



HOWARD COUNTY  
AUTISM SOCIETY

# **Howard County Autism Society Board Orientation Manual**

**January 2020**



January 2020

Dear Board Member:

Welcome to the Howard County Autism Society Board of Directors! As President I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for serving – your contributions over the year(s) to come will be vital to the health and success of our organization, and advancing our mission.

We are committed as an organization to make your transition as a new board member as smooth and effective as possible. This Board Orientation Manual is one part of this effort. In the pages that follow you will find materials that provide a snapshot of HCAS, your fellow board members, the bylaws and policies that guide our activities, and a description of the staff and staff job descriptions. Of course this information is not exhaustive, but it is a start!

Please contact me, or the Governance Committee, if you have any questions about these materials.

Sincerely,

Patrick Boxall  
President  
Howard County Autism Society

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*Welcome Letter*

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# 1. Mission and Guiding Principles

## Mission

To serve individuals on the autism spectrum, their families, and their communities by providing information, support, and advocacy; by promoting awareness of autism that values the dignity and uniqueness of each individual; and by working to improve the quality of and access to services and educational opportunities.

## Guiding Principles

Howard County Autism Society fulfills its mission by following these guiding principles.

The Howard County Autism Society:

- Notes that when provided the opportunity, all individuals on the autism spectrum have a contribution to make to their family, to their community, and to society at large. Therefore, the Society supports meaningful participation and self-determination in all aspects of life for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.
- Supports individuals on the autism spectrum of all ages and throughout the lifespan to find their own voice through self-advocacy.
- Informs individuals and families directly affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders and local service providers by seeking out opportunities to educate all in best practices in support and treatment.
- Promotes better awareness and understanding of the autism spectrum. It provides information and resources to the autism community and to the public at large in a manner that is most effective with each target audience.
- Advocates for public policy and funding that expands educational, vocational, therapeutic, recreational, social, and residential options as well as research opportunities and medical knowledge.
- Promotes collaborative relationships between individuals on the autism spectrum and their families, and their service providers.
- Encourages cooperation between schools, agencies, organizations, and other professionals involved in the lives of people within the autism spectrum.

## 2. Autism 101

### Acronyms

**ABA:** Applied Behavioral Analysis. This is a well-established behavioral approach to autism treatment.

**ADD/ADHD:** Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Many children on the autism spectrum are also diagnosed with ADD or ADHD.

**AS:** Asperger's Syndrome. In 2013, this was officially made part of the Autism Spectrum Disorders. Usually differentiated from Autistic Disorder by no language delay and no delay in cognitive development.

**ASA:** Autism Society of America

**ASD:** Autism Spectrum Disorder in the DSM(Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), where the diagnostic criteria for autism and related disorders can be found. Includes Autistic Disorder, PDD-NOS, and Asperger's Disorder.

**BIP:** Behavior Intervention Plan. Sometimes put in place at school.

**DAN!:** Defeat Autism Now. The DAN! protocol refers to a specific set of biomedical theories and treatment approaches.

**DIR:** Developmental, Individual-Difference, Relationship-Based (DIR) Model. The basis for the Floortime method of treatment which involves, among other things, a form of therapeutic play.

**DSM-V:** Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Published by the American Psychiatric Association in 2013 (replacing DSM-IV), it provides a common language and standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders including Autism Spectrum Disorder, PDD-NOS, and Asperger's Disorder.

**ESY:** Extended School Year. Summer school services.

**FAPE:** Free and Appropriate Education. All children in the United States are entitled to FAPE; the definition of FAPE, however, is difficult to pin down. (Note, at HCAS, FAPE is also a grant received from the county, and stands for Family Advocacy and Parent Education.)

**GF/CF:** Gluten free/casein free. This diet is used by some children on the spectrum to alleviate mental and physical challenges.

**HCAS:** Howard County Autism Society.

**HFA:** High Functioning Autism. Generally refers to individuals who are verbal and academically capable, but who are not diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. Like "classic autism," this is not a

medical term, but it does help to define an individual's profile. Tends to be a frustrating term for many in the community looking for a more appropriate reference, yet an improved one is not yet agreed upon in the autism community.

**IDEA:** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Passed in 1990, this law is the basis for all educational law as it relates to individuals with disabilities.

**IEP:** Individualized Educational Program. Most children with autism are entitled to an IEP, a legal document which lays out each child's personal goals and educational modifications.

**LD:** Learning Disability. Many children with autism cope with learning disabilities in addition to their autism diagnosis.

**LISS:** Low Intensity Support Services program available through the state of Maryland's DDA. Formerly known as rolling access funds, this is funding that can be obtained to pay for services.

**LRE:** Least Restrictive Environment. One of the six principles that govern IDEA. Schools are required to provide services with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible.

**MR:** Mental Retardation

**NT:** Neurotypical. This term refers to individuals who are not diagnosed with any disorder.

**OT:** Occupational Therapist. In the world of autism, occupational therapists wear many hats. They may be involved with anything from handwriting to play therapy to sensory integration.

**PDD-NOS:** Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Not Otherwise Specified. A diagnosis under DSM IV received by children that may not meet the criteria of Autistic Disorder or Asperger's Disorder

**PECS:** Picture Exchange Card System. This system uses pictures instead of words to help non-verbal children to communicate.

**PT:** Physical Therapist. Many individuals with autism have low muscle tone and/or difficulties with gross motor activities. Physical therapists can address such issues.

**RDI:** Relationship Development Intervention. A relatively new and growing therapeutic approach which places parents and therapists in a "coaching" relationship to their child.

**SI:** Sensory Integration. A form of occupational therapy that supports a child's ability to better manage his own body in space. SI is also thought to help with behavioral and attention issues.

**SLP:** Speech Language Therapist. SLPs working with children with autism are most likely to address "pragmatics" (how to use speech) as opposed to issues such as stuttering.

**TEACCH:** Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children. One of the first educational approaches developed to treat autism.

**TSS:** Therapeutic Staff Support. Otherwise known as "Wraparound," these are paraprofessionals who provide 1:1 support to autistic individuals during times when such support is needed (often when the individual is not in school or at a structured activity).

## Big Names in Autism

Hans Asperger - In 1938 used term in modern sense while studying what is now known as Asperger's syndrome.

Dr. Temple Grandin - an American doctor of animal science and professor at Colorado State University, bestselling author, and consultant to the livestock industry on animal behavior. As a person with high-functioning autism, Grandin is famous among the autism community for her work in autism advocacy and as the inventor of the squeeze machine designed to calm hypersensitive people.

Eugen Bleuler - Swiss psychiatrist in 1910 who coined the word *autismus* (English translation *autism*) as he was defining symptoms of schizophrenia. He derived it from the Greek word *autós* (αὐτός, meaning *self*), and used it to mean morbid self-admiration, referring to "autistic withdrawal of the patient to his fantasies, against which any influence from outside becomes an intolerable disturbance."

Leo Kanner - In 1943 physician at Johns Hopkins who first used term autism in modern sense in English.

Bernard Rimland - Founder, Autism Research Institute

John Elder Robison - author of *Look Me In The Eye*, with ASD

Dr. Andrew Wakefield - Responsible for a now-retracted British study that linked autism to childhood vaccines considered by the medical community to be an "elaborate fraud." This charge is vigorously denied by Wakefield and many believers from the biomedical autism community.

Carol Kranowitz - Carol Kranowitz is the author of [The Out-of-Sync Child](#), the popular book explaining sensory integration dysfunction written for parents. In this book, Carol Kranowitz provides explanations, examples and treatment strategies for different types of sensory integration issues in children - including oversensitivity and undersensitivity to touch, taste, smell, sound, or sight, and/or to movement sensations, unusual activity levels, and problems with motor coordination. Sensory solutions provide great support to many on the spectrum.

# 3. Organization History and Structure

## History

The Howard County Autism Society (formerly, the Autism Society of America-Howard County Chapter) was formally established in 1993. In 2007, the Howard County Autism Society was named the “ASA Chapter of the Year.” It received this honor again in 2019. We are proud of this recognition from our peers and national organization. It is one of five Maryland chapters of the national Autism Society. The other chapters are Northern Chesapeake, Baltimore-Chesapeake, Frederick, and Montgomery.

At its heart, the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS) is an organization created, inspired and powered by loving parents helping their own children as well as others with autism find their place in this world.

The Board originally consisted of a group of parents, brought together in their individual journeys through the world of autism. The main focus of the Board in the early years was to advocate for more intensive educational services in the public schools.

As a direct result of its work, the public school system opened Multiple Intense Needs Classrooms (MINC) where Applied Behavior Analysis was adapted and students received more intensive instruction than ever before. In subsequent years, HCAS advocated for additional classrooms focused on Verbal Behavior Analysis and thus the MINC-Early Learner and MINC-Primary Learner programs were developed and implemented.

Over the years, HCAS also has been instrumental in bringing nationally recognized experts to consult with the public school system. The Society has funded professional development by Paula Kluth, Michele Garcia Winner, Jed Baker, Stephen Shore, Lynn Keogel, Pete Wright, and many others.

In recent years, HCAS has expanded its efforts to focus increasingly on transition and lifespan issues. In 2014 HCAS organized the first annual Transition Symposium to support self advocates and families to address issues related to exiting high school. The Transition Symposium continues to be an important event for us and was held in November of 2019.

