



## **Board of Trustees Service Package**



**Join our mission to empower and support a network of  
parents of children and adults with disabilities!**

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**@ptopmiami**

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## Parent to Parent of Miami's History

Parent to Parent of Miami, Inc. began in 1986 with one heart-felt wish: may families have an easier time than we did obtaining the services and support needed to raise their children. Founder and first President Paula Lalinde built a Board of Trustees along with Iliana C. Hernandez, Marci Mesa and Chris and Ven Sequenzia which secured its not-for-profit status. For the first time in the history of disability services in Miami-Dade County, families from all types of disability groups were outreaching to other families in an organized and systematic way.

The organization operated out of the office of United Cerebral Palsy until July 1987 when it moved to the homes of Paula Lalinde and Iliana Hernandez. Slowly, the new service model of parents helping other parents began to take hold, and the home telephone numbers of parent volunteers became the lifeline for hundreds of families throughout Miami-Dade County.

In 1990, Parent to Parent of Miami experienced significant growth. First, there was funding from the Community Committee for Developmental Handicaps (CCDH), whereby Parent to Parent of Miami was able to hire its first part-time employee. Second, the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource Systems (FDLRS) offered office space in their new facility. Third, March of Dimes' funding supported efforts to outreach and provide peer support to families with young children with disabilities. With this funding, Parent to Parent of Miami developed an official logo, printed brochures, and developed mechanisms to collect and report grant data. These efforts prepared the organization for later funding opportunities.

In 1997, after serving as president of the Board, Isabel C. Garcia, was appointed Executive Director of the organization. In 1998, Parent to Parent of Miami submitted a grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The proposal was funded as one of the first ten *Community Parent Resource Centers* (CPRC) under the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1997 (IDEA 1997) to serve families who have children and adults with disabilities in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. With this funding, Parent to Parent of Miami expanded its role as a CPRC by entering into a cooperative agreement with Miami-Dade County Public Schools from October 2002-2007. This cooperative agreement provided greater opportunities for school-based parent professional partnerships.

Parent to Parent of Miami was funded by The Children's Trust in 2004 to expand peer to peer support, advocacy and education that leads to best parenting practices, improved child health, school outcomes, and systems of care for children and youth with disabilities or special needs. This funding led to increased fundraising activities and the launching of our major signature fundraiser Journey of Dreams Benefit November 20, 2004.

For the past 36 years this mission has been the essence of our work and the success is attributed to the engagement of parents who are willing to share their personal perspectives and volunteer time to advocate on behalf of children and families. Partnerships with The March of Dimes, The Miami Foundation, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, University of Miami, Florida International University, Miami Dade College, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Programs (OSEP) and The Children's Trust propelled the small nonprofit organization's ability to serve more and more families. From serving 20 families a year in 1989 to approximately 1,500 families a year in 2021.

Today, Parent to Parent of Miami is the only organization in Miami-Dade County serving the full range of disabilities at no cost to families. Peer to peer support to help families connect, cope and thrive is provided by a team of parents of children and adults with disabilities with unique perspectives and experience in parenting and supporting children with special needs. This support combined with a series of activities such as individualized coaching, face to face meetings, advocacy at school meetings and educational workshops related to parenting, disabilities, laws and regulations; and planning for the future topics help families achieve better outcomes for their children.

Our services and supports are individualized to meet every family's need. A dedicated Board of Trustees and Staff continues to be the key to the organization's growth, development and impact.

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## Mission

Empower and support a network of parents who have children and adults with disabilities.

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## Vision

Children and adults with disabilities live full, productive lives in increasingly inclusive communities because of the specialized support, hope and hands-on assistance their families received from Parent to Parent of Miami.

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## Values

**Empathy.** We believe it is vital to put ourselves in another person's shoes to offer the support families need. Because we, too, are parents of children with disabilities, we understand the impact and necessity of empathetic assistance.

**Respect.** We believe that respectful treatment is the basis for all of our relationships, be it with families we serve, our colleagues, board, volunteers or community supporters. Respect for us begins with understanding there is no "I" in teamwork.

