

STAR Swimming Board of Directors

Updated June 2024

Board Members with Seats Expiring in August 2026:



Jamie Codjovi is the proud mom to two girls, Jelani (15) and Brielle (11) who keep her busy with swim and dance. Both Jelani and Brielle started swimming as infants at the Michael Phelps Swim school and then as competition swimmers with Velocity Aquatics before they closed and the family transferred over to Star Swimming in April 2021. Jamie is always eager to volunteer at STAR hosted swim meets. You may recognize Jamie from signing you in at the volunteer check-in table bright and early prior to the start of a

weekend meet, or remember her voice when she has filled in as the announcer at previous meets with finals.

Ms. Codjovi is a sole practitioner at The Codjovi Law Firm which she began in 2013 where she is engaged in general practice with a focus primarily on family law. Ms. Codjovi was born and educated in the Western New York area. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Canisius College in 2003 where she obtained a double major in Sociology and Urban Studies with a minor in Anthropology. She also participated in their Raichle pre-law program. Ms. Codjovi then pursued a dual degree graduate program – JD/MA in Political Science at the University at Buffalo and received her law degree in 2007.



Karen Benz Coen Growing up, Karen was a swimmer with STAR for 7 years and swam on her varsity high school swim team. She had a great experience with STAR and swimming has always held a special place in her heart. Karen was excited to have her 3 boys join the team that she grew up with! They have been swimming for 10 years now and they love it. They started with the Red Team/Exploring, learning the different stroke techniques and gaining speed. Jack and Liam (twins) and her youngest son, Mitchell, swim for Coach TJ on the Senior Team. She and her husband, Chris, are so proud of their progress, but more

importantly, how STAR has taught them good sportsmanship, the value of commitment,

and how much fun the sport is! It has also taught them good time management. Their school work comes first, but they make sure it gets done before or after swim practice. As we all know, our team couldn't run without the dedication of the parents. Karen works full-time as an Insurance Broker. She understands the struggles of a work/family balance. She has served on the Board of Directors in a few different roles for the last 8 years, including member at-large, Treasurer, and presently as the Vice President. She also served 4 years on the board of directors for the Junior League of Buffalo as the Communications VP and understands the importance of volunteering. When they first joined STAR, she & Chris were timers, but Karen quickly decided to become an USA Swimming Official. Chris is an Administrative Official (AO) and volunteers in the Green House, using the computer system during our hosted swim meets. Karen is also the Safe Sport Coordinator for STAR and has been for the last 4 years. With her experience as a Board member and volunteer for the Junior League of Buffalo, she was able to bring some of the media connections to STAR, with a press release in The Buffalo News as well as reaching out to Kevin O'Neill with WGRZ for a spot on Daybreak in February 2019 to introduce Coach TJ & STAR to WNY. She brings to the board experience in swimming, officiating, board experience, and perspective of parents who work full-time. She hopes to continue to share her skills to help STAR be the best it can be!



Jeff Errington and his wife Lynn, along with their children Lauren and Julia, live in Amherst. Julia has been with STAR since 2018 and is now with the Senior group. Jeff has enjoyed volunteering at the meets in various capacities. He is eager to find new ways to contribute to STAR, with the aim of improving the overall experience of the athletes, parents, and coaches.

Jeff is a Professor within the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering at the University at Buffalo. He earned a BS in Chemical Engineering from the University at Buffalo, a PhD in Chemical Engineering from Cornell University, and subsequently studied as a post-doctoral fellow for two years at Princeton University. He has served in various leadership capacities at UB, including now as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education for the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Part of his role involves the analysis, interpretation, and communication of data. He hopes to apply these skills as a board member with STAR.



Helana Mulawka, along with her husband, Keith and children, Dillion (12) and Kennedy (9), and bonus daughters, Morgan (21, Florida) and Paige (19), live in Derby. Dillion and Kennedy grew up at the pool watching their older sisters swim. Dillion and Kennedy fell in love with swim and Coach Nate when they joined “Learn to Swim” in 2020. In 2021, we joined the STAR family, and quickly fell in love with the swimming community. Helana, also known as Lanie, did not grow up with a swimming background. She quickly emersed herself into learning more about the sport, and began shadowing in the

Greenhouse. She quickly became a familiar face for volunteering, along with her husband, Keith. She has gone to earn her USA Swimming Administrative Official certification, which allows her to work in the greenhouse at Star hosted meets.

Currently, Dillion is a member of the Dreaming team, and Kennedy a member of the Learning Team. As parents, Helana and Keith love the community, sportsmanship, confidence and discipline that STAR has and continues to instill in their children. Helana and Keith are both starting their 22nd year with the New York State Police. Helana has worked in various positions but is extremely proud of her 9 years serving the community at the Erie County Child Advocacy Center, Buffalo. During her time there she interviewed almost 4000 children that had been victims of physical, and/or sexual abuse, or witnesses to serious crimes. Currently she is the Regional Coordinator for the Employee Assistance Program for the State Police, where she assists all active and retired sworn and non-sworn members and their families. Helana also volunteers at her church as a youth leader for children’s youth group for age 4-grade 5. Keith currently serves as a Technical Sergeant in the Underwater Recovery Team. Helana is very passionate about creating a safe environment for our children that is supportive. Her experience with children throughout her years and her law enforcement background would make her an asset to the board.



Melanie Sandquist and her husband Aaron live in Wheatfield with their two boys Luke and Jack. We joined STAR swimming after being with another local swim club and are so happy to be a part of this team. Luke currently swims for the Learning group and is excited to transition to Dreaming in the fall, Jack swims for the Exploring group and loves learning the intricacies of each stroke. Most of the time the boys practice at STAR's Northtowns location Sweet Home High School.