Much of the work undertaken by the organization has been and continues to be directed toward raising awareness and educating the general public about the complexities of autism. We believe that once people better understand autism, they are better able to welcome and support people living with autism into the greater community.



In addition to advocating for improved services and promoting awareness of autism, the mission also is to provide overall support to families.

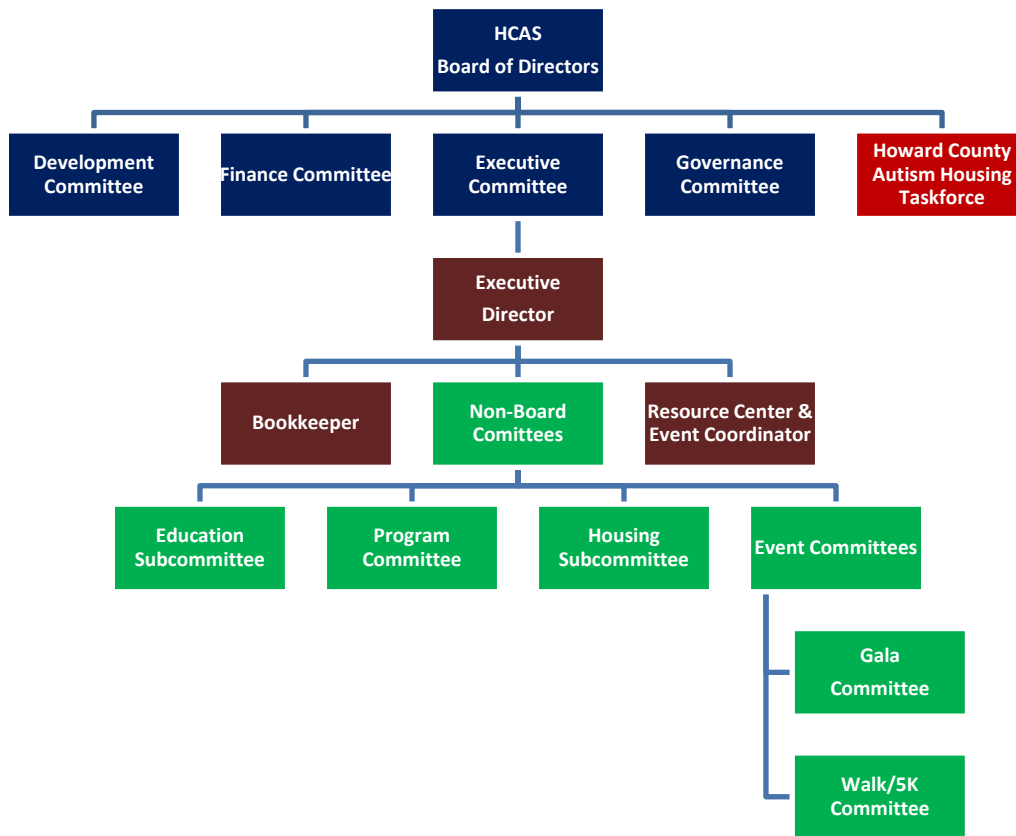
### **Organizational Structure**

The Howard County Autism Society is directed by an active Board of Directors (minimum of nine members; maximum of 25). Until 2011, all directors were parents of children with autism. Since then, HCAS has sought opportunities to expand outreach beyond families affected by autism, while requiring that at least fifty-one percent of the members are self-advocates or immediate family members of someone on the autism spectrum.





In 2004, HCAS hired its first staff member, a part-time Executive Director. The executive director worked from her home, 20-25 hours per week. Within six months, the executive director was moved to office space (the “resource center”) and her hours were increased to full-time.



Currently, the staff consists of a full-time executive director and a part time resource center and event coordinator. In addition, the office also contracts a part-time bookkeeper. All staff members are supervised by the executive director, who in turn is supervised by the president.

In 2016, the HCAS by-laws were updated to differentiate committees fulfilling board versus non-board functions, as outlined below.



## 4. Board Member Profiles and Photos

	<p>Theresa Ballinger - Theresa is a longtime member of HCAS. She is a CPA and MBA and a supervisory accountant at NASA/GSFC. Theresa is the parent of two sons. Trey has autism and currently attends Wilde Lake High School. Theresa brings accounting and auditing expertise to assist the board's finance committee and will also help the public relations committee with autism awareness activities.</p>
	<p>Don Barrick - Having done business in and around Howard County for more than 20 years, Don is well aware of the resources available in the area for the HCAS constituency. He has been involved in Commercial Real Estate and Business Brokerage throughout that time, but his previous experience was in Health Care Management and Marketing. Don is attempting to bring all of that experience together in an effort to contribute in an aggressive manner, for the benefit of HCAS.</p>
	<p>Patrick Boxall - Patrick has been a board member since 2007. He is originally from the United Kingdom, however has lived in the United States since 1985 and Howard County since 1997. He lives in Glenelg with his wife Lisa and their three sons, Matthew, Nicholas and Christopher. His two youngest sons are on the spectrum. Patrick is a VP&amp;COO at KRA Corporation, a workforce development services firm.</p>
	<p>Alisa Kobrinetz Chernack – Alisa lives in Howard County and is a mother of two boys, one who has autism. She currently has a law firm located in Ellicott City, which concentrates in areas relating to the elderly and individuals with disabilities. She sought to serve on the HCAS Board to help families “navigate the maze” as Howard County children age out of the public school system. She has been a member of the HCAS for many years and looks forward to continuing her involvement as a board member.</p>

	<p>Jim Curran - Jim is a Certified Financial Planner who, with his partner, Monty Knittle, has a focus on Special Needs Financial Planning. While he does not have a child with autism, he served as a trustee for a close friend's Special Needs Trust. He is also currently a board member of Make Studio, an art studio for adults and individuals in transition with autism. Jim lives in Lutherville with his wife, Andi. They have three grown children and two grandsons.</p>
	<p>Katie Gandy – coming soon</p>
	<p>Nora Hart - Nora is the mother of a son named Danny who has autism. As a member of the Howard County Autism Society, Nora has become familiar with the organization's mission and her family has enjoyed participating in HCAS events. Her work experience is as a fundraising and development professional for non-profit organizations. During her career, she has worked at a teaching hospital, a think tank, and a historic home. She is currently Development Officer at the Metropolitan Washington Ear. Nora grew up in Montclair, New Jersey.</p>
	<p>Jennifer May - Jennifer was raised in Howard County and now lives in Highland with her husband and two sons. Her older son is on the spectrum. She is a CPA and healthcare consultant. Jennifer enjoys travel, running and hiking, cooking and photography. She likes to attend Orioles, Ravens and UMD basketball games with her family.</p>
	<p>Erik Kristopher Myers – Erik is a filmmaker based out of Baltimore, MD, and an accomplished writer and film theorist. His first feature film, ROULETTE, is an award-winning thriller that was released in 2013. His follow-up, the faux-documentary horror film, is BUTTERFLY KISSES. Following his son's diagnosis in 2014, Myers became actively involved in the autism community. He has mentored filmmakers on the spectrum, guiding them toward realizing their vision for receptive and inspired audiences. He has been a volunteer for HCAS since 2015.</p>



Matthew Plantz – Matt has lived with autism for 36+ years. He is currently living in a home supported by The Arc of Howard County. He has had the pleasure of serving on the Community Advisory Committee for Kennedy Krieger, the Commission on Disabilities of Howard County (serving as Chair for two years), and currently serves on the Board of Directors for People on the Go.



Sabina Sambat - Sabina lives in West Friendship with her husband and 2 boys, the older of which is on the spectrum. Trained at Johns Hopkins where she received her masters degree as a nurse practitioner, Sabina has taken a break from practice to advocate for her son and volunteer at his elementary school on a regular basis. She looks forward to continuing to work with the gala planning committee and further promoting HCAS.



Mia Williams - Mia is the mother of two sons, the oldest of whom is on the spectrum and is in high school. Mia works as an administrator in Howard County Government. She has served on the Parent Panel of Towson University's Autism Education Series, as the Parent Liaison for Special Needs students at her son's school, and is a strong advocate for her son. She became involved with HCAS through its Yoga Classes and Transition Symposium, and served as a volunteer starting in 2017. Mia resides in Baltimore County.



Lisa Wilson – Lisa, a Clinical Dental Hygienist, originally hails from just outside the Boston area. She and her husband Stephen live in Fulton, Maryland and have two children. Their youngest son who is on the spectrum. Lisa is an avid runner and enjoys her career as a clinical dental hygienist at the University of Maryland. Lisa looks forward to increasing the community presence for the organization and creating meaningful opportunities for the youngest of our members.

## 5. Board and Board Member Responsibilities

The Howard County Autism Society (HCAS) Board of Directors:

- Provides strategic direction to the organization, adopts yearly goals on which to focus, and evaluates the completion thereof.
- Approves an annual operating budget and provides fiscal oversight for the implementation of the operating budget.
- Provides strategic oversight and participates in fundraising efforts.
- Ensures that activities and programs are guided by the HCAS mission.
- Enhances the organization's public image by assisting in the clear articulation of its mission through programming, public meetings, advocacy, and public statements.
- Recruits, orients, and develops its members and evaluates the performance of the Board related to the annual goals.
- Via its Officers and Executive and/or Ad Hoc Committees, hires and supervises the organization's Executive Director.

