

Board of Directors

Lisette Gelinas - President

Lisette has been President of the Open Arms Children's Foundation board for the past 2 years and a board member for 12 years. She grew up in many different towns around Ontario and even though she has lived in Toronto for 25 years still calls Kirkland Lake her hometown. She married her high-school sweetheart 22 years ago and they adopted their daughter Anne in 2005 from China when she was 10 months old.

Lisette is a seasoned marketing and economic development professional with expertise in helping small and rural communities grow and prosper. She started her own consultancy 5 years ago. She also teaches marketing for the Canadian Marketing Association and provides training courses for tourism operators to help them improve their offering and ROI.

During the summers Lisette has also been volunteering with one of OACF's partner, Fu Hui Education Foundation to help teach English to orphans and underprivileged girls in China. She has found this work particularly rewarding and lots of fun talking and getting to know these girls over Skype!

Deborah Maw - Vice-President

Deborah Maw has been the Executive Director of Open Arms to International Adoption, a licensed adoption agency that specializes in adoptions from the People's Republic of China, for over 10 years. She has also been actively involved in the formation of the Open Arms Children's Foundation and its fundraising activities.

Deborah has participated in a wide range of volunteer and board positions with numerous non-profit organizations, and has served as president of the Rosedale-Moore Park Association, the Junior League of Toronto and the University Women's Club of Toronto. She has a professional background in history and museum studies, having graduated from the University of Toronto with both a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Master's Degree in Museum Studies. However, after adopting four children from China, she changed her professional and volunteer focus in order to help other families to adopt children from China.

Laura Isidean - Treasurer

Laura Isidean joined the Board in 2011.

Laura has 20 years of financial services experience. She recently retired from her position as Managing Director and Global Head of FX Sales at Scotiabank, Global Banking and Markets, where she worked with clients to manage currency exposure. She graduated from McGill University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and a Master of Business Administration degree in Finance. She is also a CFA Charterholder.

In addition to her work with the Board, Laura is an active member of Women in Capital Markets, the Toronto CFA Society and United Way's Women Gaining Ground.

She and her husband are the proud parents of a beautiful daughter, adopted from China in 2010.

Murray Rice - Secretary

Murray and his wife Joanne, adopted their daughter Jocelyn in August 2011 through Open Arms to International Adoption. Murray is a biomedical engineer working at the University Health Network. Volunteering is an important part of his life and has included teaching physically and mentally challenged children, building homes with Habitat for Humanity and helping homeless with Out of the Cold.

Adopting from China has brought a great gift to his life. Being involved with the Open Arms Children's Foundation and raising funds to help orphans in China is a rewarding way for him to keep a connection with China.

MaryAnn Crichton - Board Member

MaryAnn Crichton has had a life-long fascination and interest in China. She has seen the country develop, beginning with one of the first individual visas issued in 1981 and has visited many times since then. In 1996, MaryAnn joined the first Board of Directors of Open Arms to International Adoption, a non-profit federally registered adoption agency facilitating adoptions from The Peoples Republic of China.

Professionally, MaryAnn is the Global Head of a Management Consulting Practice within Hatch, a Global engineering and construction firm with 20 years of project experience in China. Mary Ann has B.Sc. Chemical Engineering and a M.B.A. She has 30 years of international business experience in strategy, new business development, marketing, finance and public policy development. She has worked on a broad range projects for financial institutions, companies, potential investors and government agencies. She is a former merchant banker.

MaryAnn is currently on the Board of the Ontario Mining Association and Chairs the newly established Education and Outreach Committee. She volunteers with a number of groups in her community. MaryAnn has been active in the Canadian Women's Foundation and Professional Engineers of Ontario (PEO). In 2006, she was awarded the Ontario Public Service Award for her co-founding the Women in Engineering Advisory Committee, updating the Engineering Awards and other PEO committee work.

MaryAnn is a single mother and is blessed with two wonderful adopted Chinese daughters.

Kathryn Soden - Board Member

Kathryn Soden joined the OACF board in 2008. She is the mother of three amazing children. Her youngest, a wonderful daughter, was adopted from China. Prior to taking on parenting full time, Kathy was the Director of Corporate Finance at the Ontario Securities Commission. Since then, she has spent time volunteering for various organizations such as the Adoption Council of Ontario and several schools.

Though not currently practising, Kathy is a Chartered Accountant.

