

2026 Samena Board Candidates

(in random order)

Steven Ellis

Samena Member: 33 years

Occupation: Retired REI manager

Skills & Experience: Strategic Planning, Nonprofit/Board, Marketing/Public Relations. BA in Economics and MBA from UW.

Volunteer Experience: Previous Samena board member (~15 yrs), King County Rural Forest Commission, Mirrormont Firewise & Parks

Samena Involvement: Fitness and lap swim.

Candidate's Statement: I would like to start contributing again. I was involved with the development of many of the key elements that are present today. Starting with the playground, the remodel of the office building, the design, planning and construction of the fitness facility and the design and replacement of facility over the indoor pool. Oversaw changes in dues and financial wellbeing of the club for the period from 1990's up to 2018.

Elise Troske-Roberts

Samena Member: Was a member as a child, then again as an adult, most recent rejoin since 2018.

Occupation: RN

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

Volunteer Experience: Bellevue Youth Theater, Red Cross, RSD reading tutor

Samena Involvement: All 5 of our kids attended Samena preschool and each has worked there. My husband and I use the gym and pool facilities, health classes, and use personal training sessions.

Candidate's Statement: I have a long family history with Samena, my mother was a previous Board President, and I want to invest in making sure Samena remains a resource and support for families in the community, as it always has for mine. I hope to gain more connection to the Samena Club community and support young families in the community.

Clark Cyr

Samena Member: 10 years

Occupation: Retired software engineer

Skills & Experience: Finance, Technology

Volunteer Experience: Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors, Pasado's Safe Haven, Rocky Mountain Conservancy, Unitarian Universalist Church of Bellevue (Finance Committee)

Samena Involvement: Lap swimming, personal training, gym workouts

Candidate's Statement: I want to contribute now that I have time available to sustain Samena Club as the place we enjoy.

Ron Griffin

Samena Member: 1 year

Occupation: Substitute teacher, Bellevue School District

Skills & Experience: Planning, Finance, Nonprofit/Board, Aquatics

Volunteer Experience: Board of Edgebrook Club and Midlakes Swim League.

Samena Involvement: My family's interests are primarily: aquatics, yoga, workout, and sauna areas.

Candidate's Statement: I am a big fan of aquatics and have learned that pools and their operation can be expensive. I would like to bring a positive contribution to Samena's operations. Growing up I was a member of the Newport Hills Pool and was on the Hazen High School swim team. As an adult, I was a member of the Washington Athletic Club (with its pool on the sixth floor in downtown Seattle). My family was active at the Edgebrook Club when my two boys were growing up. We participated in swim team and water polo at Edgebrook as well as in Scouting and hiking. I served on the Board of the Edgebrook Club for about ten years including planning and construction of new building projects. I also served on Midlakes Board including a year as President. Midlakes provides the framework for swim team competitions. So while I am new to Samena, I am a big fan of the local outdoor pools and bring experience to community pool management. I appreciate your support.

Michael Yelle

Samena Member: 2 years

Occupation: Attorney

Skills & Experience: Construction, Legal

Volunteer Experience: CYO basketball and soccer coaching for my children's elementary school teams, Oregon State Bar Association House of Delegates, previously City of Duvall Planning Commission (Chair and Vice Chair)

Samena Involvement: Our family has two swimmers that are on Samena's winter and summer swim teams. Our kids also attend summer camps and have taken swim and tennis lessons at Samena. We are also regulars at family swim, especially when the outdoor pool is open in the summer. My wife and I also try to squeeze in time at Samena for our own workouts and take advantage of yoga and other classes, lap swim, and the upstairs fitness center.

Candidate's Statement: I want to help Samena be around for a long time and offer a great value to anyone looking for fun or a serious workout (or any combination of the two). Our kids have improved tremendously as swimmers, conquered their fear of the diving board, and made friends and had a ton of fun—I want to focus on making sure that can continue at Samena. My focus will be getting Samena on a sustainable trajectory so swimming, camps, classes, and fun can be part of our community well into the future.

Vince Lee

Samena Member: 10 years

Occupation: Wealth Manager

Skills and Experience: Strategic Planning, Finance

Volunteer Experience: I volunteered for my son's Boy Scout Troop 520 for 7 years in various capacities including Recruitment Chair, Adult in Charge for Philmont 2022 crew and outings, and numerous camps, high adventure, and outdoor outings. I also served for 2 years as President of my homeowner's association and board member for 2 years.

