

PPJ Board of Directors

The PPJ Board of Directors currently consists of nine members, each bringing their own talents and expertise to bear on major decisions for the organization. PPJ holds monthly board meetings to vote on strategy, partnerships, hiring, fiscal management, and other important issues. Board members effectively work as volunteer program staff for PPJ as the organization presently has no paid staff.

PPJ Co-Founder, Executive Director Robert Torres (Latino, Male) (773-457-9760): Robert, born and raised in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago, spent most of his career in the stock market before deciding he wanted to improve the communities he grew up in. He founded his own successful drug testing company called AccuQuest Drug Test in 2009. In 2012, he met Elizabeth Ramirez and was touched by her story and passion to create change. Together, they formed Parents for Peace and Justice to ensure a better and safe future for all youth of Chicago. He has been running the organization ever since as a tireless volunteer.

PPJ Co-Founder, Elizabeth Ramirez (Latino, Female) (773-782-7022): Elizabeth's motivation for starting Parents for Peace and Justice comes from her own personal story. In October 2011, her 23-year old son, Harry "Deejay" Rodriguez, was gunned down at his own birthday party. Elizabeth wants peace on our streets so children can play outside in safety. She founded PPJ with Robert Torres to make this dream a reality.

Board Secretary, Katie Prentiss Onsager (White, Female) (727-417-9118): Katie is a Chicago-based documentary filmmaker and video journalist who has produced and directed more than 30 documentary shorts across the country, and abroad in Haiti and Tanzania. In her role as Executive Producer of Small Forces, Katie works daily with nonprofit leaders from a diverse range of causes and organization types. Katie leads the creation of PPJ's record-keeping infrastructure.

Board Treasurer, Annie Rios-Otero (Latina, Female) (773) 537-5973): Annie has spent the last 13 years in the financial world. Most recently, she graduated with a double MBA in Healthcare Administration and Finance and currently works at the University of Illinois for the College of Medicine. Born and raised in Chicago, her heart and soul are in philanthropic and missionary work, in addition to helping others. She is a proud mother of 4 children who keep her on her toes. She is excited to be able to bring her expertise in finance and accounting to help further the mission and goals of the organization.

George Velazquez (Latino, Male) (773-983-2677): In his 'day job', George works as Director of Sales for Premiere Systems, which provides technology services in three major markets. Ordained as Senior Chaplain, George provides spiritual guidance and support to parents who like himself have lost a child to senseless violence and speaks at prayer vigils and services across the city. He serves as President and Senior Chaplain of Christ for Life Motorcycle Ministry as well as Chaplain for two additional boards.

Jennifer Tengelsen (White, Female) (312-771-6156): Jennifer spent the first decade of her career in client systems & service in the banking and informational technology fields, eventually managing a team of employees. With a strong passion for philanthropy and fundraising, she has supported a number of charitable causes over the years through her family's foundation, the Tengelsen Family Foundation. Jennifer's true superpower is connecting other people, and she loves exercising that power to forge networks that collaborate to brighten futures for those in need.

Eileen Robertson Hamra (White, Female) (443-852-2922): Eileen is an author, speaker, philanthropist, yogi, and impact investor. As CEO of Fit Together, LLC, Eileen provides lifestyle and business coaching to individuals and companies looking to explore and expand what is possible for themselves, their businesses, and the future of the planet. Eileen lives in Chicago with her four children, husband, and big dog.

Daniel Maldonado (Latino, Male) (dmaldonado1210@gmail.com): Daniel is a lifelong Illinoisan whose trajectory as a passionate community leader is driven by his experiences growing up in the Chicagoland area. Daniel is involved with the Puerto Rican Parade Committee of Chicago (Vice-President and Youth Director) and the Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce (Leadership Committee). As the Chairman, President and Founder of ULEED, Daniel provided leadership for the organization and built key relationships with local leaders and businesses, resulting in exponential growth of the organization. ULEED provided free employment and education programs for six years. Daniel was named one of 2014's "Influential Latinos of Chicago" by Latino Leaders Magazine.

Katie Keller (White, Female) (708-813-3356): Katie is a graduate of The Joseph Business School and The Illinois Institute of Art-Chicago. She has over 20 years experience in the private and public sectors, which includes 12 years of managerial experience. She currently is part of the teaching staff of an alternative high school in Chicago's Austin community and she is a member of the Public Affairs Panel for Ingenuity, an organization that focuses on equity in arts education.