**Integrity.** We strive to do the very best we can in the name of our organization and in support of families. We are trustworthy, honest, and ethical in all we do.

**Inclusion.** We believe inclusion is vital both for our work culture and for the families we serve. We strive for inclusive communities where children and adults with disabilities can live the life they choose.

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## Statement of Distinction

Parent to Parent of Miami is the community's trusted resource for empowering and supporting families who have children and adults with disabilities. Our professional team of parent-peers provides information, training, support and advocacy to help families make decisions about early intervention, early childhood, education, vocational training, employment, college opportunities, as well as the laws that protect the rights of children and adults with disabilities. We offer services for people in Miami-Dade County, Florida in our community resource center and virtually. For more information, visit [www.ptopmiami.org](http://www.ptopmiami.org).

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## Board of Trustees Membership

Elected members to Parent to Parent of Miami's Board of Trustees join a group of individuals dedicated to ensuring that families of children and adults with disabilities have access to information, peer to peer support and advocacy to improve health, educational and independent living outcomes.

Fifty-one percent (51%) of the membership is open to parents of children and adults with disabilities with a diverse representation of disabilities, children's ages, and cultures. Parents invited to serve may be accessing services at Early Intervention Programs, M-DCPS, Charter and private schools. Forty-nine percent (49%) of the membership may be represented by individuals serving and supporting initiatives that improve outcomes for children and adults with disabilities in our community.

Members serve a four (4) year term and may renew their board service commitment every two years. Board service is limited to eight years. As a member of this group, it is important to understand the commitment expected. This document is meant as a brief guide to those expectations.

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## Board of Trustees Member Biographies



Maday Bonet

Board Chair

Maday.Bonet@nicklaushealth.org

Maday Bonet was born in Cuba and migrated to the United States with her parents and siblings at the age of four. She was raised in Miami, Florida and has a young adult son. Her passion for children began at an early age. She was involved with HandsOn Miami, where she volunteered her time reading to children who were underprivileged and in foster care. The trauma the children experienced and shared with her gave her the passion to advocate. Life experiences reinforced her passion to continue an active role in helping other children and families.

As Office Manager of the Department of Psychology at Nicklaus Children's Hospital, she has had the opportunity to advocate for children and their families. Her growth within the department has led to leadership roles, which keeps her driven and focused on mental health advocacy, the importance of community engagement, and the wellbeing of all children.

Maday aspires to utilize her experience in leadership, strategy, professional development, and community engagement in her role as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees at Parent to Parent of Miami. She is also an active volunteer at Nicklaus Children's Hospital and other local non-profit organizations.



Richard A. Brugera

Board Vice Chair

Richard.Brugera@ey.com

Richard was born and raised in Miami, FL and has three children (Lily, Liana, and Lucas), who he is blessed to be raising together with his wife, Josephora. Richard's involvement with Parent to Parent of Miami began over 16 years ago, when he was hired as Operations Manager of the organization. During his employment at Parent to Parent of Miami, Richard witnessed first-hand the significant positive impact that the organization's services made on our community, as well as the tangibly improved outcomes achieved for parents of children with disabilities. Richard feels deeply passionate about the mission of Parent to Parent of Miami, and as a board member, strives to empower and guide the organization to reach new heights for our community.

In addition to his duties as a father and a board member of Parent to Parent of Miami, Richard is a Certified Public Accountant in

the State of Florida who graduated from Florida International University with a Bachelor of Accounting, a Bachelor of Finance, and a Master of Science in Taxation. He is currently a Partner in the Tax practice of Ernst & Young, LLP.



Maria Salvo  
Treasurer  
msalvo@gmail.com

Maria Salvo-Venerio was born in Nicaragua and raised in Miami, Florida. She is a mother of three children, one of which was born with a disability and died in March 2017. During her child's journey, she experienced how much need there is for families of children with disabilities. Maria is very happy to be part of this organization and hopes to be able to support everything they stand for.



