

**By-Laws for the  
Frederick County Chapter #521  
Autism Society of America**

**I. NAME & ADDRESS**

The Frederick County Chapter # 521, Autism Society of America (ASA) (hereinafter referred to as "the chapter").

The official mailing address and phone number of the chapter shall be the address and phone number of the chapter president, unless there is a chapter office, then the address phone number shall be that of the office.

**II. PURPOSE**

The chapter is dedicated to advancement of the goals and objectives of the ASA National Organization and particularly the expansion of services and the inclusion of autistic individuals in the society of Frederick County.

The chapter is NON-PROFIT and VOLUNTEER OPERATED. Any resources of the chapter shall be used to support the goals and objectives of the chapter as described generally herein and specifically in the "Goals and Objectives" document described later.

The chapter shall strive to:

Promote self-help, mutual support and advocacy on behalf of and by individuals with autism and related "autistic-like" conditions or other related communication, behavioral and emotional disabilities.

Establish and maintain an active network of concerned individuals dedicated to the fulfillment of the life goals of those with autism (etc.).

Serve as a community source of information and education about autism (etc.).

Create opportunities for dialogue with decision makers in education, social services, business and government concerning the needs of those with autism (etc.).

Work for the Creation of adequate independent living, employment and socialization opportunities for those with autism (etc.).

Encourage medical research into the causes and possible treatments/cures for the various conditions commonly associated with autism (etc.).

### **III. GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

The chapter members shall develop and maintain a "Goals and Objectives" document as a priority guide to the utilization of chapter resources.

The "Goals and Objectives" document shall list those specific activities in outline form and in priority sequence.

The document shall have major categories that shall rank equally in priority. These categories are based on the purposes outlined in the ASA National By-Laws, and these chapter By-Laws, such as, but not limited to, "Support", "Advocacy", "Education", "Socialization", etc.

While a specific goal or objective is being developed, that particular item will be carried as an addendum to the "Goals and Objectives" document. Once the issue is presentable, as described below, it will be announced at the current meeting as an amendment to the "Goals and Objectives" and placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting as described below.

Each category then contains the priority listing of the goals and objectives that support the purpose of the category. The following is the general format of the items in this list.

Statement of the project or activity.

Explanation of how the item supports the category.

Estimated duration of the project or activity. It is possible to have continuing, short duration and single event issue, as well as, short and long term goals.

Description of how this item will be accomplished, with any estimated costs or human resources that would be entailed in doing the described activity or project. Included will be possible sources of funding or volunteers (or in some instances paid staff), if required.

The activities of the chapter shall be generally guided by the list, occasionally there may be an opportunities to accomplish a lower priority item, and if this action does not directly conflict with a higher priority item then it shall be deemed a valid effort.

Any person shall be able to offer for approval at any regular chapter meeting, amendments to this list, such as additions, deletions, or adjustments in priority.

The Secretary shall accept the amendment (or new item) proffered, and if the nature of the amendment permits, it shall be included in the agenda of the following meeting.

An emergency amendment shall be determined by the fact that action would be required prior to the next regular meeting time.

If the expenditure of chapter general funds for the emergency purpose does not exceed 50% of the chapter's general funds, or \$500.00, whichever is less, then the amendment may be voted by the paid members at the current meeting.

If the emergency amendment exceeds the guidelines above, then those paid members present at the current meeting shall vote as to whether a special meeting will be called to decide the issue of the emergency amendment.

If the issue is remanded to a special meeting, then the President shall determine an appropriate meeting time and place.

The Secretary shall either mail notice to all paid members NLT 7 days prior to the date of the special meeting, or by telephone notice NLT 3 days prior.

The Secretary shall keep a log of the time call was made and who was contacted if the phone notice is used.

Also, if phone notice is used, the Secretary shall be required to have documented the attempt to contact all paid members and actually to have made contact with at least 75% of the members' households.

If proper notice has NOT been provided as stated above, only by the actual attendance at the special meeting of 51% of the current paid members of record shall a quorum be certified for action on the amendment.

If the specified proper notice of special meeting HAS been given, then those paid members who are in attendance at the start of the meeting shall be certified as a quorum.

If the action to remand the emergency amendment to a special meeting is defeated, then no further action on the issue shall be required.

Once an amendment (or new item) of the Goals and Objectives is offered and remanded to a special meeting then those paid members attending the current meeting shall become a "committee of review" and determine a recommendation to be applied to the amendment.

The priority position will also be addressed in the recommendation.

The recommendation of the group will be reported with the normal notice of the amendment.

The "Goals and Objectives" document shall undergo a complete review by the membership at each November meeting. The ratification of the review and certification of the document shall take place at the December meeting.

#### **IV. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the chapter shall be open to anyone who is a member of the National ASA and pays the current chapter dues.

The chapter meetings shall be open to all interested persons, member or not, however voting on chapter business may be restricted to paid members at the discretion of the meeting chairperson, if not otherwise specified in this document.

