

Chris Aakre



- ▶ I ran my first 5k since high school in 2018 and caught the running bug - vowing to complete my first marathon the next year. I discovered the RRC and its amazing group of running ambassadors during training and quickly recognized that these are my people. Since then, I've enjoyed racing and pacing with this fun group of runners across local and regional events.

- ▶ *Qualifications: What special talents or experience can you contribute to the Board?*

Anything tech!

- ▶ *Goals & Plans: There are various team opportunities that oversee RRC activities; Races/Events, Website, Social Media, Diversity & Inclusion, and Promotions. How would you like to devote your time as a board member?*

Administering races, expanding RRC reach with promotion and ambassadorship.

- ▶ *Are there specific changes or new opportunities you'd like to spearhead during your tenure?*

Work with city and county to improve water access on trails!

Kali Aldrich



- ▶ My running roots started when Cindy and Brian Morgan invited me to a Team RED run. Since then, I have completed 12 half marathons, one full marathon, and will run my second full marathon in November. I love all the friendships I have created through running!
- ▶ According to my Clifton strengths, I am responsible, a multi-tasking machine, enjoy maximizing where needed, relate well with others, and have self-confidence. I have served as an Ambassador at a local gym, volunteered for Rochester Sports, and work for the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce so I understand the importance of tasks and deadlines.
- ▶ I would like to devote my time as a board member in races/events.

Joseph Barr



- ▶ I started running on my own at the end of my senior year of high school and into college. I ran for a couple years with the Purdue Run Club, and participated in a few local races. After college, I moved to Rochester, and started running with the RRC within a few weeks. Since, I've spent most of my Saturday and Sunday mornings running with the club, and participated in as many local races as I can, as well as a few marathons. I've been consistently in the habit of running since I started seven years ago, and I have no plans to stop. I find great value both in running with a community, and doing it by myself, and I find ways to squeeze it in no matter the weather or where I am.
- ▶ I participate very regularly in the Saturday Morning Training Runs and Off Season Striders, so I interact with a variety of other people, especially newer ones or those who don't join the group very frequently. I enjoy getting to know people and welcoming them into the Rochester running community. This gives me a unique ability to take in many different perspectives about the club and what it does.

I have considerable experience building, maintaining, and administering websites. I'm also generally quite comfortable managing online platforms (Discord, email, JotForm, etc.). This will allow me to help the board and RRC with their online presence.
- ▶ As mentioned above, I have extensive experience in web administration and platform management that I could apply to bolster the RRC's communication. I would also like to focus on Diversity & Inclusion, which is a strong passion of mine. When I first joined the RRC, I immediately felt a sense of belonging, and I want to make sure that's true for everyone who joins.
- ▶ I'd like to explore ways to improve wayfinding during Saturday Morning Training Runs, such as by instituting "pacers" at a broad range of paces, or by providing guidance and tech support for downloading route maps to personal devices.

I'd also like to improve the incentive structure to encourage more people to volunteer. Providing t-shirts to our volunteers has helped create a sense of community, identity, and trust, and I'd like to build on that. For example, we could institute a punch card system, where volunteers can earn rewards, like a pair of socks or a race entry, after so many volunteer events. While small, this would show volunteers they are appreciated and encourage participation.

Carrie Gilson



- ▶ I have been running since 2012, when I was a senior in college. I ran my first half marathon in 2013 and my first marathon in 2019. This year I ran the Twin Cities marathon for the fourth time hit a new PR of 3:55 (a big improvement from my 5:15 time in 2022)!
- ▶ I have previously served on community boards, such as the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission. I also held leadership positions for various clubs in college. And while it may not be a talent or an experience, I bring with me a lot of enthusiasm and excitement.
- ▶ I would like to assist with races and events, both planning and logistics day of. I am also willing to assist with diversity and inclusion and promotions.
- ▶ I have already noticed some changes (or at least RRC's activities are becoming more visible lately). Since these appear to be positive changes, I would prefer to hear what work has already been done before I suggest any additional improvements.

