

Needham stars – 10 sets of dancers



Chris Gerstel

[Christopher J Gerstel](#) is a longtime Needham resident. He is a graduate of the class of 94 at Needham High where he was the "Rocketman" for the Thanksgiving Day Game Pep rally. You might also recognize his handsome face as one of the Needham Town Criers from the Needham 300 Celebration. He is currently the Vice Chairman of the Park & Recreation Commission and also is part of Needham Baseball & Softball. He is happily married to his wife Katie and has two wonderful children (CJ & Ellie). A special note to all the other competitors: As Larry Bird once said " I hope all you guys are thinking about 2nd Place.... Because I am winning this"

Barry and Linda Coffman

Linda has lived in Needham for 30 years with Barry where they have raised their three children. She has volunteered for several groups thru the years, including PTC president , Child Assault Prevention Program and Needham Community Council. Linda is a current member of the Needham Women's Club. After watching her daughter Alexandra light up the dance floor for many years she has decided to give dancing with Barry her best shot. The big question; can she let him lead! Linda can be found multi tasking behind the the counter at Stacy's Juice Bar making smoothies and practicing her dance moves. Stop by and say hello!



Barry had a long career as a professional investment manager with Fidelity Investments and Boldwater Capital. He is currently a member of Launchpad Venture Group, a Boston based angel investment group that invests in, advises and mentors local startup companies. He has been an active member of the Needham community serving as a board member and past president of the Needham Community Council and the Needham Sports Council. Currently Barry is a trustee of Beth Israel Deaconess Needham and a member of the Town's Finance Committee. He is getting way outside his comfort zone with DWTS but is looking forward to dancing with Linda for a great cause and is hopeful that she will let him lead!

Samantha Sherman

Samantha Sherman is well-rooted in the local community. Since 2012, she has been on the senior leadership team at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital–Needham. In her current position as Chief Development and External Relations Officer at BID–Needham, she is responsible for the direction, management, and coordination of all the external relations activities at the hospital, including fundraising, marketing and communications, board relations, community relations and benefits, government relations, and volunteer services. Each year, she organizes the hospital's gala, one of the largest in the area. This year the gala hosted nearly 800 people and raised \$720,000, the most in the hospital's history. Samantha serves on the board of the Newton-Needham Regional Chamber and the Bulfinch Charitable Foundation. She coaches youth basketball for the Saint Joe's League, and serves as a member of 100 Women of Needham. Originally from Newton, Samantha has lived in Needham for the past fifteen years with her husband Marc Rolfes and their three children.



Michael Lombard

A near life-long Needham resident, Michael moved to Needham at the age of four, attended Needham public schools, and graduated from Needham High School (class of '83). He and his wife Kim have two daughters (Taylor & Amanda) who both graduated from NHS as well. A graduate of Holy Cross, Michael received his MBA from the Carroll School of Management at BC and is currently employed as a Vice President at Walker & Dunlop, one of the nation's premier Commercial Real Estate lenders and has spent the last 20+ years on the real estate finance industry.



Michael currently is the Chair of the Board of Advisors at BID-Needham after having served on the Board of Trustee for many years and has also is on the Boards of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mass Bay and the Boston Police Athletic League.

How does he feel about DWTS?: “With two left feet and no natural ability whatsoever, I realized I could use some professional help. Plus, as the father of two daughters, (who may disown me after this is over!) and realizing that they may one day get married and I would need to dance with them at their wedding was both a sobering and motivating factor for participating in this great event.”

Brenda and Mark Miskin

Mark has been a life long resident of Needham. He went to college at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. After graduation he started his career in sales with the Bic Corporation and almost at the same time met his future wife Brenda Considine.

His career took him to many different locations, but eventually he and Brenda moved back to the Miskin family home where they have raised their 3 boys ,Ricky, Jake and Brandon. After many years of coaching soccer to the 3 boys, several board positions including president of the Needham Soccer Club, Mark has come full circle becoming the first Executive Director and Tournament Director for the Needham Soccer Club, the club he grew up playing for as a youth.



Brenda grew up in Brighton with her five siblings and parents. She attended Fitchburg State University for one year. Following her heart Brenda worked to get certified as a Physical Fitness Instructor.

In 1988 Mark and Brenda began their special family of three sons. Her instinct was to remain at home and raise their boys and she can honestly say they were the best years! As the children got older she reentered the workforce and became the Assistant Coordinator for the Needham E.A.S.E Program and also taught children's yoga

classes at Hillside and Mitchell Elementary schools.

Since 2007 Brenda has been a preschool school teacher at Waltham Creative Start. She takes pride that she is making a difference for many of the underprivileged children enrolled there.