Sara Bloom  
Member

Sara is a development and marketing professional who partners with professional firms, CEOs and executives to grow their brands, expand their community engagement, and achieve their business development goals. Working for over a decade in the events and non-profit development world, Sara has experienced the marketing industry through various lenses and knows what is required to take a company's branding and communications to the next level. She believes that the keys to success in business and in life are building genuine relationships, connecting with others, cultivating win-win partnerships, and finding passion in what she does every day.

Sara's biggest passion is her children. Her oldest was diagnosed with Autism at 3 years old and she, like so many in our community, experiences firsthand the difficulties that parents and families of those with disabilities face. Through the assistance of various organizations, including Parent to Parent of Miami, she is able to get her son the help he needs, and she will be forever grateful for the support her family continues to receive. She is invested in her role as a board member of Parent to Parent of Miami because she wants to help other families find the best resources available to them, as well as advocate for and raise awareness of the many disabilities that exist in an effort to make our community a more accepting and supportive place for all.

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## Board of Trustees' Responsibilities

Board members are the fiduciaries who steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as making sure the nonprofit has adequate resources to advance its mission.

One of the most important responsibilities for many boards is to hire and set compensation of a talented President & CEO/Executive Director to run the day-to-day management activities of the organization. When there are paid staff in place, rather than steer the boat by managing day-to-day operations, board members provide foresight, oversight, and insight: think of them as up in the crow's nest scanning the horizon for signs of storms or rainbows to explore, perhaps with a pot of gold at the end! Yes, board members - your role as stewards of the nonprofits DOES involve fundraising. And...at Parent to Parent of Miami we are big promoters of the important role board members play as advocates for the nonprofit's mission.

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## Meetings

The full board meets ten (10) times yearly. The Board makes every attempt to schedule meetings to accommodate each member's availability. For this reason, each member is expected to attend all meetings, preferably in person. When travel to a meeting is not possible, a video conference link will be made available.

To accommodate this the board has established a policy allowing members to attend eight (8) of the ten (10) full board meetings to remain in good standing. Additionally, if requested, a leave of absence may be arranged. Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month from 7:00PM-9:00PM with no meetings in July or December.

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## Committee Membership

Each Board Member is asked to contribute to the organization using their unique talents by joining one (1) working committee. Each committee determines its own meeting schedule and the amount of work varies over time. You are encouraged to choose committees that match your interests; however, you may be asked to join a specific committee if the organization has a specific need.

**Executive Committee:** Lead by the elected officers of the non-profit, this committee is chaired by the Board Chair, the membership consists of the Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and President/CEO. The executive committee has special responsibilities and authorities above all committees. At times it can act on behalf of the full board. Its main purpose is to facilitate decision making between board meetings, or in urgent crisis circumstances. However, must report actions to the full board by email, phone or video conferencing for full board approval.

It often also acts as the communication link to the President/Chief Executive Officer and, in assisting the Board Chair with the annual performance evaluation of the President/CEO.

**Ad-hoc By-Laws Committee:** Chaired by the Board Vice-Chair is responsible for reviewing by-laws once a year. This committee is prompted to action once there are identified revisions and edits, ensuring that they align with the Organization's and Board's policies and procedures.



**Finance and Ad-hoc Audit Committee:** Chaired by the Board Treasurer, works with the Operations Manager in examining the financial reports, understanding and monitoring the financial condition of the organization. The Treasurer presents the monthly financial statements to the Board at each board meeting. This committee assists with the selection of an audit firm every five years, reviews the audit plan, audit and IRS 990.

**Fundraising Committee:** Chaired by the Board Vice-Chair the fundraising committee works with the President/CEO and Development Coordinator, if there is one, and the Board of Trustees in developing strategies to identify and secure needed resources and funding to support the organization. The Committee is responsible for creating and executing a plan to raise money. The full Board is responsible for introducing their network to the organization, attending events, financially supporting the organization and encouraging others to do as well.

