

MEET OUR MEMBERS

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



SANDI SMITH

JOB: Senior Director - Accounting & Finance with Principal Financial Group, Des Moines

HOMETOWN: Guthrie Center

ALMA MATER: University of Northern Iowa, accounting and Drake University, Master of Financial Management

COMMUNITY AND ISCPA ACTIVITIES: ISCPA board director, Career Awareness Committee member and Johnston Volleyball Club board treasurer

How has being a member of ISCPA helped you? It has really helped me grow as a leader and expand my network of accounting professionals. I have served on several committees over the years, and I have learned something and made new connections with each experience.

What are some of the biggest changes you've seen in the profession? For sure, the decline in the accounting pipeline has been a huge issue that I am passionate about helping resolve. I feel certain that our work on the Career Awareness Committee has made a difference in influencing high school students to consider accounting as a career.

What is your favorite thing about your job? I work with some amazing people around the globe. I have direct team members in London, Singapore, Sydney and the U.S. plus constituents across all of Europe and Asia Pacific. No two days are the same.

I am passionate about: My family! I spend all my non-working hours carting the kids to their many activities. I love spending time with my large, boisterous extended family as well.

People don't know this about me, but: I love to sing.

Your message for students considering a career as a CPA: No matter where your career path takes you, an accounting background will make you better! Accounting is a stable, always in-demand career. You can do so many different things with an accounting degree and will get compensated well to do it.

My philosophies toward work and life: It is all a juggling act. There will never be balance. Sometimes

work needs you more, sometimes your family does, and sometimes you need to prioritize your own health and well-being. Sometimes a ball will drop. You just have to pick it up and keep moving on.

Have you had mentors? Over the last 22 years, I have been so fortunate to have several very strong, sharp, women of finance to learn from at Principal including Julia Lawler, Deanna Strable, Jill Hittner, and Angie Sanders; however, the mentor who has had the most direct impact on my career has been Brenda Scholten. She has taught me to seek to understand, how to lead with empathy, and how to focus my passion to make a difference.

Biggest achievement to date: I made three amazing humans! I may be biased, but my kiddos are smart, beautiful, talented, kind and generally fun to be around. I'll share some of the credit with my hubby.

Secret talent: I love to make rosaries. My mom taught me, and it is a very meditative hobby.

Favorite quote: "We could learn a lot from crayons; some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, while others bright, some have weird names, but they all have learned to live together in the same box." Robert Fulghum

I never leave home without: My giant water bottle filled with the good ice.

Sandi and her husband Tyrone live in Urbandale with their children, Vivian (13), Drakeston (11) and Avianna (8).

When I grew up: I thought I wanted to be a lawyer, but then I realized that most lawyer jobs are boring. Accounting is so much more exciting!

First job: Housekeeping at local nursing home

If I weren't a CPA: I'd be a party planner

Favorite food: Cheese

Three words that best describe me: Passionate, energetic, honest

Go-to karaoke song: Janis Joplin's Me and Bobby McGee