



The Dynamic Fundraising Duo

Swaim and Steele combine forces in management, theater and cycling

There have been many dynamic duos in queer history: Batman and Robin, Annie Leibovitz and Susan Sontag, Edina and Patsy.

Please welcome to the stage Samantha Swaim and Kristin Steele.

"We are a lesbian couple working within the community as artists, organizers and consultants," Swaim says.

The Sapphic team is the force behind Samantha Swaim Fundraising, a company focused on event planning, management and fundraising.

Swaim takes a very direct role in her namesake business: "We provide the tools, education and resources for organizations to increase their fundraising at their event. We are event planners with a fundraising eye, and fundraising consultants with an expertise in events."

Steele, with a background as a writer, works alongside Swaim.

"I work with clients to develop storytelling strategies," Steele explains. "People want to connect and hear specific stories of change. I try to help our clients do that. I work on-site at

our events to keep things afloat."

Swaim, 37, and Steele, 36, met in college at the University of Portland years ago.

"We were best friends for seven years before we started dating," Swaim says. "Thank goodness we finally figured

it out. We've now been together for 12 years."

Both Steele and Swaim hail from California. Steele grew up in Ukiah, Calif. "San Francisco always felt a really long way away," she says. Swaim spent the majority of her youth in Southern California.

"In 2001, after working for years in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles," Swaim says, "Kristin and I decided it was time to return to Portland. We loved the community and always wanted to plant roots here."

In that decade back in Portland, the two have materialized elaborate galas for Basic Rights Oregon and Q Center, and have helped put on productions for Insight Out Theatre Collective.

"We tend to really balance each other," Swaim says of her partner in life and business. "We have a rule that when one of us is up against a deadline or feeling stressed out, the other one can't go there. It's great when the day has gone a bit off track, because the other one is always there to get things back on track."

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