Samena Involvement: I am active in the Muscles in Minutes class. Previously, our family were in various group classes from yoga, hybrid HIIT, group cycle, and use the pool occasionally.

Candidate's Statement: Samena has provided my family and I a safe and welcoming environment to exercise, train, and build a sense of community among members and instructors. I welcome the opportunity to meet other people from diverse backgrounds and industry experience to collaborate ideas, experiences, and knowledge to work toward a solid future for Samena. I want to help Samena build a sound community for wellness and financial stability.

Sonia Cook

Samena Member: New Members

Occupation: Attorney (currently non-practicing); stay-at-home-parent to 3 kids.

Skills & Experience: Community Development, Legal, Communication and Writing

Volunteer Experience: My present volunteer work revolves around our kids' school- St. Louise Bellevue, which is located a couple of blocks away from Samena. I assist with special events such as visiting workshops, auction planning, and field trips. Our family has leadership roles in CYO recreational sports for our school-- girls' soccer and boys' basketball. My husband coaches these sports and I provide logistics, planning, equipment organization, and team communication.

Samena Involvement: Our family has three kids-- an 11 year old and twins, age 7. We are new to the club and signed up after doing swim lessons and joining the non-competitive swim team. Our twins swim twice per week on the non-competitive swim team, and we use the gym to work out. We have plans this summer to expand our experiences with the club by participating in camps, classes and other social experiences.

Candidate's Statement: It's time for me to broaden my community contribution beyond our kids' school, and Samena has quickly become a place where our family loves to spend time. As new members, we can see that Samena shines in many areas but has room for improvement in others. Having joined the club, our family has a personal investment in ensuring the club operates responsibly, transparently and in alignment with best practices that will enhance its long term vision and sustainability. Board service would be a way for me to utilize my strengths in critical thinking, communication, writing, planning, policy and risk awareness to help the board make thoughtful, balanced decisions. It is a way for me to stay professionally engaged and connected while prioritizing a community that is important to our family life. I love shared spaces that bring people together and would like to contribute my time and efforts to enhancing this community.

Katie Leland

Samena Member: 10 years

Occupation: Chief of Staff at Microsoft

Skills & Experience: Through my role as Chief of Staff at Microsoft, I bring experience in strategic planning, governance support, communications, and technology. I work closely with senior leaders to align long-term vision with fiscal responsibility and day-to-day operations, ensuring decisions are thoughtful, sustainable, and people-centered. I have strong experience helping leadership teams navigate complexity, balance competing priorities, and make decisions that support long-term organizational health and community impact.

Volunteer Experience: I currently serve on my Bellevue neighborhood HOA Board and as a board member for Microsoft's PNW GLEAM employee resource group, supporting community engagement and inclusion initiatives. I have previously served on the board of Yoga Behind Bars and other Microsoft community-focused boards. These experiences have provided me with a strong appreciation for good governance, stewardship of shared resources, and the importance of collaboration between board members, staff, and the communities we serve.

Samena Involvement: I am an active, long-time member and primarily use the outdoor pool and the weight room as part of my regular routine. Samena has been a consistent and important part of my life for many years.

Candidate's Statement: Samena is an important part of my routine and my connection to the local community. I'm interested in serving on the Board to help ensure the Club continues to thrive as a welcoming, sustainable, and inclusive resource for members of all ages.

In addition to my long-standing involvement at Samena, I have also been a long-time member of Pro Club. This gives me a valuable perspective on different club models, programming approaches, facilities investment, and member experiences. Having experienced both environments over many years, I can bring thoughtful, practical insights into what makes Samena special as a community-based club, while also identifying opportunities where member-focused enhancements could strengthen the overall experience without losing Samena's unique character or mission.

I would value the opportunity to contribute my experience in planning, governance, and community engagement to support thoughtful decision-making and the long-term success of the Club. As someone who has served on multiple boards and leadership teams, I bring a collaborative approach, a strong sense of stewardship, and a commitment to listening to member needs. I look forward to becoming more actively involved in supporting a community resource that has a direct impact on local families, and working closely with fellow Board members and staff to help ensure Samena continues to thrive for current and future members.

Mary Dougherty

Samena Member: 45 + years

Occupation: Paralegal

Skills and Experience: Non-profit/Board Leadership, Legal

Volunteer Experience: I currently serve on The Samena Board as the Board Secretary. I have also served as a board member in the past. Serving on the Board has given me a deep understanding of the Club's operations and mission. For several years, I volunteered with the Samena Splashers Special Olympics team. The athletes and parents are truly a gift, inspired by our top-notch coaches and volunteers who make this program so special.