#### **V. ORGANIZATION**

##### **The Executive Committee.**

The executive functions of the chapter shall be governed by an executive committee consisting of the chapter officers and the chairperson of each current committee.

The President shall be the Chairperson of the executive committee.

The executive committee shall be the administrative body of the chapter, and except for those things otherwise specifically designated to the general membership, may perform all those duties normally performed in an administrative function. Including the expenditure of chapter funds in the reasonable pursuit thereof.

The members of the chapter, by their membership, agree to indemnify and hold harmless the members of the executive committee from any and all liability as a result of their good faith actions as members of the executive committee of the chapter.

##### **The General Membership.**

The ultimate authority of the chapter shall rest with the members.

The general membership shall be permitted to direct any action not in conflict with these By-Laws, or any other jurisdictional laws, including approval of contracts.

##### **Committees.**

The "charter" of all committees shall be determined at the time of their formation. Charters may be adjusted by the directing entity.

The President shall appoint the members all committees. The officers of the chapter may serve on committees, but may not constitute a majority of the committee membership.

The members of the committee shall select their Chairperson. The initial meeting of the committee will be "chaired" by the President so the committee's first order of business will be the selection of the chairperson. Officers of the chapter may not serve as chairpersons of committees, except for the President and only for the purpose stated here.

Any committees that are formed at the sole direction of the President shall be "ad hoc". Such "ad hoc" committees shall be subject to ratification by the general membership.

Any committees that are formed at the direction of the general membership may be either "standing" or "ad hoc" and are subject to the administrative control of the President. However, "standing" committees require an amendment to these By-Laws.

The Chairpersons of all active committees shall also be members of the executive committee. If a person is the chairperson of more than one committee, they shall still only have one (1) vote on the executive committee.

## **VI. OFFICERS & DUTIES, ELECTIONS, AND TERMS OF OFFICE**

**The officers of the chapter and their duties shall consist of:**

### **President**

The chief executive officer of the chapter, and shall be empowered as is customary under "Robert's Rules" as the chief executive and presiding officer at all meetings.

"Ad hoc" committees may be appointed and given their charter by the president, subject to the approval of the membership.

The ratification of a committee would take place at the current meeting when the committee is formed or at the next regular meeting.

The President shall have the authority to administratively suspend the functions of a committee at any time, however this action must then be approved by the membership at the next regular meeting in order for the committee to be formally discharged.

Notice to the Committee Chairperson by the President, through the Secretary, or in writing "cc" the Secretary shall be sufficient to suspend the function of a committee.

Committee Chairpersons shall remain on the executive committee until the committee is formally discharged by the membership.

The President shall also be "member ex-officio" of all committees.

### **Vice-President**

The secondary chief executive (or "Chief of Staff") of the chapter and shall function in the president's stead whenever the president is unavailable or so requests.

Assist the President.

Coordinate the activities of the executive committee in consultation with the President.

Ensure that established time-tables are met and that all activities are proceeding as directed.

Advise the President on matters of policy, and apprise him/her of problems.

(Drafter's Comment: Ideally, either the President, or the Vice-President - or both - should be readily available during the day.)

### Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for the maintenance of the official chapter records.

The Secretary shall maintain the chart of terms and track the election time of all officers. Each October meeting notice shall restate the officers and the expiration dates of their current terms, it shall also state if any officer up for election that year is ineligible due to term limitations.

The Secretary shall record the minutes of meetings, and act as certifying official of chapter documents.

### Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection, retention and disbursement of chapter funds.

The Treasurer shall provide a monthly report of chapter finances for the membership and on demand of the President.

### Librarian/Historian

The Librarian/Historian shall manage the acquisition and maintenance of the chapter library.

The Librarian/Historian shall be the chapter historian and maintain a "scrap book" of ALL printed media and/or selected photographs pertaining to the chapter or the members when their actions or appearance relate to autism or the chapter, all news mentions, printed matter and the like produced by the chapter and a record of the speakers at chapter meetings and a record of events/forums/functions which the chapter has participated.

The Librarian/Historian shall also be the Assistant Secretary/Treasurer to function in the stead of either should they be unable or so request.

**The election of officers shall occur as follows:**

The general membership of the chapter shall hold an election of officers at each October regular meeting.

A "Supervisor of Elections, Chairperson pro tem" will be appointed by the President.

This person must be a member who is neither a current nor a candidate for election.

This person shall be elected to serve as "supervisor of elections, chairperson pro tem" for the purpose of holding the election of officers.

This person shall also certify the results of the election.

This person shall oversee the installation of the new officer(s) and then relinquish the "chair" back to the new President.

In the case of an unopposed position, the chairperson pro tem may entertain and the membership may move for a unanimous vote to be cast by the Secretary, if the motion is approved by the membership.

**Terms of office.**

The "charter" officers of these By-Laws shall serve for one year. (Oct., 2006 -Oct., 2007).

Beginning with the elections of officers at the October 2006 meeting, the terms of each officer shall be as follows:

President

The term of President shall alternate as a 1 (one) year term, followed by a 2 (two) year term., followed by a 1 (one) year term then a 2 (two) year term, and so on.

