



Safe Passage Board of Directors
February 07, 2023



Jessica Britt, President – Boston, MA

Jessica started her career at Safe Passage as a long-term volunteer nearly a decade ago after graduating from Bowdoin College. While at Safe Passage, she managed the Guatemala-based development team stewarding support teams, sponsors, international visitors, and local donors. For three subsequent years, Jess worked as a project manager for USAID-funded Democracy and Governance programs throughout Latin America. She also holds a graduate certificate in program monitoring and Evaluation from American University. Since 2015 Jess has been on the National Research & Evaluation team at Year Up (www.yearup.org) a workforce development organization in 17 US states. In her work at Year Up she focuses on program performance management, staff data capacity building, internal research studies, and externally-funded program evaluations.



**Kolia John O'Connor, Vice President and Interim Secretary
– New York, NY**

Kolia currently serves as an advisor and mentor to educational leaders in the United States and around the world. He formerly served as Head of School at Sewickley Academy from 2003 until 2021. With a B.A. in English from Boston University, and an M.A. in English from the University of Avignon (France), Kolia began his career at a boarding school—teaching English, working in a dormitory, and coaching soccer. He spent the subsequent six years as an English teacher and Dean of Students at the all girls' Chapin School in New York City. He then moved to The Browning School, an all boys' school, where he served as Head of Upper School and was later appointed Associate Head of School. While in New York, Kolia earned an M.A. in Educational Leadership from Teachers College at Columbia University, served as secretary of the Assistant Heads Association, and was a founding member of the New York State Association of Independent Schools Diversity Committee. Kolia currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Head Mistresses Association of the East as the treasurer, and Robert Morris University as the chair of the Academic Affairs & Enrollment Management Committee. He is a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools and the Assistant Heads Association, for which he served as secretary. Kolia and his wife, Susan, are the proud parents of two sons.



Alyson Welch, Treasurer – Plainfield, VT

Alyson is an international development professional with more than 10 years of experience in the industry. Since 2011, she has worked in increasingly complex roles for large government contractors, managing projects in Latin America that are financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), including two years in Mexico as the director of operations for a project focused on preventing crime and violence and providing opportunities for at-risk youth. Alyson served as a project director at DAI, overseeing the implementation of Latin American projects that focus on a variety of governance and environmental issues. She has both a bachelor's and master's degree in psychology and is fluent in Spanish. She is currently the Executive Director of Food 4 Farmers and resides with her family in Plainfield, Vermont.



Carolyn Johnson – Yarmouth, ME

Carolyn is a member of the Rotary Club of Yarmouth, Maine, and has been a Rotarian since 2001. She served as Governor for D7780 (Western Maine/Coastal New Hampshire) in 2013-14.

Professionally, Carolyn is an educator with more than 30 years of experience. She taught and was a principal at the elementary school level. She was selected as Distinguished Educator by the Maine Department of Education to assist schools in developing student support teams and anti-bullying programs. In 2006, she volunteered with the Guatemala Literacy Project, an effort that quickly evolved into her developing a program to improve the quality of literacy instruction for indigenous children in Guatemala. Carolyn is the founder of the Culture of Reading Program (CORP), providing training and support in effective literacy instruction for rural schools in Guatemala. Beginning in one school in 2008, CORP now serves more than 15,000 children in 80 primary schools.

Carolyn is a member of the Rotary Club of Yarmouth and served as District Governor of clubs in western ME and coastal NH. She is active as a facilitator with Rotary International, working with local clubs and districts. She is a frequent motivational speaker at regional and international events. Carolyn is Vice-chair of the Literacy Rotary Action Group, an advisor to the Rotary Foundation's Water, Sanitation & Hygiene in Schools programs, and serves as a consultant and project reviewer for major Rotary Foundation education & literacy grants. Carolyn was awarded the Service Above Self Award, Rotary's highest award recognizing Rotarians who demonstrate their commitment to others through volunteering their time and talents.

