

A Letter from the Board President



Ten years ago the Parent Advisor leading my toddler support group called me and said, “Matrix would like you to join its Board of Directors.” My first thought was, “Me?” My second was, “Matrix has a Board of Directors?” What I didn’t know is that as a federally funded Parent Training and Information Center, Matrix is governed by a Board of Directors primarily made up of parents and others with relationships to families with children with special needs. That means that parents, many of whom have had the same experiences as the families Matrix serves, have a direct influence on setting the direction for the programs and activities that Matrix offers.

Matrix’s Board of Directors is now actively seeking new members to join us in creating a vision for Matrix as it strives to continue to help families during this time of dwindling services and economic uncertainties. Though many parents may have the same reservations I did ten years ago, let me share with you what I have learned.

I’m just a Mom/Dad. What can I contribute?

The most important contribution to give is parent perspective. Are Matrix’s programs truly meeting the needs of families? Does this expense make sense? These are areas where all parents have knowledge and experience to offer.

It’s such a huge time commitment.

Directors serve a two-year term. The Board currently meets once every two months, generally for about 2 hours. Occasionally Board members attend meetings by phone. Members contribute additional time to projects according to their schedules. As with any volunteer activity, you control your time.

I hate fundraising.

OK, I won’t lie. Fundraising is a significant responsibility of the Board and it was one of the main reasons I hesitated to join. There are many different ways to support the agency’s development activities: attending events; writing personal notes on fundraising letters; making phone calls; or hosting a party. Directors also provide input on programming, budgeting, training and communications. (Making a big donation is good too!). Directors are simply asked to help in ways that are comfortable for them.

What will I get out of being a Director?

For me, I’m proud that my input has enabled Matrix to help hundreds of families deal with the challenges of raising a child with special needs. And I’ve grown, too. I have gained management experience and the confidence to speak in front of large groups. I not only learned how to host a fundraising party but also about resources that help me be a better advocate for my child. As a Director, you not only offer your experience but you gain expertise that can help you grow personally and professionally.

So, if you’ve ever thought that you’d like to do something to give back to Matrix because of the help you or others received, please consider serving on the Board. Feeling shy about joining? Ask a friend to join with you. For more information, you can email me directly at rhandad@matrixparents.org

- Rhanda Dunn, President of the Matrix Board of Directors

Matrix serves families of children with special needs in the North Bay and is one of over 100 Parent Training and Information Centers (PTI) nationwide, authorized through the U.S. Dept. of Education’s IDEA law.

Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center
Helpline: 800.578.2592
www.matrixparents.org

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