Sergio Gradilone



- ▶ I'm a chubby guy that started running in 2010 with some friends and evolved into some adventure racing, and triathlons. My first running event was MedCity half in 2010. After that I've participated every year in the medcity half marathon and in several Full Marathons (Chicago, Twin Cities, Grandmas) and many sprint, olympic, and half and full ironman distance triathlons.
- ▶ I would like to contribute to the vision of having very slow people like me, with no running or exercise experience, involved in running activities as a way to improve health.
- ▶ *Goals & Plans: There are various team opportunities that oversee RRC activities; Races/Events, Website, Social Media, Diversity & Inclusion, and Promotions. How would you like to devote your time as a board member?*

That would depend on the needs of the board, but my passion would be in attracting first timers to the sport, training activities tailored to that group, slow pace groups on saturday runs, with the ultimate goal of running a first half as a group.

Rylee Kopchak



- ▶ From a young age, I've had a love for running and the amazing community it has brought me. I began competing in cross country and track at the age of 10 and haven't stopped running since. I ran at a high level throughout high school and went on to run NCAA Division I cross country and track at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC. At Wake, I focused on distances ranging from 1500m - 6k and had the opportunity to compete against some of the nation's top running talents. Since graduating in 2022, I have shifted gears to half marathon / marathon training. I have completed 4 half marathons, and I recently completed my first marathon, qualifying for Boston 2025. I'm excited to continue growing as a runner and chase new goals as I venture into longer distances.
- ▶ Throughout my years of running competitively, I have gained extensive knowledge about training cycles, strength, nutrition, recovery, injury prevention, etc. from experts in their respective fields (NCAA coaches, sports medicine physicians, registered dietitians, collegiate strength coaches, DPTs). I hope to share this knowledge and be a source of information for those new to running or others seeking guidance.

I am very passionate about running and have always recognized the importance of a strong running community. I have been an active member of run clubs in every city I've lived in (Pittsburgh, Winston-Salem, Boston, Scottsdale, Jacksonville, and now Rochester), providing me with a unique perspective. These experiences have given me insight into different community-focused events organized by run groups, which may help generate new ideas for RRC.

In addition to attending the SMTRs, I consistently participate in Tuesday Thesis runs and Wednesday Minnesota Treads runs, allowing me to connect with a variety of RRC members and others in the broader Rochester running community.

- ▶ I am interested in devoting my time to overseeing races/events and developing RRC's social media. I would like to get more involved in RRC races/events planning or provide support as a volunteer. Additionally, I would love to help RRC's social media showcase the fun we have, highlight our community, and engage with current and potential members. Whether it's promoting upcoming races, sharing highlights from past events, or collaborating on new ideas, I am eager to contribute to growing RRC's presence and fostering an even stronger connection among runners.
- ▶ I believe RRC does an amazing job at organizing group runs and promoting a sense of comradery among members. A few new ideas that I would like to spearhead include:
 - 1) Monthly newsletter - In addition to the weekly emails, it may be nice to have a more comprehensive monthly newsletter that highlights recent running accomplishments. This could also include race recaps / stories that RRC members want to share or other creative columns to help us get to know each other better.
 - 2) Organized weekly (or bi-weekly) track workouts during training blocks
 - 3) RRC guest speaker presentations - Host a quarterly guest speaker to present on topics relevant to runners. Examples include: dietician - race nutrition, exercise physiologist - training based on VO2 max / HR, DPT - exercises for injury prevention, sports psychologist - overcoming mental blocks

Kasey Kuker (incumbent)



- ▶ I've run 67 marathons and 46 half marathons. I'm the 35th woman in the world to run a marathon under 4:00 hours in all 50 states. I've also completed all 6 World Marathon Majors under 4:00 hours. I've run the Boston Marathon 8 times, and was recently accepted to run it again in April. My current marathon PR is 3:10. I've been a race pacer since 2015, pacing over 25 half marathons and 10-milers, with 3 pacing teams. Running is a huge passion of mine, especially with friends! I'm happy to run any pace, if it means getting outside with friends, for some great conversation and exercise!
- ▶ I have been a Rochester Running Club Board member since 2020. This year, I was elected Board President. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with such an amazing group of hard-working, dedicated, and talented board members, and I'd love the opportunity to be re-elected for another term.