Carolyn has been involved with a number of community organizations, including Yarmouth Senior Housing, which provides safe, affordable housing options for older citizens. She is on the board of Learning Works, which offers education opportunities for at-risk youth, immigrants, and low-income families. Carolyn and her husband, PDG Peter Johnson, live in Yarmouth, Maine. Their son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren live in Michigan—much too far away from Maine!



Esther Brol – Guatemala

Esther is a founding partner of Communication Consulting Group, where she has been a consultant in strategic communication, as well as in the conceptualization and organization of corporate events for more than 25 years.

She has been an advisor to private companies; (Banco Industrial, Copa Airlines, EPA, Guatemalan Association of Insurance Institutions, Guatemalan Chamber of Construction, etc.); public entities (Guatemalan Tourism Institute); diplomatic corps in Guatemala (Embassies of Canada, Spain and the Foreign Commercial Service of the United States Embassy); different programs of cooperation

agencies and international financial institutions (USAID, European Union, Counterpart International, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, Inter-American Development Bank, Central American Bank for Economic Integration) and different agencies of the United States government (Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce), among others.

She has a bachelor's degree in political science from Francisco Marroquín University and a master's degree in reengineering, information and social communication technologies from Galileo University. She also has a diploma of National Strategic Studies. She is currently studying for a master's degree in leadership and senior management at the Miguel Cornejo School of Leaders in Mexico.

She is a Service Best trainer. She has several certifications in the meetings Industry. She is a professional speaker and interpretive announcer. She participated in several emergency procedure courses taught by Corporate Communications of Continental Airlines (now United Airlines) in Houston and Copa Airlines in Panama. She has been a professor at Galileo and Istmo Universities and has offered training through Panamerican Business School and the Guatemalan Management Association.

Currently, she is the president of the Guatemala Convention and Visitors Bureau, a member of the board of directors of the Guatemalan Management Association, as well as a member of the board of directors of Safe Passage. She is a correspondent for the magazine Rotary in the Heart of the Americas and was an editorial counselor for the magazine Gerencia of the Guatemalan Management Association. She is a founder and an active member of Guatemala La Reforma Rotary Club. She has been the chair of the Public Image Committee of Rotary District 4250 for Guatemala for the last five years. She is the founder and president of the Guatemalan Rotary Academy of Arts and Letters. She lived in Switzerland from 1988 to 1989 (AFS International Intercultural Programs). She speaks Spanish and English and lives in Guatemala City.



Jeff Katz – Cambridge, MA

Jeff is a nonprofit consultant specializing in organizational development, fundraising, and transitional leadership. He has served as an executive director to two organizations and interim

executive director to 13 different organizations including homeless shelters, community development corporations, a Vietnamese community center, and a school in rural Nicaragua. In addition to serving as an interim executive director, Jeff also helps nonprofits in searches for executive directors and other key positions. Jeff helped Safe Passage with an executive transition in 2013—an experience he describes as life changing.

In addition to his work as a nonprofit consultant, Jeff has been very active as a child welfare advocate. He was a member of the Obama for President Child Policy team, testified before Congress, and played a role in passing the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. His op-ed pieces have been published in the *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and he has been interviewed on CNN and National Public Radio. He also served as a child welfare expert at the Neiman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University.

Jeff attended the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, where he was a Public Service Fellow and received a master's in public administration. Jeff later served as a Fellow at the Kennedy School, where he developed the *Listening to Parents Project*, an influential national study of how prospective adoptive parents are treated by public child welfare agencies. He also holds a master's degree in social work from Boston University.



Douglas McAdams – Pittsburgh, PA

Douglas is one of the original founders of Transport Investments, Inc. and American Transport, Inc. He has over 40 years of experience in the transportation industry. After a successful 10-year career in banking and finance, he entered the trucking industry in 1974 when he joined Jenna Corporation, a company that managed the Special Commodities Division of Carolina Freight Carriers Corporation.

In pursuit of opportunities resulting from deregulation of the transportation industry, Douglas and co-founder Burton S. Singer formed ATI. ATI went on to become the platform and flagship carrier of TII. Douglas holds a B.S. from the University of Pittsburgh, advanced studies in accounting and finance at the University of Wisconsin, Duquesne University and the University of Pennsylvania.