Individual Board members:

- Are members of HCAS in good standing.
- Understand, commit to, and promote the HCAS mission.
- Become familiar with HCAS programs and services.
- Assist in developing strategic plans and annual goals.
- Participate in fund-raising efforts, leading a team at the HCAS One Step Closer Walk/5k and attending the Pieces of the Puzzle Gala
- Generate \$1,500 through personal contributions and/or securing donations for HCAS fundraising efforts.
- Participate in the adoption of the annual HCAS operating budget and in the acceptance of the financial reports to the Board.
- Serve on at least one of the Board of Director's standing committees.
- Attend at least 60 percent of Board meetings (three out of five).
- Participate annually in the evaluation of the HCAS goals, the Board of Directors, and individual performance as a member of the Board.

## 6. Standing and Special Committees

The HCAS Board of Directors has the following standing committees:

- (a) Executive Committee. The Executive Committee includes the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Immediate Past President (ex officio). The Executive Committee serves as the oversight committee that provides overall executive direction and support to HCAS. The Executive Committee advises and assists the President and between meetings of the Board of Directors has the powers of the Board of Directors, except the power to pass bylaws. The Executive Committee works to maintain a solid infrastructure and increase funds, enhancing the HCAS's ability to support a diverse membership and maintain the resources required for effective operation.
- (b) Finance Committee. The Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer and assisted by a bookkeeper, is responsible for matters concerning HCAS finances, including its annual review.
- (c) Governance Committee. The Governance Committee provides for the Board's effectiveness and continuing development. The committee is responsible for assessing the efforts of the Board as a whole, its committees, and individual Board members throughout the year. Additionally, the Governance Committee is responsible for recruiting and recommending a slate of candidates for the Officers and Directors prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- (d) Development Committee. The Development Committee is responsible for overseeing the organization's overall resource development and fundraising initiatives. The Development Committee works with the staff to develop the Society's fundraising plan, as well as policies, plans, procedures and schedules related to fundraising. The Development Committee also works with staff to familiarize members of the Board of Directors with fundraising skills and techniques and oversee the involvement of the Board in fundraising activities.

The Board of Directors has authorized the establishment of the following special committee:

- (a) Howard County Autism Housing Taskforce. This committee, comprised of board members and members of the community, works to expand the availability of affordable, appropriate and replicable housing for adults with ASD in Howard County.

## 7. Non-Board Committees

HCAS has a number of non-board committees that support the day-to-day operation and programming at HCAS as well as supporting special events.

Non-board committees include:

- (a) Program Committee. The Program Committee coordinates efforts to educate individuals with autism, families, educators, support professionals and community members on Autism Spectrum Disorders through information, speakers, support group meetings, workshops, and conferences.
- (b) Education Advocacy Subcommittee. The Education Advocacy Subcommittee works to enhance Howard County Public School System services for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and related disabilities and their families.
- (c) Housing Subcommittee. The Housing Subcommittee is comprised of parents who, several years ago, spearheaded HCAS research into different housing options for adults with autism, which led to the formation of the Housing Taskforce, special committee, and the Patuxent Commons development proposal. The Subcommittee continues to be a sounding board for Housing Taskforce activities.
- (d) Event Committees. Ad Hoc Committees are formed to spearhead major events including the annual gala, 5k/walk, and major conferences.



## 8. HCAS On-Line

Website: [www.howard-autism.org](http://www.howard-autism.org)

The site provides basic information, newsletter and donation links as well as a calendar of upcoming events.

Special Education News Center: [www.specialed.howard-autism.org](http://www.specialed.howard-autism.org).

This new site was launched in 2013, and is intended to provide a warehouse of information in one location related to special education services. The site is supported with funding from the County, FAPE grant.

Patuxent Commons: [ptxcommons.org](http://ptxcommons.org)

Launched in 2019 this website provides information about the proposed housing development sponsored by HCAS, Patuxent Commons.

Facebook and Twitter: HCAS maintains a presence in social networking through both a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Howard-County-Autism-Society/100647563709>) and Twitter.

Email addresses within HCAS:

[board@howard-autism.org](mailto:board@howard-autism.org) – Board members only

[planning@howard-autism.org](mailto:planning@howard-autism.org) – Board members + Executive Director (ED) + bookkeeper + RCEC (Resource Center & Event Coordinator)

[info@howard-autism.org](mailto:info@howard-autism.org) – email available for anyone wishing more information from HCAS or to register for events, monitored by ED & RCEC

## 9. Major Initiatives

Major HCAS initiatives include the following:

**Monthly Support Group Meetings:** In addition to a monthly general support group, the Howard County Autism Society hosts an Asperger's Syndrome support group and a support group for families with transitioning youth and young adults.

### **Social and Fitness Opportunities for Families**

- **Pool Parties:** Twice yearly, in the summer and the winter, HCAS offers a pool party for its membership, closed to the public. One of the most enjoyed social engagements of the year.
- **AMC Sensory Friendly Movies:** Inspired by one of HCAS's own parents, this program provides a special opportunity for families to enjoy recently-released films in a safe and sensory-friendly environment. The auditorium has the lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are free to get up and dance, walk, shout or sing! HCAS maintains a display outside the theatre, and does a small presentation before the movie begins.
- **Fitness First:** Fitness First brings together individuals with autism and their families, at no charge to families, to enjoy various exercise activities and swimming at the Columbia Gym in River Hill or Lifetime Fitness. HCAS pays the rental fee for the gym and provides snacks at the end of each session.
- **Yoga Classes:** Programs are offered periodically to children with autism ages 9 to 18, and their parents, at the Yoga Center of Columbia. This is a grant-funded program.
- **Autism Awareness Dinners and/or Happy Hours:** HCAS arranges a number of autism awareness dinners with area restaurants throughout the year. The fundraisers bring in a modest income, but the effort continues to raise awareness about autism in the community and at the host restaurant, and allows families to gather together at an agreed upon location for an evening of fun. HCAS also organizes "Dads' Night Out" and "Moms' Night Out" events.
- **Great Wolf Lodge:** HCAS organizes an annual family trip to Great Wolf Lodge, usually in February.
- **Sensory Friendly Easter Bunny:** HCAS partners with the Mall in Columbia to provide members and patrons-at-large the opportunity to meet the Easter Bunny ahead of normal mall hours. (In 2019 the Mall ended its collaboration with HCAS for a Sensory-Friendly Santa, as a result of new national partnership between the Mall owner and another national autism organization).

### **Transitioning Youth & Lifespan Issues**

- **Annual Transition Symposium:** Starting in 2014 HCAS has sponsored a day-long conference on issues related to exiting high school to employment, secondary education, and adult services.

- **Patuxent Commons Housing Initiative:** HCAS is spearheading a multi-year effort aimed at identifying suitable housing solution(s) for adults with ASD, advocating for implementation. HCAS identified an intergenerational, supportive housing model called Generations of Hope as a desirable development model and has supported a discovery process to examine the feasibility of developing housing consistent with this model in Howard County. The Board of Directors authorized the establishment of the Howard County Autism Housing Taskforce as a Special Committee to spearhead this initiative.
- **Howard County Transition Outreach Partnership:** HCAS collaborates with Howard County Government, HCPSS, and Accessible Resources for Independence, Inc. to coordinate and support training and development related to transition. Starting in 2016, the HCTOP has co-sponsored the Transition Symposium with HCAS.

### **Advocacy and Promoting Awareness**

- **Autism Awareness Month:** In April HCAS plans a month of events that reach out to the community in a number of ways to raise awareness about autism, as well as a project that will influence community understanding in some positive way.
- **Education Advocacy:** HCAS has a partnership with HCPSS and is actively engaged with the Department of Special Education and school-based programs. HCAS has helped spearhead numerous workgroups over the years, resulting in expanded programming for students with autism.
- **Family Advocacy and Parent Education (FAPE) Program:** Funded by the Howard County Department of Citizen Services, FAPE supports one-on-one information and advocacy on special education issues; one-on-one assistance with special education law and how it applies to individual circumstances; workshops and seminars on special education topics; and management of the special education news website.
- **Training.** HCAS conducts autism training of county police, firefighters, and first responders, and will deliver “Autism 101” information sessions at Howard County Hospital, libraries, restaurants, and other businesses.
- **Perspectives Newsletter:** HCAS on-line newsletter detailing HCAS activities, issues of interest or newsworthy announcements for Howard County families dealing with autism. Sent to membership, HCPSS and Howard County government select staff, and select local service providers.
- **Legislative Affairs:** HCAS participates on, and supports the activities of, the Arc of Howard County Legislative Affairs Committee. HCAS co-sponsors and annual legislative breakfast featuring local and state elected officials in December, writes letters of support for legislation (as applicable), and encourages members to participate in the advocacy with the General Assembly.

## 10. Major Events

HCAS has two major fundraising events each year:

- The Pieces of the Puzzle Gala in the spring raises money through the auction of silent/live donated items, as well as ticket sales for a dinner and entertainment.
- The One Step Closer 5K Run/Walk in the fall is a run/walk where teams raise money individually. After the run/walk all participants are invited to an area of fun family activities and booths set up by sponsors/supporters.

These two key fundraising efforts support the Resource Center operations and staff positions -- Executive Director, Resource Manager & Event Coordinator, and consultants.

