



2021 Incoming Board Members

Samantha Abare

Eight years ago, Samantha started as a Teller at Northfield Savings Bank. Throughout her eight years of employment there, she has had many roles: Call Center, Assistant Branch Manager, Mortgage Closing Coordinator, and now Mortgage Originator. She has earned several certificates and diplomas with the Center for Financial Training regarding front line banking, customer service, compliance, and mortgage banking. She has also been involved in NSB's Product Development Team, Labor Day Footrace Committee, and has written procedures for their new online banking rollout.

Over the years, Samantha has volunteered with many organizations, some of which include March of Dimes, Lake Champlain Dragon Boat Festival, Making Strides for Breast Cancer, United Way, and Northfield Labor Day. Most recently, she worked with Montpelier High School to create a Community Based Learning Program that allowed a student to shadow various areas of banking. She served on the Board for HomeShare Now for two years prior to the organization being absorbed by HomeShare Vermont. This non-profit screened and matched members of the community to help bring them affordable housing while sharing a mutual benefit. While bringing the organization to a close, she had the experience of becoming interim Board Secretary.

Samantha currently volunteers with Community Harvest of Central VT by helping to collect containers for fresh vegetables that are harvested from local farms so they can be delivered to recipients such as the VT Foodbank, Capstone, Another Way, and local food shelves. Being an active member in her service area has always been important to Samantha, and she feels that having the opportunity to work with Downstreet will allow her to make an impactful difference within the housing community.

Rep. Sarah Copeland Hanzas

Born in Illinois, Sarah moved to Vermont in 1971. She studied history and geology at the University of Vermont before completing her teaching certification at the Upper Valley Educator Institute to become a secondary science teacher in public schools and at Valley Vista in Bradford. As a State Representative first elected in 2004, she has served on the Health Care Committee and is the current Chair of the Government Operations Committee. She also serves

on the Executive Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Until recently she was a small business owner of the The Local Buzz Cafe in Bradford, where she lives with her husband. Together they have three young-adult children.

Celine Davis*

Celine and her three children (16 yr, 13 yr, and 10 months old) moved to Vermont a year ago; Celine is originally from Lakewood, Ohio. Celine describes herself as a "Jill-of-all-trades" having been involved in construction & contracting, worked in the mental health field for over ten years, and serving with AmeriCorps in community organizing over the last two years. Celine is currently in pursuit of becoming an attorney in Vermont. As a resident of Taylor Street Apartments, Celine is a strong advocate for mental health awareness, social justice, and racial equality. Celine has shown her love and passion for community through various acts of kindness such as decorating the lobby of her building every holiday and offering assistance to her older neighbors.

**Celine has been actively serving on the Downstreet Board since she was appointed in November 2020 to fill an unexpected vacancy, and is now up for election by the Downstreet membership.*

Vini K.D Emery

Vini Emery (they/them) lives in the North Montpelier home they purchased with the help of Downstreet's Down-Payment Assistance Program. They work for Recovery Vermont as the Program Manager of the Recovery Coaches in the Emergency Department Program. Vini currently serves on The Vermont Community Foundation's Samara Fund Committee. In their free time, Vini enjoys writing, cooking, time with their friends, being outside, and relaxing with their elder dog, Lark.

Emmanuel Riby Williams

Emmanuel has lived in the Barre-Montpelier area for 19 years, and graduated from Johnson State and American Public University. He and his partner Suzy have five children, four from previous relationships. Three of their children are enrolled in the Montpelier Roxbury Schools and all enjoy playing sports. Emmanuel enjoys attending and being deeply involved with his kids' activities and sporting events, and he treasures their family time.

Emmanuel teaches Physical Education k-4 at Union Elementary School in Montpelier. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from Johnson State College and a Master's in Sports Management through American Public University. He has worked in school districts including U32, Lamoille, and Montpelier.

He brings to the Board his passion of working with students and their families, along with his past experience as a Downstreet rental tenant and now as a homeowner through the Downstreet Down Payment Assistance Program. He hopes to make a positive impact on Downstreet for many years to come.