I've demonstrated commitment, leadership, and motivation to make positive changes. Bonus: I can sing the National Anthem at a moment's notice before any race.
- ▶ I've enjoyed being on the Annual Banquet Team, Race Director Team, Diversity and Inclusion Team, SMTR team, and helping with races and events. I'd like to continue to devote my time to those teams as well as others.
- ▶ I'd like to help grow our races, and make sure they're welcoming and inclusive of all runners!

Derek Pape



- ▶ I ran track in high school and ran off and on during college. When I moved to Rochester in 2020, I continued running but found I wasn't as excited about running as I used to be. I did a few group runs in 2023 with the RRC and enjoyed them. In 2024, I have been the most active with running in my life, and the RRC has been a big part of that. I ran my first two half marathons this year and also completed my first full marathon. I attend many of the group runs and have found them to be extremely impactful on my enjoyment of running.
- ▶ I have been volunteering for the RRC over the past year in a few different capacities. I do the majority of the email sendouts (weekly, member, etc.), maintain the website, and put together sign up forms. I have also volunteered at a few events this year, my favorite of which was at an All Comers' meet this past summer.
- ▶ I would like to continue supporting the website and the emails. Getting involved with races and events for the RRC also sparks my interest.
- ▶ The main thing for me is that I want people to always feel welcome and included in the RRC. Participating in RRC group runs and events has impacted my life in such a positive way that I really want people in the community who are unsure about running with a group to realize they are welcome here.

Dale Pfrimmer (incumbent)



- ▶ I have run 26 marathons and 4 of the 6 World Majors.
- ▶ *Qualifications: What special talents or experience can you contribute to the Board?*
Race Director for the All-Comers' meets and Lance Pfrimmer Memorial Run.
- ▶ *Goals & Plans: There are various team opportunities that oversee RRC activities; Races/Events, Website, Social Media, Diversity & Inclusion, and Promotions. How would you like to devote your time as a board member?*
Continue as Race Director for the All-Comers' meets and Lance Pfrimmer Memorial Run.
- ▶ *Are there specific changes or new opportunities you'd like to spearhead during your tenure?*
Improve both the All-Comers' Meets and Lance Pfrimmer Memorial Run.

Shannon Rupp



- ▶ I ran for Rochester Lourdes High School, competing in the HVL conference. Following high school, I competed at the Division III level for Saint Catherine University. Post-graduate I have continued not only competing but have dipped my toes into coaching. Recently, I have begun running racing more consistently at longer distances.
- ▶ As a Rochester native, I have many connects within our community. I believe this would be an asset to our board. With this, I have a strong relationships with a great deal of the area high school teams. Not only that, but I have an out-going personality that I believe could be beneficial with not only sponsorship relationships, but those within the RRC.
- ▶ I believe I could be valuable with races/events and promotions. Although, I am open to helping out wherever the board would think I am the best fit!
- ▶ This last summer, we saw a few pairings of races and sponsors. I think this area could potentially be expanded up. With multiple brewery/food sponsors, we could plan more collaborations- such as family group runs to/from these locations or more sponsorship related race gifts/giveaways. Specifically, we could plan an event similar to Douglas Trail last year with the pint glasses & coupons. Or, if we have a restaurant/food truck sponsor we could have them present in some capacity at the finish of a race. This could allow for more camaraderie amongst runners who may not feel comfortable going to a group run or SMTR.

Susan Schultz



- ▶ I have been running pretty much since the 4th grade. Ran track in grade school, did not run much in high school but started back running after raising kids. Got serious(socially) in my 40's. I have several half marathons, 2 marathons and 2 Half Ironman Triathlons in the books. I currently just run because I love it. Prefer running outdoors and on trails, but just getting out is what I love.
- ▶ I moved here 5 years ago from upstate NY. I was lucky while in NY to be trained by Alan Jones, inventor of the Jones counter. I was certified to measure and have several races under my belt. I have not certified anything in about 6 years but I would be willing to help measure if needed. I also directed and co-directed many races in NY. I was on the Board of Directors for the Broome County Triathlon Club.
- ▶ I would love to help with races and various events. Social media is not one of my strengths, But I am willing to learn anything.
- ▶ I would love to try to help getting the word out about running events in the community. It seems I hear about things after they have already taken place.