## **11. Budget**

The Howard County Autism Society operates with an annual budget of approximately \$250,000. This makes us one of the largest Autism Society of America chapters in terms of operating income nationwide. The majority of our income is generated from two major fundraisers; our springtime Gala, and our fall walk/5K. Other sources include general donations and grants, most significantly a Community Service Partnership grant from the Howard County of Department of Citizen Services, which supports the Family Advocacy and Parent Education (FAPE) program.

We operate on a balanced annual budget, and currently maintain a reserve of approximately \$250,000 to ensure financial stability. We utilize our annual income to employ both full time and part time staff to spearhead the execution of our mission and goals. In addition to staff, our primary expenses include the leasing of the resource center and the support of our many programs that serve the autism community.

# 12. BYLAWS

## BYLAWS OF THE HOWARD COUNTY AUTISM SOCIETY

Established 1993

Amended June 15<sup>th</sup> 1997

Amended May 21<sup>st</sup> 2006

Amended September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Amended January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010

Amended January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Amended January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Amended August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Amended September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

### ARTICLE I—Purpose

The Howard County Autism Society (hereinafter referred to as the “Society”) serves individuals on the autism spectrum, their families, and their communities by providing information, support, and advocacy; by promoting awareness of autism that values the dignity and uniqueness of each individual; and by working to improve the quality and access to services and to educational opportunities.

The Howard County Autism Society fulfills its mission by following these guiding principles.

The Howard County Autism Society:

- a) notes that when provided the opportunity, all individuals on the autism spectrum have a contribution to make to their family, to their community, and to society at large. Therefore, the Society supports meaningful participation and self-determination in all aspects of life for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families;
- b) supports individuals on the autism spectrum to find their own voice through self-advocacy;

- c) informs individuals and families affected by autism as well as professionals and local service providers by seeking out opportunities to educate all in best practices in support and treatment;
- d) promotes better awareness, understanding and acceptance of individuals on the autism spectrum; it provides information and resources to the autism community, educational and government agencies including the county school system, and to the public at large in a manner that is most effective with each target audience;
- e) advocates for public policy and funding that protects the rights of individuals with autism, and expands educational, vocational, therapeutic, recreational, social, and residential options as well as research opportunities and medical knowledge;
- f) promotes collaborative relationships between individuals on the autism spectrum and their families, and their service providers;
- g) encourages cooperation between schools, agencies, organizations, and other professionals involved in the lives of people within the autism spectrum.

## **ARTICLE II—Membership**

### Section 1. Eligibility

Any person who subscribes to the purposes and principles of the Society shall be eligible for membership.

### Section 2. Admission to Membership

Any eligible person who meets the requirements of membership, namely subscribing to the principles and purpose of the organization and paying annual local membership dues, shall be admitted to membership in the Society.

### Section 3. Dues Payment

Membership is to be renewed on an annual basis. Membership in the national organization can be done separately through national correspondence, and is not discussed in these bylaws.

### Section 4. Revocation of Membership

For just cause, revocation of membership shall be enacted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall within two days thereafter, serve upon such member written notice of the proposed action and the reasons therefore. Written notice may be done by electronic mail. The member may present a written response to the Secretary within fourteen days after the receipt of the notice of proposed removal. After consideration of the written response, a final determination will be made by the Board of Directors by a majority vote. The removed member shall have the right to have his or her full statement appended to the minutes of the meeting of the Board at which revocation was enacted. A revoked member may be reinstated by a majority vote of the Board of Directors after receipt of a written request from the revoked member which contains additional information.

## **ARTICLE III—Meetings**

### Section 1. Meeting Types

There shall be meetings designated as Meetings of Members whose purpose is carrying out the society's mission. There shall be meetings of the Board of Directors and Business Meetings, including Annual General Meetings and Special Meetings, to carry out the business of the Society.

### Section 2. Meetings of Members

Meetings of the members shall be held at least ten months out of every year at a location that is at the discretion of the Board.

### Section 3. Meetings of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall meet at least quarterly each year, and at other times as mutually agreed.

### Section 4. Annual General Meeting

An annual general meeting of the Members shall be held no later than December 31 of each year at a time and location within Howard County determined by the Board of Directors. The President, or his or her appointee, shall make a report to the membership, a financial report shall be available for inspection and discussion, and election of officers and board members shall take place. Members may call for items to be placed on the agenda by notifying the President or Secretary at least two weeks before the meeting. Other items may be taken up from the floor after advance agenda items have been addressed.

### Section 5. Special Membership Meetings

Special Meetings of the members may be called by the President or Board of Directors. The purpose of such meetings will be to conduct business of the Society that the Board deems to require approval by the membership at large.

### Section 6. Voting and Quorum at Business Meetings

A quorum for Business Meetings shall consist of ten Members or one fourth of all Members, whichever is less. Each individual membership holds one vote. All voting at Business Meetings shall be in person.

### Section 7. Authority

Except where inconsistent with these bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of the Meeting of the Board of Directors and Business Meetings as defined in Section 1.

### Section 8. Notice of Meetings



Notice of Annual General and Special Meetings shall be provided to the Members by the Secretary or designate not less than 14 days or more than 90 days prior to the meeting. Notice may be made by electronic mail, the Society website, or U.S. Mail.

## **ARTICLE IV—Directors**

### Section 1. Composition

There shall be a Board of Directors (referred to as the “Board”) that shall consist of a minimum of nine (9) and shall comprise the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Directors, referred to also as Board Members. There shall be a maximum of twenty-five (25) members of the Board of Directors and the number of Board Members shall always be odd. The Board shall be comprised of at least fifty-one percent (51%) of members who are self-advocates or immediate family members of someone on the autism spectrum (caregivers, parents, siblings, or grandparents). In order for an individual to be considered for a position on the Board, he or she must be a member in good standing, and must submit a written letter of intent to the Governance Committee stating a desire to serve as a Board member, and an affirmation of the Society’s purpose and principles as outlined in Article I. The Governance Committee shall be responsible for recommending new candidates to the Board. An election of Officers and Directors shall be held at the Annual General meeting to be held no later than December 31 of each year. The Board shall have discretion at any time to vote to add officers or directors subject to the limits above.

### Section 2. Term

Each Director shall hold office for an initial term of two years, effective January 1 the year following election at the Annual General Meeting. No person shall serve more than four consecutive full terms of the Board. Except upon approval by the Board, a Director may extend their term for one year to serve as Immediate Past President. After serving the maximum time allowed, a person may again serve after being off the Board for one year.

### Section 3. Removal

The Society requires that each Board member takes an active role promoting the Society’s purpose and principles, and supporting the successful operation and continuation of the Society. A board member must be a member in good standing of the Society throughout their time serving on the Board. Each Board member must attend a minimum of sixty percent (60%) of the Board meetings. Additionally, each Board member must either take an Executive Officer position or serve on one of the standing committees. Each Board member must subscribe to the Conflict of Interest Policy (which is attached to these bylaws) and complete the paperwork required by that policy. If these duties are not fulfilled, a Board member may be removed by a majority vote of the Board.

### Section 4. Powers

The Board shall be the governing body of the Society. The Board shall have the lawful powers to carry out the purposes of and to conduct the business of the Society.

#### Section 5. Vacancy

In the event that an elected Officer or Director resigns, is removed, or is unable to complete his or her term, the President shall have the authority to select an individual to serve the remainder of that term.

#### Section 6. Voting

A quorum of the Board of Directors consists of a majority of the number of directors in office immediately before the meeting begins. The act of the majority present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors. For urgent Board matters, votes may be taken via email at the discretion of the President. The President must submit the vote to the Board for consideration and voting. A motion will be passed by the affirmative vote of a simple majority of the quorum.

### **ARTICLE V—Officers**

#### Section 1. Term

All Executive Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) shall serve for a term of one year beginning on January 1st, and shall be limited to serving three terms consecutively in the same position.

#### Section 2. President

The President of the Society shall be elected by a vote of the membership and shall serve for a term of one year. There may be two persons elected to share this position, each as Co-President, if the Governance Committee so submits names for election. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Membership and the Board. The President shall have general responsibility for the activities of the Society. The President may be a member of all committees and shall exercise general supervision over their work in order to ensure effective operation of the Society. On behalf of the Board, the President shall supervise the Executive Director and his/her work and activities undertaken on behalf of the Society. The President will work with the Board to identify funding sources and pursue grants.

#### Section 3. Vice-President

The Vice-President shall assist the President in the performance of his/her duties and shall assume such other duties as are assigned by the President and approved by the Board. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall assume the duties of the President, and shall preside at meetings of the Members and the Board. In the event the President shall be unable to serve, the Vice-

President shall succeed to the office of President for the remainder of the President's term. The Vice-President shall be responsible for overseeing and coordinating the efforts of the standing committee chairpersons.

#### Section 4. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all Meetings of the Board of Directors and Business Meetings. The Secretary shall be custodian of the books and records of the Society except those specifically assigned to others. The Secretary shall ensure that notification is sent to the membership of all Business Meetings. The Secretary shall provide for a registration log at each Meeting.