Samena Involvement: Samena is a second home for my family. I have been an active member of the MIM class since its inception; it keeps me accountable and has gifted me with lifelong friends. My husband and I are lap swimmers, and we love watching our grandkids grow through their lessons at the Club. I appreciate the value of Samena in our community. I consider myself very fortunate to be a part of it.

Candidate's Statement: I value being part of a community I believe in. My previous time on the Board allowed me to benefit from the diverse perspectives of my fellow members, and I find that the collaborative problem-solving we do at Samena enriches every other area of my life. I would be honored to continue contributing my legal and leadership experience to help Samena thrive.

Daniel Karuppiah

Samena Member: 7 years

Occupation: Head of Product Engineering, docu3C

Skills & Experience: Strategic Planning, Community Development, Technology, Finance, Nonprofit/Board, Marketing/PR

Volunteer Experience:

Founder & Leader, Safe Parking Ministry, Overlake Christian Church (2015, 5+ years)

Founded and led a program providing secure overnight parking and support services to individuals experiencing homelessness, in partnership with King County. Successfully helped transition 15 participants into permanent housing.

Founder & Annual Coordinator, School Revitalization Program, Overlake Christian Church (8+ years)

Mobilized 100+ volunteers each summer to fully prepare an adopted elementary school ahead of the academic year, enabling school leadership to allocate limited budgets toward student needs rather than facilities.

Senior Holiday Outreach, Overlake Christian Church (6 years)

Organized annual holiday visits to three Eastside retirement communities, coordinating 40–50 volunteers for caroling, activities, and meaningful engagement with seniors.

Informal Advisor, Pacific Science Center (2025–present)

Advising on membership strategy and community engagement to expand participation among young families and the next generation of learners.

Samena Involvement: Samena has been central to our family life for seven years. My daughter joined at age three for swim lessons and has grown into a confident, capable swimmer through its programs — something our family is deeply proud of. For me, Samena is where I stay healthy and grounded. I lap swim here multiple times each week. This club is not a convenience for us — it is part of how we live.

Candidate's Statement: Samena nearly closed. The fact that it didn't is a testament to this community — members who stepped up, and a board that made difficult decisions with transparency and integrity.

But that chapter is not fully behind us. Building a sustainable future for Samena is still ongoing work — and I want to contribute to that effort.

I am a seven-year member, a regular lap swimmer, and a parent who has seen firsthand how this club shapes lives. Professionally, I bring over 30 years of experience working at organizations like Microsoft and advising institutions on growth, partnerships, and disciplined investment decisions — the same challenges Samena continues to navigate. I currently advise Pacific Science Center on expanding membership and strengthening engagement with families, which directly aligns with Samena's priorities.

If elected, one area I would focus on is strengthening membership growth and retention through a more structured, data-informed approach — understanding who we serve today, where we are losing engagement, and how we can evolve programs and partnerships to remain relevant to the next generation of families. This is essential to long-term financial stability and community vitality.

Equally important, I bring a track record of sustained commitment. I founded and led a homeless outreach program that transitioned individuals into housing. I have coordinated large-scale volunteer efforts year after year to support local schools. I don't join organizations to add a line to my profile — I commit to building and strengthening them over time.

Samena gave my daughter confidence in the water. I want to help ensure it remains strong and accessible for the next family that walks through its doors.

Drew Magill

Samena Member: 18 years

Occupation: Retired Boeing leader

Skills & Experience: Strategic Planning, Finance, Board Governance and Leadership

Volunteer Experience: Current: VP of Samena board, finance committees at Hopelink and BelPres Church, Vice Chair of the Bellevue Transportation Commission; Previous: Board Chair of Hopelink, Board Chair of Leadership Eastside

Samena involvement: Samena holds a special place for our family — my wife learned to swim here as a child, and today I train for triathlons in the outdoor pool and benefit from our excellent Masters instructors and fitness programs.

Candidate's Statement: After completing my first board term, including a year as Vice President, I've seen firsthand what makes Samena irreplaceable: two year-round pools – indoor and outdoor, evolving fitness classes and a rare multigenerational community united around healthy living, youth development, and summer camps.

There is real opportunity to grow, innovate, and help Samena truly thrive.

Important work remains to secure Samena's long-term future, including membership growth, financial sustainability, and long term investment. I look forward to partnering with members, fellow board members, and our incoming Executive Director to make that happen.

I hope to earn your vote and your trust to serve a second term on the board.