

## Election Bios

**Peter Tesche** - Peter moved to Guelph in late 2015. Anxious to integrate into and contribute to his new home, he joined the boards of three community non-profit organizations including the Guelph Humane Society where he also volunteers. Peter is passionate about animal welfare having rescued and cared for stray cats, including 11 in and around his home on South Florida prior to returning to Ontario. He also volunteered for 100+ Abandoned Dogs of Everglades Florida. Peter is a CFA© charterholder and has had a long and successful career in finance living and working in Canada, the U.S., Mexico and Brazil in addition to a long-term project in China. He and his wife Jackie share their Guelph home with two former GHS foster kittens, Hershey and Lily.

**Jim Kearns** - Jim is a retired high-tech executive with a background in engineering, business and law. Since retiring, he has become involved in the not-for-profit sector including volunteer Board positions and Committee work. Jim believes that society has an obligation to safeguard and advocate for the animals in our community and that otherwise touch our lives. He has had many dogs over the years including some that were adopted from GHS.

**Gael van Veen** - Gael came to Guelph in the 1980's to complete her nursing training and never left. The years have flown by, busy with family, career, volunteering with many organizations and seeking out opportunities to give back to this community. Gael is passionate about animals and believes that they teach us life lessons in simplicity. Who else could unconditionally support us through tears, laughter, thunder and stillness, all for a simple scratch behind the ears.

She hopes to bring her unique style of energy to the GHS as it puts down new roots. Gael and her family have a long history of housing many fur babies and currently lives with her husband David, son Boaz and felines Lucy and Cinder.

**Alex Ciccone** - Alex is an environmental and municipal lawyer practicing at Garrod Pickfield LLP in Guelph. He also co-teaches a graduate course at the University of Guelph and sits on the Board of Directors for Our Energy Guelph and Vegfest Guelph.

A passionate animal advocate and vegan since 2008, Alex advocates for animal rights through public events, writing, and representation of clients who protect animals' interests. Alex can be found running or cycling Guelph's trail system, woodworking or paddling in his homemade canoe.

**Earla Smith** -Earla and her husband moved to Guelph five years ago from K-W to be closer to their son, daughter-in-law and, at the time, soon-to-come new grandson. Originally from the beautiful Eastern Townships in Quebec, as outdoor lovers, they enjoyed skiing, x-country and canoeing in l' Estrie with its beautiful lakes and mountains.

A firm advocate of volunteering, as an employment counselor, Earla views volunteering as the cornerstone of community. Serving on the Guelph Humane Society board reaffirms her personal commitment to a cause that has always been close to her heart...the welfare of animals.

Earla loves to spend time with her enthusiastic and happy grand boys (ages 2 and 5), cook, bake, paint artsy bird houses, and read. She lives with her husband, Stuart, and rescue Australian Shepard, Daisy.

**Lena Levison** - Lena is a veterinarian who works as the Saputo Dairy Care Program Manager in Population Medicine at the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC). She helps support student learning

around dairy cattle welfare. As her areas of interest and experience revolve around animals and animal welfare, Lena felt the GHS board was the perfect opportunity to contribute to her community and help support the positive roles animals play in our lives.

Lena says her house is kept in constant chaos by two Boston Terriers, Maggie and Violet, who were “foster fails” from Toronto Animal Services. In her free time, Lena can be found taking the dogs out for a walk, reading, playing volleyball, enjoying yoga, and singing in the U of G choir.

**Meaghan Middleton** - Meaghan is passionate about community engagement and animal welfare. She has served on several boards through her career, including the Canadian Dachshund Rescue. Meaghan shares her home with Evinrude, a little black cat adopted from GHS. Meaghan has worked in the not for profit, academic and tech sectors since returning to Canada 15 years ago.

**David DiMatteo** - David has been involved with the Guelph Humane Society since 2016 as a member of the Finance Committee. He wanted to be part of an Organization that is vital to the community and focuses on the welfare of animals in society. David has also been a part of another local not-for-profit board since 2015 with a focus on fundraising and volunteer coordination. David has been an accounting and tax advisor since 2013 and wants to be a contributing member of the Board with knowledge in accounting and finance.