#### Section 5. Treasurer

The Treasurer, under the supervision of the President, shall have the oversight of the receipt and deposit in the name of the Howard County Autism Society of all revenues received by the Society, the disbursement of funds, and the monthly expenditures of the Society. Two members of the same household may not have signing authority. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial records of the Society and will prepare the annual budget with the input of the President and Executive Director. For expenditures over one thousand dollars (\$1000), checks must be co-signed by two members with signing authority. The Treasurer shall be the Chair of the Finance Committee.

#### Section 6. Immediate Past President

The term "Immediate Past President" is applied to the person or persons who just completed their terms of office as President. This title is retained until the next President completes his or her term of office. The Immediate Past President guides and supports the Officers of the Society. The primary responsibilities of this role involve serving as a resource for new officers and ensuring continuity with past terms. The Immediate Past President serves as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee.

### **ARTICLE VI—Committees**

#### Section 1. Standing Committees

The Standing Committees of the Society shall be:

- (a) Executive Committee

(b) Finance Committee

(c) Governance Committee

(d) Development Committee

and such other committees as the Board may determine. Committees not serving Board functions may be formed by the staff or Board as appropriate to meet and enhance the mission of the Society, but are not covered in these bylaws.

## Section 2. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall include the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Immediate Past President (ex officio). The Executive Committee serves as the oversight committee that provides overall executive direction and support to the Society. The Executive Committee advises and assists the President and between meetings of the Board of Directors has the powers of the Board of Directors, except the power to pass bylaws. Decisions of the Executive Committee made between Board Meetings must be ratified by the full Board of Directors at the next following Board Meeting. The Executive Committee works to maintain a solid infrastructure and increase funds, enhancing the Society's ability to support a diverse membership and maintain the resources required for effective operation.

## Section 3. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer and assisted by staff (i.e. Bookkeeper), shall be responsible for matters concerning the finances of the Society, including its annual review.

## Section 4. Governance Committee

The Governance Committee shall provide for the Board's effectiveness and continuing development. The committee shall be responsible for assessing the efforts of the Board as a whole, its committees, and the individual Board member throughout the year. Additionally, the Governance Committee is responsible for recruiting and recommending a slate of candidates for the Officers and Directors prior to the Annual General Meeting. As such, the committee shall be composed of at least three Board members, none of whom are currently standing for Executive Office. In the event that three such Board members do not exist, the Board shall appoint Members of the Society to fill vacancies on the Board Governance Committee. Other Members of the Society may be included on the committee at the discretion of the committee chair.

## Section 5. Development Committee

The Development Committee is responsible for overseeing the organization's overall resource development and fundraising initiatives. The Development Committee works with the staff to develop the Society's fundraising plan, as well as policies, plans, procedures and schedules related to

fundraising. The Development Committee shall also work with staff to familiarize directors with fundraising skills and techniques and oversee the involvement of the Board in fundraising activities.

#### Section 6. Special Committees

The President may from time to time appoint special committees whose duties and assignments shall be fully outlined.

#### Section 7. Committee Chairs

The President, with the advice of the Board, shall appoint the Chairpersons of the Standing and Special Committees who shall be responsible for coordinating and overseeing the responsibilities of that Committee, and for keeping the President and Vice President advised on the activities of the committee. The Chairperson of each committee shall advise the Board of Directors at each scheduled meeting of the Board, and the membership a minimum of once yearly, as requested, on the activities and progress made by the committee. The Chairpersons of the Standing Committees are required to be current Board members.

### **ARTICLE VII—Administration**

#### Section 1. Appointment of Employees

The Board of Directors, bearing in mind the activities and the financial resources of the Society and whenever in their judgment such action is desirable to promote the achievement of the purposes of the Society as set forth in these bylaws, may authorize appointment or employment of persons to carry out designated duties for the Society on a compensated basis.

#### Section 2. Supervision of Employees

All employees and contractors shall serve under the direction of the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall hire all compensated staff and contractors, conditioned on the approval of the Board of Directors. The Executive Director shall be supervised by the President, or designee, in all work and activities undertaken on behalf of the organization. The Executive Director shall report to the Board of Directors at each scheduled Board meeting. The Executive Director serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. Any personnel action, including the hiring and termination of the Executive Director, must be undertaken by the Board of Directors by a majority vote.

#### Section 3. Employee Duties

The staff will perform duties and responsibilities as outlined in position descriptions and assigned by the committees, with the approval of the President.

#### Section 4. Conflict of Interest Policy

All members of the Board of Directors, and all compensated staff members shall sign and submit a copy of the organization's Conflict of Interest Policy on an annual basis.

#### Section 5. Compensation of Officers and Board of Director Members

Officers and members of the Board of Directors shall not receive any salary or other compensation for their services in said capacities. An Officer or member of the Board of Directors may, however, receive reimbursement for travel or other expenses incurred in said capacities, if such compensation is approved by the Board.

#### Section 6. Acts of the Chapter

Excluding the office staff, no person shall act in the name of the Society except as authorized in these bylaws or by the Board of Directors, the President, or vote of the Members. No person shall, without the approval of the President or the Board of Directors, send any letter, notice, or other written communication in the name of the Society to the Members or to any other person including an association, government agency, or public official regarding policy matters of the Society.

#### Section 7. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Society shall commence the first day of January of each year and end on the thirty-first day of December of the same year.

#### Section 8. Other Organizations

The Society may become an affiliate of any other organization deemed advantageous to the fulfillment of its mission and objectives.

#### Section 9. Bank Account

The Society shall maintain a bank account.

#### Section 10. Financial Report

The Society shall prepare an annual financial report.

#### Section 11. Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the Society by the surrender or forfeiture of the charter or otherwise, no distribution of assets is to be made to any Member. All property owned, managed or operated by the Society will be dispersed at the discretion of the Board of Directors to another nonprofit organization(s) that the Board deems to serve the purpose and mission of the Society as outlined in Article 1 of these bylaws.

**ARTICLE VIII—Amendments**

Section 1. Requirements

A proposal to alter, amend, repeal or adopt bylaws or provisions to the bylaws may be made by the Board through a majority vote.

Adopted by the Board of Directors

President \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

# 13. Conflict of Interest Policy

## I. PURPOSE

The purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS) and to enable our members and supporters to have trust and confidence in the reputation of our staff, Board members, volunteers and organization, by safeguarding against actual, potential, perceived or implied conflicts of interests.

## II. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DEFINED

A conflict of interest is defined as an actual or perceived interest by an interested party – defined as a staff member, Board member, or a non-Board volunteer with certain responsibilities – in an action that results in, or has the appearance of resulting in, personal, organizational, or professional gain. Such conflict of interest shall hereinafter be referred to throughout this policy solely as “conflict of interest.” Non-Board volunteers covered by this policy are those who have the authority to make purchases for HCAS, or contractual or financial commitments for HCAS.

### A. Financial Interests

A conflict exists where an interested party directly or indirectly benefits or profits as a result of a decision or transaction entered into by the HCAS.

### B. Other Interests

A conflict exists where an interested party obtains a non-financial benefit or advantage he/she would not have obtained absent his/her relationship with the HCAS, or where his/her duty or responsibility owed to the HCAS conflicts with a duty or responsibility owed to some other organization.

### C. Examples

1. The following examples do constitute a conflict of interest, and are prohibited under this policy and subject to sections III and IV, but not subject to section V:
  - a. Serving as both a Board member and an employee/staff member at the same time.
  - b. The hiring of a relative (defined as a child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or sibling) by an interested party.



- c. An interested party seeking to make use of confidential information obtained from the HCAS for his/her own benefit, or for the benefit of a relative, close associate, or other organization.
- 2. The following examples might constitute a conflict of interest, and are subject to disclosure under Section III, and to strict scrutiny by the Board, and subject to Sections IV and V. Strict scrutiny is defined as a heightened standard of review to determine the appropriateness of the action or relationship in question.
  - a. A contractual relationship between the HCAS and an interested party, including his/her business, company, or non-profit entity, for financial benefit of the interested party.
  - b. An interested party being involved in any activity that would lead to the diversion from HCAS of a business opportunity, for purposes of personal benefit, whether direct or indirect.
- 3. The following examples may constitute a conflict of interest, and are subject to disclosure under Section III and consideration under the provisions of Section IV and V:
  - a. The hiring of a close associate by an interested party.
  - b. An interested party accepting a gift, gratuity or favor having a value of \$100.00 or more, from a person or entity that does business, or seeks to do business, with the HCAS.
  - c. An interested party, or a relative or close associate of an interested party, being provided use of the facilities, property, or services of the HCAS gratis.
  - d. An interested party seeking to grant or obtain preferential treatment by the HCAS for himself/herself, a relative, or close associate.

### **III. DISCLOSURE OF ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

An interested party is under a continuing obligation to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest as soon as it is known, or reasonably should be known.

An interested party shall complete a questionnaire (see below), to fully and completely disclose the material facts about any actual or potential conflicts of interest. The disclosure statement shall be completed upon his/her association with the Howard County Autism Society, and shall be updated annually thereafter. An additional disclosure statement shall be filed at such time as an actual or potential conflict arises.

Board Members shall provide disclosure statements to the Board President(s). The President(s) shall provide disclosure statements to the Board Secretary. Copies shall also be provided to the Executive Director of the HCAS.

Staff and volunteers who have the authority to make purchases or commitments for HCAS shall submit a disclosure statement to the Executive Director. The Executive Director's disclosure statement shall be provided to the President(s) of the Board.

