

Our Board

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Matthew Cole Chairman of the Board (2008)

Matthew Cole, Acting Chairman of the Board of Directors, has been on the Board of Refuge house for 3 years. Mr. Cole is an entrepreneur and a business owner involved with eight different companies as part or sole owner. Mr. Cole has gifted funds and donated office equipment to Refuge House because he believes in youth, and wants those at a disadvantage to have the support they need to succeed and flourish. Mr. Cole holds a Bachelor of Science and Master Degrees from Texas A&M. He is currently a licensed Texas Real Estate Broker and a Member of the Appraisal Institute (MAI).

Michele Gorman Co-Founder and Treasurer (2002)

A native of Seattle, Washington, Dr. Michele Gorman came to Texas in 1992. Dr. Gorman earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Jacksonville College in Jacksonville, Florida. Additionally, Dr. Gorman is certified in non-profit management by Center for Non-Profit Management and Brookhaven College.

Dr. Gorman has many years experience in the State of Texas in developing and operating Child Placing Agencies, in addition to advising representatives from other states in the area of foster care and adoption program development. She has been actively involved as a panel member for various State of Texas legislative boards in Founding Executive Director A native of Seattle, Washington, Dr. Michele Gorman came to Texas in 1992. Dr. Gorman earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Jacksonville College in Jacksonville, Florida. Additionally, Dr. Gorman is certified in non-profit management by Center for Non-Profit Management and Brookhaven College. Dr. Gorman has many years experience in the State of Texas in developing and operating Child Placing Agencies, in addition to advising representatives from other states in the area of foster care and adoption program development. She has been actively involved as a panel member for various State of Texas legislative boards in addition to serving on the board for other foster and adoptive care organizations.

Dr. Gorman is herself a foster parent for over 5 years and has in 2004 adopted a little boy from the foster care system. This truly lends greatly to her understanding and appreciation for the challenges foster families face, as well as a keen understanding of the dynamics of foster parenting. Additionally, she has a special compassion for the children who have entered the foster care and adoption system.

Dr. Gorman co-founded Refuge House in 2002 and has continuously served as Executive Director, but has worn many hats associated with the operation from its inception, including that of Case Manager and Program Director.

Jeannie Duarte Co-Founder and Secretary (2002)

Jeannie Duarte co-founded Refuge House with Michele Gorman in 2002. Since that time she has served in a variety of roles with both the Board and as a part-time and full-time employee of the Agency. She sees her role as primarily an operations resource, which is supported with her career experience and education, a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Computer Information Systems and Business Administration.

Ms. Duarte is excited to see the areas in which Refuge House can grow and expand to find more ways to serve children and families in need. She expects to see Refuge House as an innovator in the industry providing quality care and services to each population the Agency serves.

Ms. Duarte is happily married to Erick Duarte, Jr. and enjoys every spare moment they can spend dreaming of places to go and adventures to experiences. They have a 1-year old son and are expecting their 2nd in the summer of 2012. Her favorite quote is "I am neither especially clever nor especially gifted. I am only very, very curious." --Albert Einstein

Tim Klund Board Member (2009)

Tim Klund is currently the Founder and President of Pro Sports Connection, Inc (PSC) which is a Sports Marketing Company located in Fort Worth, Texas. PSC helps professional athletes with name branding, endorsement opportunities and community relations. Currently PSC works with past and present professional athletes from the NFL, MLB and NBA. He is also a current member of the NFL Players Association (NFLPA).

TK has had a very long and successful career in Sales and Marketing before starting Pro Sports Connection. He began his career in sales after being Honorably Discharged from the United States Air Force in 1995.

His main focus with his company is helping young professional athletes give back to their community. Tim joined the board of Refuge House in the spring of 2009, and promptly recruited highly visible celebrity athletes and artists to raise money, visibility and community awareness.

It is TK's mission to help great organizations like Refuge House, along with Lift of America to achieve their goals of helping children worldwide. He believes that by using celebrity heroes within each organization and in different communities, together they can help children believe within themselves that anything and everything is possible.

TK is married to his beautiful wife Jessica and together they have three wonderful children. Their family resides in Aledo, Texas.
Bryan Richie Board Member (2009)

Bryan Ritchie and his wife, Rachel, were Refuge House's first adoptive family. Having adopted all four of their children from Refuge House, Bryan has seen Refuge House grow over the years. Presently, Bryan stays home and homeschools their four children.

Professionally, Bryan taught English in both private and public schools for over five years. In addition, he served as the youth pastor at Trinity Bible Church in Aledo, TX and Kessler Community Church in Dallas, TX. He also served as a Camp Director at Camp El Har in Dallas. Serving children and facilitating their growth has been at the core of Bryan's professional career.

Bryan holds a Bachelor of Arts in English with an education minor from the University of North Texas and a Master of Arts from Dallas Theological Seminary in Biblical Studies.
Andrew Crawford Board Member (2012)

Andrew Crawford is a Vice President of Commercial Lending at PlainsCapital Bank, where he has worked for the past six years. Mr. Crawford currently serves in the Heights Baptist Church's Student Ministry as an 11th Grade teacher. Previously, Mr. Crawford served on the Local School Council of Apollo Junior High School in Richardson. Mr. Crawford received a BBA in Finance from Texas A&M University. He currently resides in Richardson, Texas with his wife, Jodi, and two sons, Wyatt and Mack.
Jeff Harper
Board Member (2012)

Jeff Harper was born in Decatur, Georgia and moved to Plano in 1976. He was an instant Dallas Cowboys fan for life, though he shortly moved with his family to Michigan for another 10 years before returning to Texas for good in until starting college at University of Texas where he was very involved in the Music Department, which included marching in President George Bush's inaugural parade. Jeff met his lovely wife Amy on a blind date and they married while Jeff was in his middle 30's. Jeff currently works for Perot Systems as a business analyst and programmer. Jeff and Amy adopted their first child from Refuge House and have since adopted a sibling. They are pleased to have built their family through adoption and he is delighted to serve on the Board.