**Ad-hoc Human Resources Committee:** Chaired by the Board Chair is responsible for the development and recommendation of relevant policies, the creation of a salary adjustment plan and the framework for the President/CEO's annual performance evaluation. It is also responsible for the search and rehiring of the new President/CEO in the event the CEO resigns, retires or is terminated.

**Nominating Committee:** Chaired by the Board Secretary, the nominating committee is responsible for reviewing Board of Trustees applicants, identification of new Board members and the development of the future leadership of the Board. This committee helps develop an effective Board through its two main functions:

**Board Building:** A diverse Board of Trustees (thought, skill, race, faith, ability, orientation, age, and gender) that is passionate about the mission of the organization is created through a Board Building process.

**Board Education:** Board members will fully understand and effectively fulfill their commitments to the Board of Trustees with a comprehensive orientation, continuing education, annual evaluation and recognition process is in place.

Except for the Executive Committee, the Nominating Committee is usually the most powerful committee of the Board. It is often the only committee that you cannot just volunteer for but must be invited to join and is the only committee made up entirely of board members.

Presidents/CEOs play a primary role in building the board. As such, they can assemble a board that can take the organization to new heights. The President/CEO assists in building the board to which he/she will ultimately report and makes recommendations, staffs board committees, and supports the board's success. The President/CEO does not have the authority to add board members to this committee.

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## Give or Get Policy

Parent to Parent of Miami operates on the belief that it is important to demonstrate to funders that the Board of Trustees is as invested in the organization's mission as they are. For this reason, all board members are required to give financially each year. In-kind giving is in addition and all donations are tax deductible as allowable by law.

**Fundraising:** Activities such as the Annual Journey of Dreams Benefit, Give Miami Day, board member driven campaigns via Facebook, matching donations from banks and institutions, asking friends to donate to the United Way and the Combined Federal Campaign for Federal employees on behalf of Parent to Parent of Miami, and participating in employer matching donation campaigns are some of the many ways you can help raise funds for the organization.

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## Fundraising Responsibilities

As a member of the board, you have a fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the organization before all others. Responsibilities for carrying this out fall into three main categories:

*Duty of Care* requires each board member to actively understand the organization's finances, participate in meetings as well as in the decision-making process. The essence of this requirement is that each member makes a reasonable effort in carrying out the responsibilities of a board member.

*Duty of Loyalty* requires each member to make decisions free of conflicts and not for personal gain. It also requires members to ensure other members are acting in the same good faith.

*Duty of Obedience* requires each member to ensure the organization is acting within all applicable laws and regulations internally (according to the organization's by-laws) and externally (according to the laws governing the environment the organization operates within). Additionally, board members are required to ensure the organization's actions are in keeping with the mission.

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## Advisory Board Responsibilities

An advisory board functions like a committee of the formal board, has no legal responsibilities, and is formed to give advice and recommendations to the nonprofit's governing board or staff. Activities that advisory boards typically focus on are fundraising, technical assistance, legal, assessment of a program's impact and serving as a public advocate for the organization.

With the rapid growth and development of the organization, the board of trustees identified a need to bring individuals from the community to contribute their expertise and thinking to the current and future work of Parent to Parent of Miami in the following areas:

- ✓ Fiscal and Fiduciary: Certified Public Accountants with nonprofit experience
  - ✓ Sustainability: Financial Planners
  - ✓ Review of policies and procedures: Non-Profit Attorney
  - ✓ Fundraising: Philanthropist/Fundraising Expert
  - ✓ Systems Advocacy: State, local and national level
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## Advisory Board Member Expectations

- ✓ Commit to serve for a minimum of two years
- ✓ Attend three quarterly Advisory Board Meetings
- ✓ Must be available for three or four telephone calls each year from staff seeking advice
- ✓ Allow Parent to Parent of Miami to publish name as a member of the Advisory Board

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## Conflict of Interest

The standard of behavior at Parent to Parent of Miami is that all staff, volunteers, and board members scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of Parent to Parent of Miami on one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest.

