

Kirkland's square dancing club mixes hip hop, charity and pajamas for fun



Members of Samena Squares, Kirkland's square dancing club, dance to more than country music.
— *Image Credit: Contributed Photo/Kayla Roberts*

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Kirkland Reporter
Oct 5, 2015

On 100th Avenue in the Juanita neighborhood of Kirkland sits the little green Juanita Community Club, home of the vibrant square dancing club called Samena Squares. Samena Squares is a member-run, non-profit square dancing club that is active in the community, provides lessons on Thursdays and hosts dances on the second and fourth Fridays of the month.



The members of Samena Squares create a lively and welcoming atmosphere at every dance they host, whether at Thursday night lessons for new dancers or Friday night events centered around fun themes. Everyone is greeted at the door with a smile and a name tag and no one is left on the outskirts once the music begins.

“The exercise, the stress release, the friendliness of the group – we never thought we would make so many new friends,” Mary Pygott said at this year’s first day of lessons.

Mary and her husband Cal Pygott went through the 24 weeks of lessons last year and are now club members who attend to help add to the fun atmosphere for new students.

Because the club makes sure current members attend every lesson, new students are able to pick up the calls and dance the first time they attend.

“We liked the liveliness of the music and the fact that it isn’t just country western,” Pygott said. She noted that they have danced to the “Mission Impossible” theme, Credence Clearwater Revival and even some hip hop songs.

“We immediately felt welcomed,” said Sherry Gray, who is now the president of the club after six years of membership.

“Where can you find 100 people laughing and dancing, and there’s no alcohol involved?” she added with a laugh.

Susan Morris is the caller instructor for all the lessons during the course of the winter and spring. Her goal is for every student to be able to understand and respond to any caller who comes to the club. Morris said that every club has its own personality and this one is very friendly and encouraging.

On the first and third Fridays of the month, the club goes “caravanning,” a term that refers to traveling to another hall to square dance. A few times a year, Samena Squares also caravans to halls across the state. Late last month, they traveled to Winthrop, stayed in a hotel and met with other clubs in the area to dance in a giant barn.

Samena Squares doesn’t just provide a fun atmosphere for square dancing, they also pride themselves on being a positive influence in the community. Members participate in a Toys for Tots drive every year around Christmastime. In August, the club hosted a parking lot sale which donated \$1,200 to Hopelink for school supplies. Last year they hosted a “Pajama Dance,” where 90 pairs of pajamas were donated to a local Sleep Country for foster kids. This event is scheduled to repeat on Feb. 26, 2016.

Open enrollment lasts until Oct. 8. Everyone is invited, whether single or a couple, and the first lesson is free. After Oct. 8, it is \$150 to sign up for 24 weeks of lessons from 7- 9 p.m. every Thursday evening.

To become a member, the fee is \$75 a year, which includes admission to all the dances at the hall. It is usually \$7 per dance to go another club’s hall.

“It’s one place where you have to focus on the dancing,” Morris said. “You can’t worry about the bills that aren’t paid, the laundry that’s not done, what’s happening at work. It’s like a little vacation.”

For further information about lessons and Samena Squares, visit the website at <http://www.samenasquares.org/home>.