Rizwan Siwani



- ▶ I really started running regularly when I came to Rochester and joined the Saturday group runs in 2008/09 training for my first long distance race- grandmas marathon. I have since been regularly involved in group runs and cherish being part of our running community. Over the years I've complete a 50K, 5 marathons, and several half marathons and 5K races. Currently, I am into trail running and running for the joy of it without a specific distance or time in mind to achieve although I'll be signing up for a race sooner or later :)
- ▶ I may be able to make a couple of unique contributions to the board; I have enjoyed running tremendously through the health benefits and social connections I've gained from the sport, as a person of color I would use my position on the board to role model and encourage other persons of color to take up running, and as a father of two children who have a positive association with running I would want to use my position on the board to figure out ways to encourage younger athletes to take up running
- ▶ In keeping with my ideas to encourage younger athletes and persons of color to take up running I would like to see how I could serve on the diversity and inclusion team. I would also be interested in figuring out how I could best serve the Club on the other teams for eg through social media
- ▶ It would be so cool to get kids to get out on regularly organized group trail runs. While there are plenty of opportunities for adults to get out on group runs, we don't see very many families or kids coming out to these.

Benjamin White



- ▶ I started running through cross country in high school, and have been running ever since (throughout college and graduate school). I've done quite a few half marathons and hope to do my first marathon next year. My approach to running is more casual than competitive, and my experience with RRC is the first time I've ever been part of an official running group. I enjoy going to as many of the weekly runs as I can, both as a way to be social and as a way to push myself physically.

- ▶ *Qualifications: What special talents or experience can you contribute to the Board?*

The description above notes that RRC is looking for folks to help manage email and membership administration. I worked as a teaching assistant for 5 years in graduate school, where I managed large hybrid and online courses (usually over one thousand students per class), including communication (email) management and maintaining student records. I'm comfortable with managing email and other administrative tasks. I'm also new to Rochester (~8 months), and would bring a fresh perspective to the Board.

- ▶ *Goals & Plans: There are various team opportunities that oversee RRC activities; Races/Events, Website, Social Media, Diversity & Inclusion, and Promotions. How would you like to devote your time as a board member?*

The description above mentions RRC needing a Board member to help manage email and administer membership. I would be most comfortable in this kind of role. I would also be willing to help with the website, or member/community outreach.

- ▶ *Are there specific changes or new opportunities you'd like to spearhead during your tenure?*

Two things. First, I work in market research, which means that I have professional experience administering surveys. I think it would be helpful to conduct a regular survey of RRC members (maybe annually or twice a year) to solicit feedback on various topics (times and locations for weekly runs, for example). There are several free survey platforms that RRC could use.

Second, I've had a few conversations with people who show up occasionally (not regularly) at RRC runs, and they've said that it would be nice to have dedicated shorter runs, for folks who have different running goals or who are just in a different place running-wise. I'm sure this has already been discussed at some point, but I think there is an opportunity to improve attendance and community outreach by being mindful of this part of the running community. I know regular RRC members feel comfortable speaking up if they want to do less mileage on a Saturday, for example, but newer or prospective RRC members might just assume that they have to be willing to run a certain mileage (e.g., 10) if they want to participate.

Jessie Wilburn (incumbent)



- ▶ I have been running since I was 10. In high school, I ran cross country. I ran my first half marathon and marathons in college and transitioned shortly after graduating to ultra marathons and trails. Running has been at the core of my life in each of the communities I have lived in as an adult and has given me my closest friends and community with which to belong.
- ▶ I have been a Rochester Running Club Board member since 2022. This year, I was elected Board Vice President. It's been a joy to work with this amazing group over the past 2 years and I'd love the opportunity to serve for another term. During this time, I've helped to expand our social media presence to include Instagram and Discord and organized the Capture the Segment challenge in the Spring of 2024.
- ▶ Over the past two years, I've enjoyed being part of the Social Media/Marketing/Website team, Sponsorship team, SMTR team, and assisted with races and other events. I hope to continue to build these teams and efforts.
- ▶ I hope in the coming years to be able to bring more social run opportunities together, such as Capture the Segment, and provide further opportunities for our members to connect on and off the run.