The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of the Parent to Parent of Miami's decision-making process, to enable our members and the community to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputations of volunteers, staff and Board members. To facilitate this policy, members complete a disclosure statement listing employment, business interests, organizations or affiliations that might become conflicts. This written disclosure statement will be kept on file and will be updated every year in October.

In the course of board meetings or activities, members will disclose any interests which includes the respective programs, projects, initiatives and endeavors, transaction or decision where they (including business or other non-profit affiliations), family and/or significant other, employer, close associates receive a benefit or gain. After disclosure, members will be asked to leave the room for the discussion and will not be permitted to vote on the question.

This policy is meant to supplement good judgment, and you are expected to respect its spirit as well as its wording. To be more comprehensive, this disclosure statement also requires members to provide information with respect to certain parties related to them. These persons are termed “affiliated persons” and include the following: Spouse, domestic partner, child, mother, father, brother or sister.

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## Background Check

As an organization that provides services to families who have children and adults with disabilities, Parent to Parent of Miami is required by Florida Statutes and Administrative Code to complete Level 2 background screenings of its personnel, volunteers and board.

In addition, an Attestation of Good Moral Character must be completed annually for each employee, volunteer, board member and subcontracted personnel who work or may work in direct contact with children. Parent to Parent of Miami will rescreen each employee, volunteer and/or subcontractor every five years.

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## Before Joining a Board

Serving on a board can be a rewarding experience but is also time intensive and demanding. Before joining a board, ask yourself the following questions to ensure that board service is right for you.

- ✓ **Are you interested in advancing a cause you are passionate about?** You must be committed to the mission of the organization before deciding to join its board of trustees. Boards can have a huge impact on an organization.
  
- ✓ **How much time can you devote to Board work?** Board members are legally required to fulfill their fiduciary duties, which will require a considerable commitment. The amount of time varies by organization, but simply planning to attend meetings is not enough. Board members must review financials statements, meeting materials, and prepare for and attend committee meeting on a regular basis.

- ✓ **Are you able and willing to assist a nonprofit organization with fundraising?** One of the primary responsibilities of the board is to ensure that the organization has adequate financial resources to carry out its mission. All nonprofit organizations require board members to make a personal contribution and solicit funds. Be prepared to make connections and introduction to donors, attend fundraising events, and send personal and thank you notes.
- ✓ **Are you patient and collegial when working as a team?** Are you looking forward to meeting people outside of your usual professional circles? Board of Trustees must work together to build consensus and govern an organization. If you work alone without input from a large group, board service may not be right for you. Additionally, the highest performing boards comprise of a mix of professionals to bring a variety of viewpoints to a discussion. Expect board members to represent a few different industries, backgrounds and perspectives.
- ✓ **Is there an opportunity for you to make a difference in the organization?** Identity a role on the board or advisory board. Do you bring financial expertise? Community connections? Before joining a board, ask yourself whether you feel that your work on the board will make a positive impact on the organization. If your answer is yes, then it is time to apply to the Board of Trustees!

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## Process for joining the Board of Trustees or Advisory Board

- ✓ Prospective members are invited to participate to a virtual or face to face meeting with the Board Chair and President/CEO
- ✓ Interested members submit board application with resume and conflict of interest statement to the Nominating Committee
- ✓ Nomination Committee reviews application and makes recommendations to the full board
- ✓ Members selected to join the Board are notified of the decision by the Board Chair
- ✓ Members accepting the invitation to serve will complete the required background check and will be invited to the next Board Meeting for full Board of Trustees approval.

Parent to Parent of Miami recognizes and appreciates your volunteer time. We are asking a lot of you! However, you will not regret it. Our Board is made up of individuals like you who are passionate and devoted advocates for families of children and adults with disabilities. For more information, please contact Board Chair Maday Bonet at [board@ptopmiami.org](mailto:board@ptopmiami.org) or Farides Garcia, President/CEO at 305-271-9797 ext. 224 or via email at [fgarcia@ptopmiami.org](mailto:fgarcia@ptopmiami.org).