#### **IV. DETERMINATION OF EXISTENCE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Whenever there is reason to believe that a conflict of interest, as defined above, exists and involves a staff member other than the Executive Director, or a non-Board volunteer covered by this policy, the Executive Director shall be responsible for review of the matter and shall take such appropriate action as is necessary to insure that this conflict of interest policy is enforced and the interests of the Howard County Autism Society are protected. If so desired, the Executive Director may seek the guidance of the Board of Directors. In any case, the Executive Director shall report to the Board whether or not a conflict exists and the nature of the action that the Executive Director has taken.

Whenever there is reason to believe that a conflict of interest, as defined above, exists and involves a Board member or the Executive Director, the Board of Directors shall be responsible for the review of this matter and shall determine what action shall be taken. The Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors where such conflict of interest is discussed shall clearly reflect the reasons for any action taken by the Board of Directors.

#### **V. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Whenever a conflict of interest, as defined above, exists with respect to a matter which is a pending action or transaction, the Executive Director, or Board of Directors, as is appropriate, shall refrain from taking any action regarding the transaction at issue, until there has been a determination of whether or not a conflict of interest exists. If a conflict of interest is determined to exist, the transaction must be addressed by the disinterested members of the Board of Directors. More specifically, the following procedures apply:

1. An interested party who has a conflict of interest with respect to a pending matter, shall not participate in any way in, or be present during the deliberations and decision making of the HCAS, with respect to such pending matter. The interested party may, upon request, be available to answer questions or provide material factual information about the pending matter.
2. The disinterested members of the Board of Directors may approve the proposed action upon finding that it is in the best interest of the HCAS. The Board shall consider whether the terms of the proposed transaction are fair and reasonable to the HCAS and whether it would be possible, with reasonable effort, to find an arrangement which is at least equally advantageous with a party or entity which is not an interested party. The disinterested members of the Board shall further determine if there is a need to require any further action to protect the HCAS in the course of the transaction.
3. If the case in question requires Strict Scrutiny, the following determinations shall additionally be made:

- a. Whether the person involved is a staff member, a Board member, or a non-Board volunteer with the authority to make purchases or contractual or financial commitments for the HCAS and, thus, an interested party,

AND any of the following circumstances occur, or may occur:

- b. Whether a contract in fact exists, or is proposed, between HCAS and the interested party or a business, company or non-profit entity in which the interested party is an officer or a principal figure.
- c. Whether the interested party will derive any financial benefit whatsoever from the established contract or a proposed contract.
- d. Whether an interested party is in fact involved in an activity that would lead to a diversion from HCAS of a business opportunity or a service opportunity.

If it is determined that a conflict exists and is not in the best interest of the HCAS, the Board shall discuss and determine the efficacy of finding an alternative arrangement. The conflicted interested party shall decide whether to resolve the conflict by stepping down from the board for the duration of the contract or not contracting with HCAS.

4. In all of the above cases, the decision of the disinterested members of the Board of Directors shall be by confidential vote. For a decision to be approved, two-thirds of the Members of the Board in attendance must vote in its favor. The quorum required to take a valid vote as stipulated in the bylaws must be present. An interested party shall not be counted for purposes of determining whether a quorum is present, nor for purposes of determining what constitutes a majority vote.

If the disinterested members of the Board determine that a conflict of interest does, in fact, exist, the procedures described for addressing conflicts of interest apply. The Minutes of the meeting shall reflect that the conflict disclosure was made, the vote taken, and where applicable, the abstention from participation and voting by the interested party.

## **VI. VIOLATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

If the Board of Directors has reason to believe that an interested party has failed to disclose an actual or potential conflict of interest, it shall inform the person of the basis for such belief and afford the person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the response of the interested party and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the Board determines that the interested party has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, the Board shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action by majority vote of disinterested members.

**ANNUAL AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE and DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

I have received and carefully read the Conflict of Interest Policy for Board Members, staff and volunteers of the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS), and have considered not only the literal expression of the policy, but also its intent. By signing this affirmation of compliance, I hereby affirm that I understand and agree to comply with the Conflict of Interest Policy. I further understand that HCAS is a charitable organization and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities that accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Except as otherwise indicated in the Disclosure Statement and attachments, if any, below, I hereby state that I do not, to the best of my knowledge, have any conflict of interest that may be seen as competing with the interests of HCAS, nor does any relative or close associate have such an actual or potential conflict of interest.

If any situation should arise in the future which I think may involve me in a conflict of interest, I will promptly and fully disclose the circumstances to the President of the Board of Directors of HCAS, or to the Executive Director, as applicable. I further certify that the information set forth in the Disclosure Statement and attachments, if any, is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Disclosure Statement (to be completed by all interested parties)**

Please complete the questionnaire, below, indicating any actual or potential conflicts of interest. If you answer “yes” to any of the questions, please provide a written description of the details of the specific action or transaction. Attach additional sheets as needed.

Financial Interests

Please indicate, during the past 12 months:

Has HCAS contracted to purchase or lease goods, services, or property from you, or from any of your relatives or close associates?

*If yes, please describe:*

Has HCAS offered employment to you, or to any of your relatives or close associates, other than a person who was already employed by HCAS?

*If yes, please describe:*

Have you, or have any of your relatives or close associates, been provided with a gift, gratuity or favor, having a value of \$100 or more, from a person or entity which does business, or seeks to do business, with HCAS?

*If yes, please describe:*

Have you, or any of your relatives or close associates, been provided free use of the facilities, property, or services of HCAS?

*If yes, please describe:*

### Other Interests

Please indicate if at anytime during the past twelve months:

Did you obtain preferential treatment by HCAS for yourself, or for any of your relatives or close associates?

*If yes, please describe:*

Did you make use of confidential information obtained from HCAS for your own benefit, or for the benefit of a relative, close associate, or other organization?

*If yes, please describe:*

Did you take advantage of an opportunity, or enable a relative, close associate or other organization to take advantage of an opportunity, which you had reason to believe would be of interest to HCAS?

*If yes, please describe:*

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 14. E-mail Policy

The Howard County Autism Society maintains an e-mail, voice-mail, and telephone system, computers, internet access, and other business equipment (collectively called the Systems) for the purpose of conducting the business of the Howard County Autism Society. The devices and the data stored on these Systems, as well as the specialized software programs and systems developed for the Howard County Autism Society use, are the sole property of the Howard County Autism Society and must be protected appropriately.

In general, access to any Systems component is restricted to authorized users. An authorized user is someone, who in the sole opinion of the Howard County Autism Society, requires access in order to support business activities. You may not use an unauthorized access code or password, access files that you have no right to access, or disseminate confidential information that is derived from electronic or other sources, including stored communications. All passwords must be kept strictly confidential. You may not use a password that is unknown to the Howard County Autism Society nor may you share your password with any individual or entity not employed by the Howard County Autism Society. The existence of a password does not mean that any messages you send using a password will be confidential. The Howard County Autism Society may monitor use of the Systems on a random or other basis to see that the Systems are being used for proper purposes.

You may not use any of these Systems for non-job related solicitations, organizational campaigns, political or religious causes, or other non-business purposes during working time. The Systems may not be used to transmit, retrieve or store any communications of a defamatory, discriminatory or harassing nature, or materials that are abusive, profane or offensive, obscene or x-rated, including, but not limited to, messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, disability, religion, national origin, physical attributes, or sexual preference. Harassment of any kind is absolutely prohibited.

The Systems may not be used for any purpose which is illegal, against Howard County Autism Society policy, or contrary to the Howard County Autism Society best interest. The e-mail system may be used for personal communications only during non-working time, and only provided that such use does not place an excessive or unreasonable burden on the System or its users.

The Howard County Autism Society reserves the right to retrieve and read any messages sent or received via its communications systems. All messages created, sent, or retrieved over the Systems and any information of any type in any Systems component, including but not limited to, all information stored on personal computers, diskettes, and voice mail, are the property of Howard County Autism Society and may be saved, accessed, and reviewed by the Howard County Autism Society. You cannot consider any message sent, received, or stored via these systems as your private

property. The Howard County Autism Society reserves the right to monitor, or download and read any electronic or telephone communication sent, received, or stored during the ordinary course of business. You are not permitted to read e-mail messages that are not sent to you unless you have obtained permission to do so from both your supervisor and the supervisor of the intended e-mail recipient.

You shall not transmit over the Systems any copyrighted materials belonging to any individual or entity other than the Howard County Autism Society. When obtaining access to another organization's or individual's materials, you must respect all copyrights and may not copy, retrieve, modify or forward copyright materials, except with permission of the holder of the copyright, or as a single copy to reference only. You may not violate any software licenses, including, but not limited to, by making illegal copies of software. All software licenses, manuals and documentation must be available for inspection in the event of a software inventory or audit. Failure to observe copyright or license agreements may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The employee may not download or install any software or other programs without the Executive Director's approval.

If, at any time, a Board member believes they need a [howard-autism.org](mailto:howard-autism.org) email address, they should approach the President with their request.

## 15. Code of Conduct

I agree to adhere to the following Code of Conduct for the Board of Directors of the Howard County Autism Society.

