, currently helping Samena Children's Programs and provided advice for the maintenance and repair of the Samena van fleet.

Samena Involvement: Fitness, weight training, and strength conditioning. Over the past year I have been employed by Samena as an Afternoon Program Van Driver. I've learned a lot about the challenges Samena faces.

Candidate's Statement: The function of the Board of Trustees is to provide a balanced advisory role to Samena leadership in areas of strategic planning, finance, marketing and public relations. It is not a job to supervise the supervisors.

I'm a retired 43 year Boeing employee who spent 25 years in management. Additionally I have a BS in Business majoring in Management and a Masters in Management, University of Phoenix 2002 to 2009.

For my last 12 years at Boeing I successfully managed people in the operations department of Boeing Flight Test. This is a highly regulated and technical job. Also, my education put me in a position, sometimes at odds with my leadership over diversity teaming, job development and hiring while meeting all state and federal DEI requirements. To this day I'm very proud of the teams that were built.

As a FT Operations Manager the job required functioning in all areas of: flight crew resource planning, engineering test plan approval, scheduling flight operations, providing service ready test aircraft while meeting the operations schedule. I love to talk about this. Directly I was responsible to manage a group of aircraft maintenance planners who ensured maintenance operations plans were resourced with parts, tooling, ground support equipment, planning paperwork and resolved resources between the individual test teams. We were responsible for monitoring equipment for end of life and obtaining executive approval of capital equipment acquisition. Much of this experience directly transfer to Samena's needs and I want to help.

Neetha Rao

Samena Member: 14 years

Occupation: Architect

Skills & Experience: Strategic Planning, Construction, Community Development

Volunteer Experience: Current Vice President of the Samena Board, previously multiple positions and board role at Bennett PTSA

Samena Involvement: I started coming to Samena when my children were young and were taking swim lessons. I have had personal training, massages, and currently take fitness classes and use the gym. I have loved trying out the different fitness class options at the club and benefited greatly from the yoga/fitness classes. Having access to such a large variety of classes has helped me with my running goals. I have been a Board member since 2022.

Candidate's Statement: This was my first term on the Board and I am currently Vice President of the Board. If elected, I would like to continue in the role, working on moving the club forward.

I had a chance to bring my architectural and planning skills to the table this past year, when the Club was working on the pool deck construction. Hopefully my input has helped resolve some of the drainage issues that have been plaguing the building. Going forward, I hope to be part of the team that lays out a strategic plan for upgrading the building and outdoor spaces.

The Samena Board has a group of people passionate about doing the best for the club and they bring the best of their diverse experiences to the table. Being on the Board has been an honor I hope to have again.

Sienna Jarrard

Samena Member: 11 years

Occupation: Student

Skills & Experience: Strategic Planning, Nonprofit/Board, Community Development, Marketing/Public Relations

Volunteer Experience: I volunteer in multiple local community projects to give back to students, seniors in care facilities or hospitals, and other members of my community. This includes regularly volunteering through a local card project group where I've been able to use my creative skills in making cards to brighten seniors days. I was also a member of my high school's National Honor Society, where I have volunteered to help younger students and educate them on the importance of safety when using technology as well as leading a pet food donation drive.

I previously volunteered on a project to promote sustainability within schools. I led initiatives to teach students about the importance of sustainability and how sustainable practices should be in all aspects of our lives. I also implemented a successful long-term composting plan at my school where composting had previously been unsuccessful due to negligence. I've also led volunteering to support the Seattle Humane Society through multiple donation drives, and led other donation drives to provide hygiene kits to local shelters through Bellevue Youthlink.

Samena Involvement: I've grown up at Samena and participated in nearly every children's program throughout my life, including summer camp programs, junior counseling, before and after school care, and kids night out events. Myself and my family have also participated in multiple club events, attended fitness classes, and utilized personal training services. From summer camp to aftercare to now working at the Front Desk for the past 2 years, I've grown my involvement in Samena because of my genuine passion and enjoyment for the community.

Candidate's Statement: I want to join the Samena Club Board of Trustees because of the direct contributions I can make to the community through the position's involvement in shaping club initiatives and long-term strategic planning. I believe I offer a unique perspective as someone who has worked at Samena and has firsthand knowledge of member feedback and experiences, and as a long term member myself who has participated in many of the programs offered. I believe the Board of Trustees should represent the diverse and broad community at Samena, including our many young adult and student members, which is a perspective I would bring. I have skills and experience that could be useful to provide even more transparency and regular communication to members via newsletters, expanded social media and website presence. My experiences serving on a Board overseeing the allocation of millions of dollars in programs and improvements to benefit thousands of people has inspired me to apply for this opportunity where I can support the Samena community similarly.

I would like to further develop my leadership and collaboration abilities as a member of the Board of Trustees. While I already have some experiences with Board procedures (meetings, agenda, minutes, communication), I would like to further develop these skills as a Trustee and learn from fellow Board members.

Tara Vollmert

Samena Member: 4 years

Occupation: Product Management and Marketing Insights

Skills & Experience: Strategic Planning, Marketing/Public Relations

Volunteer Experience: I am currently a Samena board member and serve on the Personal and Governance Committee. I have previously volunteered as a children's reading coach, mentor for executive women, and art teacher at my kid's school.

Samena Involvement: My family actively participates in year-round activities and programs at Samena! We attend summer camp, open swim and lap swim, swim lessons and swim team. We have also hosted a Samena birthday party and enjoy special events (like the Polar Plunge!). Samena offers something for our whole family!

Candidate's Statement: Samena has always provided our kids with great swim instruction, but during COVID, the Samena Club became a life-line for our family. Samena safely operated summer camp, provided virtual school support, and implemented reservations for safe lap swim. The club enforced required health department policies efficiently and with compassion. I have enjoyed serving on the Samena Board of Trustees during these past 2 years and hope to continuing serving for another 2 years! I have spent my career learning about customers and trying to develop products and services that can better meet their needs. I have leveraged this background while on the board as we implemented our first e-Member survey and also staff satisfaction survey.

Travis Sterner

Samena Member: 19 years

Occupation: Author, Coach, and Motivational Speaker

Skills & Experience: Strategic Planning, Finance, Marketing/Public Relations, Nonprofit/board, Technology

Volunteer Experience: Previous Samena Board President, Media Producer at TEARS Foundation, and Media Producer at American Lake Golf Course

Samena Involvement: Fitness classes, personal training, fun runs, pool maintenance

Candidate's Statement: Samena has always been a wonderful place for my family. My kiddos have multiple core memories from Samena that include swim team to fun runs to summer afternoons by the pool. I was a previous Board President and would like to again join with the purpose of helping ensure Samena's positive impact on our community. From Staff to Volunteers, I'd be honored to join the fantastic people who also want to make a difference. Thank you for this opportunity!