Wanita Kennedy

Wanita comes to us by way of Chicago, Danville, VA and Princeton, NJ; each decade and geography influencing her music roots and dancing style. Finally settling in Needham in the early 1990's, she has raised her four children, two dogs, cat and husband to never shy away from an opportunity to light up a dance floor. After moving to Needham Wanita decided volunteering was the best way to integrate into the community, and she has been doing so ever since. She has volunteered with multiple Needham organizations such as: St. Josephs Parish and Schools, Needham Newcomers, Parent Talk, and Needham Woman's Club. She is currently serving on two boards: Needham High School Boosters and Needham Steps Up - a mentoring program at the high school for low income students. Nurturing the place she calls home has introduced her to some of her closest friends. The more people to work with or dance with, the more fun it is. We have 80's frat party dance moves, theatrical flair, air guitar and hugs for everyone.....this is the bundle of energy that is Wanita . It's always a tough call for the instructor – to tame the flame or stoke the fire. Will we see the refined Eliza Doolittle in My Fair Lady or the sizzling Sandy Olsson in Grease?



Suzanne Baker



Born and raised in Westport, CT, Suzanne made her way to Massachusetts in 2001 and settled in Needham the fall of 2004. She loves everything about the 02492 (and 02494!) and was on the board for the Newman Elementary School Parent Teacher Council as well as the Charles River YMCA before taking a position at the Needham Historical Society in April 2016. Suzanne is charged with raising funds and raising friends for the Society so stop in and say hello - history happens everyday.

Suzanne and her husband, Andrew, have three girls - Madison (10), Olivia (6) and Finley (2). If this "party of 5" is not at a sporting event, out to dinner or spending time on Cape Cod we don't know where they could be!

Good food, good wine and good friends & family are fixtures in Suzanne's life and she hopes to dance to the beat of her own drum during this fun and charitable competition.

Aaron Sicotte

Aaron was thrilled to have been welcomed into the Needham community four years ago. Now, as the principal of Needham High School, he is looking forward to many years of working closely with the community to support the students. He believes that somehow learning to dance publicly will help him do that. Prior to being drafted to dance, Aaron taught high school English for ten years in Massachusetts and New York, before becoming an assistant principal and then returning to Mass. As an assistant principal at NHS over the past few years, Aaron saw firsthand how our students' hard work leads to incredible successes for them. He is now hoping to replicate those lessons with his own dedication to a dancing title.



Megan & Zach Bourque



Megan grew up in Connecticut and returned to the Northeast after attending college at the University of Virginia. After living in Brookline for a few years, Megan and her husband Zach were ready for the suburbs and moved to Needham in 2008. They have four children - daughter Erin (born in 2009), daughter Annette (born in 2011), son Ryan (born in 2012), and son Henry (born in 2015). Megan discovered Parent Talk after Erin was born and first got involved through the semi-annual Clothing and Toy Sale. She has since enjoyed all that Parent Talk has to offer through playgroups, lectures, events, and community service, and is honored to contribute more to the organization through her current role as President of the Board of Directors. On the homefront, Megan enjoys cooking, reading, spending time outdoors, and managing the chaos of a young family. In her other life,

Megan works as Director of Health & Welfare Strategy in the human resources department at CVS Health. Aside from frequent dance parties in the kitchen with the kids, Megan has very little dance experience but looks forward to learning some new moves through this event!

Zach works at Rice, Heard, and Bigelow, a firm of private trustees in Boston, where he is a director and shareholder. Zach holds his Chartered Financial Analyst designation and is a member of the Boston Estate Planning Council. Zach graduated from Middlebury College and has since served in several volunteer roles for Middlebury, including President of the Alumni Association and currently, Partner on the Board of Overseers. Zach grew up playing basketball and soccer, and now he can be found on the sidelines coaching those YMCA preschool sports teams on the weekends. He is still not sure how he got roped into Dancing with the Needham Stars as Megan's +1, but he is excited that it will allow them to finally take the dance lessons they've been talking about for years!

Mardy & Rob Claus

Mardy and Rob both grew up in Needham and graduated from Needham High School Class of 1974. They have four children, all Needham High graduates, Tim, in 2000, Brian in 2002, Danny in 2004 and Maggie in 2006.

Mardy recently retired as a teaching assistant from the John Eliot Elementary School where she enjoyed assisting in the classroom with many of Needham's finest teachers. While at Eliot, she was the Community Service Coordinator partnering the Eliot School community with Generic Ministry, developing a program called "Sandwich Tuesday" which provides meals for the homeless in Boston. She also worked closely with the Needham Community Council teaching the children about the wonderful work this organization provides for our Needham families. Mardy is a former CCD teacher at St. Joseph's Church, and spent many years coordinating, organizing and chaperoning the Needham High School "All Night Graduation Party". She is a graduate of Chamberlain School of Retailing in Boston. Now that she is retired, Mardy enjoys spending her time with her family, especially her new grandson, playing golf, biking, traveling and enjoying everything on Cape Cod.



Rob is a successful sales leader with more than 35 years of experience developing, building and managing high technology sales organizations. He has held senior executive positions with PictureTel, Polycom, HP and Huawei and is currently Vice President of Sales at Revolabs, a division of Yamaha Corporation. In addition, Rob has been an instructor at Northeastern University teaching sales and marketing courses, and serves as an advisor to a private equity firm specializing in go-to-market strategies for technology

companies. He has received numerous industry honors and awards for sales channel design & strategy and channel management. Rob earned his bachelor's degree in management from Boston College. He likes all sports, is an avid runner, likes to bike, drink wine and is an extremely frustrated golfer.