It is my responsibility to:

1. Read all materials given to me by the HCAS board members.
2. Return phone calls/emails in a timely manner.
3. Come to meetings of the full board or committees on time and fully prepared.
4. Honor the diversity of the Board and membership of the HCAS.
5. Listen and speak respectfully to other members.
6. Honor the role of the board in governance and oversight.
7. Speak up and participate with questions, concerns and insights as they arise in board and committee discussions.
8. Volunteer for assignments, complete assignments on time, but inform the appropriate committee chair or officer if unable to complete an assignment.
9. Honor the decision making process of the board and the rule of majority, endeavoring to keep disagreements and controversies impersonal and to promote unity.
10. Maintain a positive presentation of the HCAS to the public through words and actions.
11. Maintain confidentiality about HCAS's donor base, membership, discussions about financial decisions, discussions about nominees to the board and to officer positions, and other items deemed confidential during the course of HCAS business.
12. Direct any and all questions or concerns about board business to the board President.
13. Criticize, when necessary, in a constructive way.
14. Approach my responsibilities in the spirit of a trustee ensuring the organization is well maintained, financially secure, growing and always operating in the best interests of those we serve, our contributors, members and the public at large.
15. Represent the interests of all people served by the HCAS and not favor special interests inside or outside the organization.
16. Not use my service on the board for my own personal advantage or for the advantage of my friends or associates.
17. Respect and support the final, majority decisions of the board.
18. Approach issues with an open mind, prepared to make the best decisions for everyone involved.
19. Focus my efforts on the mission of the organization and not my personal goals.



20. Never exercise authority as a board member (except in an internal meeting) or represent myself as speaking for the board or the organization unless expressly authorized to do so.

In being entrusted by my fellow board members to carry out the above agreement to the best of my abilities, I will voluntarily resign from the board, or understand that I may be removed from the board, if I fail to act in good faith on any part of the above agreement.

---

Name

---

Date

---

Signature

# 16. Board Commitment Form

## 2017 Board Participation in HCAS Events:

I will commit to leading a team for HCAS' One Step Closer Walk and attending the Gala Pieces of the Puzzle Gala.

## Board Member Financial Contribution:

I pledge to generate \$1,500 or more combined through my personal contribution as well as soliciting donations to HCAS through our fundraising events.

## Board Committee Service:

I commit to serving as a member of the following committee(s) (Please circle all that apply):

Development          Governance          Finance

I am interested in serving as the Chair of the following committee(s) (Please circle all that apply):

Development          Governance          Finance

## Agreement:

I hereby agree to the aforementioned responsibilities and will fulfill this pledge in the coming year.

Board Member Signature:

Date:

Executive Director Signature:

Date:

Board Chair Signature:

Date:

## 17. Staff and Contractor Profiles

### **Melissa Rosenberg, Executive Director (F/T Staff)**

Melissa joined HCAS in 2016 with over 15 years of experience in nonprofit management. She spent 10 years with the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts in Howard County, developing a Theater Outreach Program that served Baltimore City Public School students and individuals of differing abilities in Central Maryland. Following that, she worked with Joe's Movement Emporium, a performing and community arts center in Prince George's County, to build a solid development program. Prior to joining the HCAS staff, she ran a consulting business that provided an array of affordable services for growing businesses and nonprofits. Melissa received an undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of Maryland and a master's degree in Nonprofit Management from the University of Maryland University College. She serves on the Boards of the Association of Community Services, Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts, and Local Children's Board of Howard County and is a 2013 graduate of Leadership Howard County. She and her husband, Jim, have two grown children and a nephew with ASD.

### **Susanne Mason, Resource Manager and Event Coordinator (P/T Staff)**

Susanne joined the HCAS staff in June 2019 and ensures the smooth operation of HCAS' day-to-day activities including volunteer coordination, fundraising and program management, information and referral, event support and member services. Previously Susanne worked with organizations affiliated with the Oakland Mills Interfaith Center, serving on the marketing teams for The Meeting House, The Meeting House Gallery, and Columbia United Christian Church, developing websites and designing promotional materials. Prior to her non-profit endeavors, Susanne had the privilege of conducting neurophysiology research at the University of Maryland Baltimore and serving as adjunct faculty in the Health Sciences division at Howard Community College. Susanne has been a Columbia resident for more than 25 years by way of Australia and Michigan. She lives with her husband, her teen son who is on the autism spectrum, and a precocious teen goldendoodle.

### **Elizabeth (Beth) Benevides, Special Education Consultant (Contractor)**

Beth is a longtime policy and educational advocate for individuals and families affected by autism and related disabilities. She serves as a consultant for HCAS, providing 1:1 special education consultation to parents of children with any disability in Howard County as part of our annual Community Service Partnership (CSP) Grant through the Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services. She is a Past President of HCAS and is Associate Director of Autism Programs at the Hussman Foundation. Beth serves on a number of statewide workgroups devoted to programs, education, civil rights and policy affecting those with autism. She is an advisory member of the Maryland Center for

Developmental Disabilities at Kennedy Krieger Institute, an appointed member of the Maryland Department of Disabilities Ethan Saylor Alliance for Self-Advocates steering committee; and co-chair of the commission for Transitioning Students with Disabilities in Howard county. She is a certified special education advocate and member of the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) Beth is mom to a 21-year-old son with autism.

**Dana Riley, Bookkeeper (Contractor)**

Dana provides general bookkeeping services for HCAS that include everything from payroll, financial reports and budget preparation, to coordinating the tax preparation and financial reviews.

**Sara Sommerville, Special Education News Center Coordinator (Contractor)**

Sara manages and oversees the HCAS Special Education News Center Website as part of our annual Community Service Partnership (CSP) Grant through the Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services. She coordinates and posts articles on the site in partnership with HCAS and HCPSS Department of Special Education. Sara lives in Howard County and is the parent of a teenage son with ASD.

**Michael Stromberg, Family Navigator (Contractor)**

Michael provides support for HCAS families most in need and helps to “navigate” them to appropriate services – food, shelter, utilities, medical assistance and more-- as part of our annual Community Service Partnership (CSP) Grant through the Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services.

He is a clinical social worker currently working for Kennedy Krieger at Central High School, a high school program for students with autism in Prince George's County. Michael has over 10 years of experience working and volunteering in various capacities with children and young adults with autism as well as their families. Michael received his undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland in 2007 and has dual masters degrees from the University of Maryland School of Social Work and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in 2014. Raised in Columbia, he currently lives in Silver Spring with his wife and two daughters. He has a family member with autism.

# 18. Executive Director Job Description

## POSITION SUMMARY

In this role the employee will provide innovative, entrepreneurial and visionary leadership in carrying on the work of the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS). The employee will be the voice and face of the organization and will guide the organizational systems and processes to ensure that HCAS remains a leader in promoting awareness of autism, advocating for improved services in the community, and supporting families. This employee will oversee all fundraising, grant writing, and community outreach, as well as program planning and evaluation, policy development and administration, personnel supervision, and fiscal management of the organization. Working closely with its Board of Directors, this employee will lead and motivate both staff and volunteers to provide the highest quality of programs and services for HCAS members and partners.

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

**Fundraising:** Systematically and effectively strengthen the organization's overall fundraising capacity by designing and implementing a comprehensive plan for developing key external alliances by cultivating individual and philanthropic support. Work with the Board to identify funds needed, preferred funding targets, and approaches, which may include the design and coordination of events (gala, walk, etc.). Conduct research, prospecting, and application to multiple donor sources. Manage and grow major gifts, federal and state grants, special events, and corporate and foundation support to best meet the budgetary and programmatic needs of the HCAS. Expand and diversify HCAS's donor base/pipeline to secure funding for new initiatives. Develop and maintain key long-term relationships with donors and prospects. Develop and support the Board's role in friend-raising. Oversee the management of the donor/stakeholder database.

**Relationship Development:** Create unique and innovative partnerships with corporations, government, associations and community leaders to keep HCAS at the forefront of issues that impact families living with autism. Stay abreast of industry trends, best practices, regulations and policies affecting the work of the HCAS. Educate the larger community on the HCAS, its mission, and services. Target and identify talent and potential partners to move the mission and vision of HCAS and its members forward.

**Leadership:** Provide visionary and forward thinking ideas to guide the systems and processes of HCAS. Have strong business acumen and awareness of industry, county, and regional trends and developments. Guide, challenge and inspire both staff and volunteer leaders to implement big picture ideas that move the organization forward. Serve as a thought leader within the autism awareness space creating programs and services that serve the needs of HCAS members. Work closely with the Board of Directors, and board committees, as appropriate, to implement and carry out the organization's strategic plan.

**Organizational and Program Management:** Enhance or develop and execute corporate policies and procedures and innovative technologies that will improve the operation and effectiveness of HCAS. Build, mentor and manage a diverse staff and volunteer base, and provide consistent and balanced leadership and direction. Develop, monitor, and evaluate the use of resources (to include staff,

volunteers, facilities, equipment, money, and information) to best meet the mission. Monitor the overall performance and effectiveness of staff in carrying out the objectives of HCAS and make changes as required to improve operations, as appropriate.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

- Master's degree preferred, but not required
- Senior management experience leading and overseeing a similarly sized or larger organization
- Proven fundraising and relationship development experience required
- Knowledge of autism spectrum disorders and developmental disabilities is preferred
- Advanced knowledge of office computer applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Ability to occasionally lift objects up to 20 lbs
- Flexibility to represent HCAS at events during evenings and weekends

## **TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES**

### **Organizational Strategic Support**

- Gathers key information essential to the planning and organizational process (e.g., internal information, audits, benchmarking information, stakeholder input).
- Incorporates an awareness of current and future management directives, required functional and technical expertise, resource requirements, and targeted stakeholders into annual plans.
- Streamlines operations for maximum efficiency, automation and effectiveness where appropriate.
- Incorporates new processes and procedures into annual plans
- Conducts internal audits (i.e., gathers information, identifies strengths and weaknesses) and provides recommendations to establish new processes.
- Identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in support of strategic planning process.
- Provides advice and guidance to resolve, implement or manage program or policy issues that involve areas of uncertainty in approach or methodology.
- Utilizes processes, tools and/or formal mechanisms to effectively monitor and manage results.

