



Board of Directors

Margaret Golding Neelsen - Chairperson

Born in Dublin Ireland moved to Charlotte in 1993. Margaret has worked in the manufacturing industry for over 20 years. Margaret has a personal connection to autism. In 2002, her son Ryan was diagnosed with autism. To ensure Ryan's progress she took a career break which allowed her to focus on preparing him for elementary school. During that time she became very involved in childhood autism and suggested programs. Prior to Ryan's diagnosis Margaret worked for Solectron Technologies for over 10 years. During her tenure at Solectron, Margaret had the privilege of meeting a U.S. President when her team won the Malcom Baldrige award. In 2008, Margaret returned to the workforce and is currently part of the leadership team at Cardinal Health. In 2010, she received the Top Gun award for process improvements that led to significant cost savings and efficiencies for Cardinal Health. Margaret is Green Belt and Kaizen leader certified. Margaret continues to be a strong advocate for children and young people with autism. Margaret and her husband Erik are the driving force behind

AutismAfter18. Their vision for Ryan and other young adults with autism led to the foundation of the Autism After 18.

Áine Walsh Kelley – Vice-Chairperson

Áine is a business owner and Irish dance instructor, teaching both children and adults in Charlotte, Greensboro and Wilmington, NC. She is certified by both the Commission of Irish dancing in Dublin, Ireland and the Irish Dancing Teachers Association of North America. Aine currently serves as recording secretary of the Irish Dancing Teachers Association, Southern Region. In 2006, Aine was honored with the Irish Woman of the Year Award in Charlotte, NC. Áine's experience as a business owner and entrepreneur is an asset to the organization.

Caroline Diffley – Secretary

Caroline Diffley holds her degree in Marketing & PR, she has worked in Tourism Development for almost 20 years. Caroline worked as a tourism executive for Shannon Development, the tourism development agency for the mid-west of Ireland, from 1995-2010. Her responsibilities included the planning, promotion and follow through of all tourism events/festivals in Limerick/Clare/Tipperary areas, one of the projects that she had sole responsibility for was the Limerick annual St. Patrick's Festival weekend where she held the position of Festival Director. Caroline has also been a key organizer for many years for the Foynes Irish Coffee Festival. Foynes Co. Limerick is the birth place of the world famous Irish Coffee and for one weekend each July the village of Foynes comes to life with lots of fun and

festivities highlighting the little drink that has become famous throughout the world.

Reg Davies – Treasurer

Reg has lived in Charlotte since 1979, coming to the US from England. He studied in both the UK & US and has undergraduate degrees in both Accounting & Business Administration, plus an MBA with a concentration in business finance. He is the owner of Accounting & Tax Services of Charlotte. In addition to serving as the treasurer for Autism after 18, Reg is a former treasurer and current board member with the Charlotte Irish Connection.

Barbara Tobias Josephs – Member at Large

Barbara is a native New Yorker who moved to Huntersville in 2017. She holds an undergraduate degree in Math and Economics and an MBA in Finance from Fordham University. She worked as a financial analyst at AXA/Equitable for ten years, leaving the corporate world to be a stay at home parent when she was expecting her second child, Matthew, who is now 25 years old. Matthew was an easygoing, delightful baby, but as he grew older, he exhibited delayed speech, sensory processing disorder, and academic difficulties. Barbara and her husband spent years searching for answers and help for Matthew, until he was finally diagnosed with autism in the fifth grade. Getting a diagnosis was just the beginning of the odyssey of

navigating the public school system, obtaining the appropriate educational services for Matthew, and equipping him with the necessary skills to become an effective self-advocate. Autism After 18 has made a world of difference for Matthew. For the first time in his life, he finally feels a sense of belonging to a community of his peers

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