Melanie is an active swim meet volunteer. As a former swimmer, lifeguard, and LTS instructor Melanie's favorite spot to volunteer is on the pool deck, so she can usually be found officiating during the 12 and under sessions

Melanie is the Environmental Health and Safety Manager at Niagara University, so she understands the struggles of working families and busy schedules. She also serves on a few committees at the church her family belongs to (First Presbyterian Church of Lockport - you should come check us out) and has just completed her 8th year as a member of the Session (which is very similar to a Board of Directors).

Melanie is excited to remain on the board of directors and will bring similar board experience as well as experience in swimming, and officiating. She will also offer STAR Northtowns parent perspective, and well as the perspective of parents who work full-time. She hopes to continue to share her skills to help STAR be the best it can be.

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Natasha Fatta resides in Cheektowaga, NY with her husband (Michael), son (Jacob), and daughter (Lilah). Lilah has been swimming with STAR Swim Club since September, 2019 and is currently part of Dreaming Team. During the past year, Natasha has been an active swim meet volunteer and feels most at home volunteering on the pool deck, as she too was a swimmer as an adolescent.

Natasha has been an educator in the Depew School District since 2002 and this extensive experience working with students and families will serve the STAR Board of Directors in a variety of ways. She looks forward to utilizing her skill set to

support STAR families and the growth of all athletes as a parent representative on the board. She is also excited to be integral in supporting STAR Swimming in their consistent efforts to implement the team's core values: accountability, respect, resilience, passion, and fun in everything they do in and out of the pool.



Caitlin Herbert, along with her husband Tom and children Reilly and Tommy, lives in Hamburg, NY. Reilly joined Star Swimming as a third grader in 2017 and quickly fell in love with the sport and the team! While Caitlin did not grow up with a swimming background, she loved that Star offered parents so many opportunities to get involved to help support the team and learn about the sport. She quickly became a familiar face volunteering on deck at swim meets and has gone on to earn her USA Swimming Administrative Official certification, which allows her to work in the greenhouse at Star hosted meets.

Currently, Reilly is a member of the Senior Team. As parents, Caitlin and Tom love the sportsmanship, confidence and discipline that Star has helped to instill in Reilly. As a Special Education teacher with the Buffalo Public Schools since 2007, Caitlin is very knowledgeable about the growth and development of children. She is passionate about ensuring the team continues to evolve and that the athletes are thriving and feel supported in and out of the pool. Her experience with kids through her years in the classroom and a desire to uphold a strong team culture make her an asset to the board.



Fernando Medellin Pérez lives in Williamsville, NY. with his wife Ara and two children Julia and Mateo who enjoy being part of the Exploring and Dreaming team since the fall of 2021 respectively, where they have nurtured the passion for swimming along with their teammates and coaches.

After a successful Cash Management career and with 17 years of experience in the Mexican and Latin American Financial System, the global bank that he works for, (HSBC) appointed Fernando to lead the Wholesale Online Banking for

the US market and was relocated from Mexico City to Buffalo NY back in October 2021. He earned a Bachelor Degree in Systems Engineering from “Universidad del Valle de Mexico” and holds an MBA from the EGADE Business School (Mexico) and a Master in Bank & Finance (Spain).

You will see Fernando doing different volunteer roles during the swim meets, including the meet entries coordinator. Outside STAR, he also supports the community by doing online mentoring for the New York State Migrant Education Program, helping the NGO Beds for Buffalo and doing some voluntarism activities for the Special Olympics Swim Program. At work he belongs to the Hispanic Latin Diversity Employee Resource Group.

He will be delighted to be part of the STAR board team, by leveraging his sport knowledge as two times High School National Basketball Champion (Mexico) and the multicultural background he has to keep promoting STAR values and across the community.



Beau Riggs, a resident of Orchard Park, NY has a rich background in swimming, having competed at the Division I level for Cal State Northridge. As an active triathlete, professional, father, and husband to Lindsay Riggs, Beau brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the Star Swim Club, which they joined in 2023 along with their daughter Chloe, who is on the Exploring team. Chloe’s younger brothers, Jack Fox and Zander Wolf, eagerly await their turn to join the club.

Beau believes in the power of teamwork, embodying the philosophy that while one can go fast alone, one can go further together. This belief led him to join the Star Board of Directors in 2024, with the purpose of making a lasting positive impact on the swimming community. Growing up, Beau admired the Star Swim Club, viewing its members as the elite swimmers in the area and dreaming one day contributing to such a prestigious organization.

Professionally, Beau owns an Independent Wealth Management Firm at Raymond James, with over a decade of experience in the financial services industry, beginning his

career at various local regional banks. He is driven by a commitment to excellence and is passionate about the future, always excited about the possibilities that lie ahead.



Shana Stegner is the current Co-President of the board and has been an acting board member since 2018. Shana, along with her husband Matt and 3 children (Josh, Ella and Allyson) live in Orchard Park. Josh (College Swimmer) and Ally are both current STAR swimmers on the Senior Team. She has been a consistent parent volunteer since Josh joined over 13 years ago and has been part of several committees. Shana has coordinated the Swim-a-Thon fundraiser in 2023 as well as a team event food drive where over 500lbs of food was collected by STAR Swimming families and donated to FeedMore WNY.

Shana is the Managing Director at CBRE|Buffalo with over 20 years of experience in advising her clients and negotiating a wide range of commercial real estate transactions in Western New York and across the U.S. Shana is active in the community and supporting and volunteering at organizations such as Cornerstone Manor, BISON Children's Scholarship Fund, Buffalo City Mission, Child & Family Services, and Habitat for Humanity.