### **Internal Resource Management**

- Identify, prioritize, and manage resources (e.g., people, systems, space, budgets, contracts) to foster productivity and deliver solutions
- Apply knowledge of organization to define requirements and acquire resources
- Develop realistic and manageable budgets based on organizational goals, objectives, and priorities
- Build and leverage networks to work across the organization and achieve results
- Optimize processes by coordinating interactions across the organization

### **Employee/Volunteer Relations**

- Understands and demonstrates knowledge of laws, rules, regulations, case law, principles, and practices related to employee conduct, performance, and dispute resolution.
- Demonstrates knowledge of a wide range of HR concepts, laws, policies, practices related to employee relations.

- Demonstrates knowledge of a variety of personnel management services to include performance management, employee conduct, benefits administration, and other work life issues.

### **Program Management**

- Design, implement and manage multiple or ongoing programs/projects, and directs the related resources, personnel and activities
- Provide leadership and creative solutions to program planning and problem solving
- Work with individuals within own organization and across other organizations to plan, schedule and ensure execution of program activities
- Monitor program effectiveness, providing reporting as necessary
- Hire, assign, coordinate and supervise program personnel

### **Financial Management**

- Applies critical financial concepts and practices to establish and maintain realistic budgets.
- Analyzes financial information to evaluate strategic opportunities and options.
- Uses financial information to monitor overall financial status of operations and makes strategically based decisions.
- Understands overall financial performance of the organization.

### **Performance Management**

- Develop and implement strategies that optimize individual performance within the organization
- Develop and use measures and rewards to enhance performance
- Translate new performance management policies into actionable goals for one's own organization, and hold self and others accountable to achieving the goals.
- Customize an organizational approach to performance management by balancing the organization's unique cultural characteristics and constraints with performance management policy
- Hold self and others accountable for complying with performance management policy and procedures.

## **BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES**

**Action-Oriented:** Consistently maintains high levels of activity or productivity; sustains long working hours when necessary, works with vigor, effectiveness and determination over a sustained period.

**Collaboration/Teamwork:** Builds constructive working relationships with clients/customers, and other work units to meet mutual goals and objectives. Behaves professionally and supportively when working with individuals from a variety of ethnic, social and educational backgrounds.

**Communication:** Clearly conveys and receives information and ideas through a variety of media to individuals or groups in a manner that engages the listener, helps them understand and retain the message, and invites response and feedback. Keeps others informed as appropriate. Demonstrates good written, oral and listening skills.

**Decision Making/Problem Solving:** Breaks down problems into components and recognizes interrelationships; makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions. Compares data, information, and input from a variety of sources to draw conclusions; takes action that is consistent with available facts, constraints, and probable consequences.

**Facilitating Change:** Facilitates the implementation and acceptance of change within the workplace; encourages others to seek opportunities for different and innovative approaches to addressing problems and opportunities.

**Formal Presentation Skills:** Effectively presents ideas, information and materials to individuals and groups. Effectively prepares and provides structured delivery; facilitates workshops or meetings in a structured manner, can facilitate and manage group process.

**Guiding & Developing Staff/Volunteers:** Focuses and guides others in accomplishing work objectives; rewards and recognizes others, both formally and informally, in ways that motivate them. Sets high performance expectations for team members; sets clear performance expectations and objectives; holds others accountable for achieving results. Successfully finds resources, training, tools, etc. to support staff needs. Works with staff to create developmental opportunities to expand knowledge and skill level; provides effective feedback and guidance for career development.

**Initiative:** Takes action without being asked or required to; achieves goals beyond job requirements; is proactive; takes prompt action to accomplish objectives.

**Innovation:** Uses creativity and imagination to develop new insights into situations and applies new solutions to problems. Comes up with new and unique ideas.

**Planning & Organizing:** Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resources requirements; determines necessary sequence of activities needs to achieve goals.

**Visionary Leadership:** Keeps the organization's mission, vision, and values at the forefront of employee decision making and actions; ensures alignment of organization's strategic plan and agency practices with vision, mission and values.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of the work being performed by people assigned to this job. They are not an exhaustive list of all duties and responsibilities associated with it.

Updated November 2015



# 19. Resource Manager & Event Coordinator Job Description

## General Description

- Ensures smooth operation of day to day operations
- Supports and works with board, staff and volunteers to implement programs and activities
- Provides members and community with information and resources

## Duties and Responsibilities

- Oversees implementation of HCAS's services, programs and activities: Works with executive director and program chairs to set activity calendar; maintains activity calendar; assists in promotion of activities; coordinates volunteers, venue, materials and supplies; manages event follow-up details including feedback surveys, thank you notes, etc.
- Provides administrative support for two annual special events: the Pieces of the Puzzle Gala (Spring) and 5K (Fall) : maintains planning calendar and checklist and delegates responsibilities between committee members and staff; oversees logistics of events; manages volunteers
- Participates in the development and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures for the office
- Collects, maintains and reports activity, attendance, feedback and marketing data
- Provides support to board and senior staff as necessary
- Responds to member inquiries and directs them to appropriate individuals or agencies
- Maintains membership database
- Processes timely acknowledgment letters to all donors
- Organizes program and office materials in an orderly fashion
- Maintains professional work environment

## HCAS Programs

- Communicate with Program Chairs to coordinate materials, supplies, (including promotional) etc., for monthly and special HCAS meetings and events
- Assist Program Chairs with various duties as necessary

## Special Events

- Work with Event Chair, Board Co-Presidents and Committee to oversee logistics of two annual special events (gala and 5K/Walk): Includes assisting with the finding/booking of the venue, creating registration sites, managing volunteers, working with outside contract companies, securing rentals, etc.
- Communicate deadlines and keep Special Event Chairs and other volunteers on task with event logistics
- Manage event websites including participant registrations, gifts/donations and sponsorships
- Update Board Co-Presidents, Executive Director and Special Event Chairs on registrations/sponsorships, etc.

### Marketing & Communication

- Promote HCAS and other pertinent meetings, events and news to HCAS members and beyond by managing HCAS website, Constant Contact emails, and Ning Network
- Provide quarterly feedback to Executive Director

### Volunteer Coordination

- Solicit volunteers through different avenues (membership, high schools, Towson, 1800volunteers.org, Volunteer Center, etc.)
- Keep database of volunteers
- Work with Executive Director and Program Chairs to secure volunteers for various meetings and events
- With Executive Director, manage administrative office volunteers
- Work with Special Event Chairs (Gala, 5K) to secure volunteers for special events: Assign volunteer team leaders and train volunteers/delegate training tasks to volunteer team leaders

### Membership

- Responsible for updating membership database
- Respond to membership inquiries
- Provide updated membership reports for various meetings and events

### Miscellaneous Resource Center Responsibilities

- Respond to phone/email/in-person inquiries
- Log gifts/donations and send acknowledgment letters in a timely fashion

Updated November 2016

## 20. Additional Resources

### National

[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org) (Autism Society of America)

[www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org) (Autism Speaks) - Maintains a variety of comprehensive toolkits: Day 100 (new diagnosis), Asperger's & High Functioning, Transition, Visual Supports

[www.autism.com](http://www.autism.com) (Autism Research Institute)

[www.generationrescue.org](http://www.generationrescue.org) (Generation Rescue)

[www.tacanow.org](http://www.tacanow.org) (Talk About Curing Autism)

### State

[www.pathfindersforautism.org](http://www.pathfindersforautism.org) (Pathfinders for Autism) - Maintains checklists by age category of important concerns when supporting children/adults with autism, important Maryland-specific information when navigating the autism community and statewide service provider database.

[www.mdod.maryland.gov/](http://www.mdod.maryland.gov/) (Maryland Department of Disabilities)

[www.ppmmd.org](http://www.ppmmd.org) (The Parents' Place of Maryland)

[www.communityconnections.umd.edu](http://www.communityconnections.umd.edu) (Community Connections, University of Maryland)

[www.dors.state.md.us/dors](http://www.dors.state.md.us/dors) (Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS))

[www.ddamaryland.org](http://www.ddamaryland.org) (Maryland Department of Development Disabilities Administration)

### Local

[www.archoward.org](http://www.archoward.org) (The Arc of Howard County)

The County Diagnostic Center 410-313-7046

The Family Support and Resource Center 410-313-7161

Project Access at Howard Community College 410-992-4800 ext. 4625

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HoCo-SpecialEd> (Special Education Community Advisory Committee (SECAC))

[http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/maryland\\_biomedical](http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/maryland_biomedical) (Maryland BioMedical Support Group)