Christian von Oppen – Berlin, Germany

Christian holds a degree in economics from Humboldt University in Berlin (2001) and is a certified foundation manager. After completing his studies, he worked for the Munich Re Group in the area of private equity for 7 years. Christian has been an independent entrepreneur in the creative industry since 2007 and founded various photo art and design labels as managing partner of designers group GmbH. As part of a sabbatical, he came to Guatemala for three months in 2006 and volunteered for Safe Passage. Back in Germany, he joined the German support organization Camino Seguro e.V., which he now heads as a board member for more than 10 years.

Juan Francisco Roldan – Guatemala & Vienna, Austria



Juan Francisco has held various volunteer positions at Safe Passage for over a decade, as well as worked within the organization in the public relations department. In Guatemala he has developed spaces for youth participation and civil society and is a member of the founding group of the Asociación Jóvenes por Guatemala. He has promoted community development and youth leadership projects within different sectors of the country and has participated in the development of campaigns to eradicate violence in Guatemala such as Subida por la Vida, Rompe el Ciclo, and No Más Violencia, among others. In addition, he has developed his sports career as a professional soccer player and coach, a technical analyst, and scouting, in both Guatemala and Europe. He currently works on projects for La Asociación Futbolista Españoles AFE and in the international area of RC Deportivo La Coruña, in Spain.

He has a B.S. in communication and information media, from the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala and La Universidad Galileo. He also has a master's in soccer management from La Escuela Universitaria Real Madrid in Spain and completed studies in big data. He is also UEFA licensed as a soccer coach.

Santiago Bolaños Torrebiarte – Guatemala & México City



Santiago is Guatemalan—based in Mexico City—he is the co-founder and CEO of [Kolibrie Energy](#), a renewable energy feedstock trading company that sources used cooking oil and other waste oils to transform them into renewable energy. Kolibrie Energy operates in Mexico, Central America, Colombia, and Ecuador. Santiago graduated with a degree in Economics and Latin American Studies from Emory University.

Santiago first got to know Safe Passage when he was young through a school field trip, the experience was so impactful that years later he sought to re-engage. He currently serves on the board of Grupo Coban, a 100-year-old Guatemalan footwear company and of the Fundacion Miguel Torrebiarte, a foundation focused on combating malnutrition and promoting education in Guatemala.

Matthew Bucher – Hamel, Minnesota



Matt is a Director in PwC's Trust Solutions practice with over 14 years of experience in public accounting. He has served a number of Fortune 500 multinational audit clients within various industries including retail & consumer products, agricultural Co-ops, industrial products, automotive and manufacturing, and technology. Through this experience, Matt has been responsible for the coordination of audit

work across a number of different geographies and is actively involved in addressing complex accounting, reporting and audit matters. Matt has led teams of various sizes, some as large as over 40 team members.

Matt also serves clients in a non-audit capacity related to identifying different ways PwC can help and provide insight into the client's business for it to grow, adapt and stay efficient. Matt has extensive technical accounting experience in complex areas including shared service centers, business combinations, revenue recognition, restructuring, debt and equity transactions, valuations (including assessing forecasts and budgets), impairment, pension, consolidations, and derivatives. Matt has significant experience with Board and executive level communications and also has extensive SEC reporting and internal controls experience.

In recent years (2017 - 2020), Matt performed an international tour with PwC in the Bratislava, Slovakia office, serving several Fortune 500 multinational clients in their respective shared service centers. In this role, Matt performed significant coordination with local teams located across Europe and Asia, while supporting the US teams with US GAAP/GAAS expertise of operations performed at the shared service centers. During this time, Matt developed a significant number of relationships which were leveraged when corporate teams needed the PwC network to implement new processes and become more efficient, renegotiate fees, or serve the client in a new/unique way. Matt also helped mobilize and set up a second shared service center approach and team in India in order to aid the client that was on their transformation journey. Matt's extensive network is leveraged for insight on his current multinational clients.

Matt graduated from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University with a Bachelor of Science in Business and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and holds a CPA license in the state of Minnesota.