The President shall be limited to not more than 6 consecutive years as President and may not run for re-election if the term at that time, including any time spent filling an unexpired term, would exceed the allowed 6 years.

Vice-President

The term of the Vice-President shall alternate, (like that of the President), but for terms of 2 (two) years, followed by 3 (three) years, then 2 (two) years again etc.

The Vice-President shall be limited to not more than 5 consecutive years as Vice-President and may not run for re-election if the term at that time, excluding any time spent filling an unexpired term, would exceed the allowed 5 years.

Secretary

The Secretary shall be elected for 3 year terms.

The Secretary shall be limited to not than 3 full consecutive terms as Secretary. However, if the Secretary was appointed to fill an unexpired term, the aggregate time in office may not exceed 9 years.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected for alternating 2 (two) and 4 (four) year terms, (similar to the President and the Vice-President).

The Treasurer may not serve for more than 6 consecutive years as Treasurer. This restriction is unconditional.

The Librarian/Historian shall be elected for 4 year terms.

The Librarian/Historian shall be able to serve without term limitation.

**VII. QUORUM, PROXY VOTING**

General Membership Meetings (Regular and Special)

Except as herein elsewhere specified, the quorum at all duly called and notified official meetings of the chapter shall be those physically in attendance.

A proxy for the current meeting shall only be valid if it was tendered to the Secretary at the previous regular meeting.

Only paid up chapter members who are also residents of Frederick County shall have the right to serve and vote on the executive committee

At all regular and special meetings of the membership, it shall be the meeting chairperson's discretion to state the method of voting, however, if there is a challenge to the, then a role call of paid chapter members shall be used to decide the challenge.

Executive Committee Meetings

A quorum of the executive committee shall be 51 % of the members of the executive committee.

Proxies are not valid for executive committee meetings.

## **VIII. MEETINGS (When and how called)**

### General Membership

The regular meetings of the chapter shall be held normally on predetermined designated day each month (currently the fourth (3rd) Monday of each month). Variations, if known must be announced at the , preceding regular meeting, regardless the notification of the change must be included in the monthly newsletter with the newsletter being mailed NLT 7 days prior to the reschedule meeting.

Special meetings may be called by the President, by a petition of 25% of the paid membership, or by 51% of the executive committee, at a duly called executive committee meeting. The Secretary shall mail notice of the special meeting to all paid-up members NLT 7 days prior to the date of the meeting.

### Executive Committee

The meetings of the executive committee shall be called by the President to be held at no more than 4 month intervals.

Notice of the meetings will be mailed or phoned to all executive committee members by the Secretary NLT 15 days prior to the date of the meeting.

## **IX. COMMUNICATIONS**

No public communication, written or oral, in the name of the chapter shall be given by any individual or committee to members of the chapter or to members of any other association, public body, private body or official without prior approval of the President, or the Vice-President, or the Secretary, or the majority of the members at a regular or special meeting, or a majority of the executive committee at a duly called executive committee meeting.

## **X. AMENDMENTS TO THESE BY-LAWS**

These By-laws may be amended by the affirmative vote of 75% of the members present at 2 (two) regular or special meetings that are at least 15 days apart.

The amendment must be presented at a prior regular or special meeting.

The notice of the next regular or special meeting will contain the amendment to the By-Laws as an agenda item. The content of the amendment will be included with the notice.

If 75% of the members present at the meeting where the first reading of the amendment occurs, approve the amendment, then it will be placed on the agenda and announced in the notice of the next regular or special meeting that falls at least 15 days after the current meeting.

If 75% of the members present at the second meeting where the amendment is considered then approve the amendment, then it shall become effective immediately, unless the amendment has a specified effective date.

An amendment that fails to be ratified, or an amendment that is substantially the same, may be (re-)submitted, but the Executive Committee shall have the option to delay consideration of the amendment until at least 6 months, but not more than 12 months, after the meeting where the initial amendment failed.

### XI FUNDRAISING

The general membership at regular meeting shall act as a committee of the whole in matters and decisions concerning fundraising.

### XII BUDGETS AND SPECIAL FUNDS.

Normally money that enters the chapter from general fundraising, activities, un-specified donations or chapter dues goes into the "general" fund. The signature of any one of the President, Vice-President or Treasurer will be required on the general operating account to disburse funds. These monies generally used for (but not limited to):

Administrative costs of a general nature.

Meeting notices and newsletter production and mailing expenses.

Publicity and other starter money for fundraisers.

Special requests

Special Funds

Funds received for special purposes will be maintained in separate accounts, the disposition of which shall be determined by the committee established to oversee the project. The committee recommendation to expend funds from these accounts must be approved by the executive committee or the general membership. Two signatures, any 2 of the President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer shall be required to withdraw funds from these accounts.

Revised January 29, 2007 for officer signature



01/29/07

Steven P. Coburn

Co-President Autism Society of America – Frederick County MD Chapter