

## 2. matt.zarras@farmhockey.org

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Phone Number:	(952) 426-2702
Number of years your family has been involved in FYHA:	5
Which board position are you seeking?	At Large Director
Why are you interested in this role specifically?	<p>I previously served as a Director on the board and this past year stepped into the Webmaster role to help strengthen our communication and online presence. During that time, I focused on improving our website, social media engagement, and fundraising visibility to better support our families and programs.</p> <p>I am stepping away from the Webmaster position because we have identified someone exceptional who is well-suited to take it to the next level. I believe in putting the right people in the right roles, and this transition allows the association to continue building momentum.</p> <p>I'm seeking to return as an At-Large Director because I care deeply about FYHA and want to continue contributing at a broader level. We've built a strong foundation, and I'd like to help build on that progress supporting our coaches, families, and players while keeping the focus on long-term stability and growth.</p>
List children or dependents currently in FYHA and their level of play for the upcoming season:	Easton who will be a first year Squirt next year
Describe your prior involvement with FYHA (board service, coaching, volunteering, committee work, events, etc.). Please include approximate commitment and responsibilities.	<p>I previously served as an At-Large Director before transitioning into the Webmaster role this past year. As a Director, I supported general board initiatives and participated in planning discussions and association decision-making.</p> <p>As Webmaster, I was responsible for managing and maintaining the FYHA website, addressing and resolving web related issues, updating content, and ensuring information was accurate and timely for families. I also managed all social media platforms, promoting programs, events, registration information, sponsorships, and player recognition to improve communication and engagement.</p> <p>In addition, I served on the fundraising committee, supporting event planning and sponsor visibility, and volunteered at various association events including the golf tournament, mite meltdown, open house etc I was also serving as our mascot ROAR. My commitment has been consistent and hands-on, with regular weekly responsibilities managing digital platforms along with additional time dedicated to meetings, events, and fundraising activities throughout the season.</p>
Describe any leadership, volunteer, or board experience outside of	Outside of FYHA, I serve as Vice President of a transportation company where I oversee multiple divisions, including recruiting, orientation, background investigations,

FYHA that is relevant to this role (professional, nonprofit, school, community, etc.).

and asset management. In this role, I am responsible for strategic planning, operational execution, compliance oversight, budgeting, and team leadership.

My professional background requires clear decision-making, accountability, financial oversight, and long-term planning which are skills that directly translate to board service. I regularly manage complex processes, resolve issues efficiently, and work to build sustainable systems that support organizational growth.

In addition to my professional leadership experience, I have remained active in community and volunteer initiatives with CurePSP and also MN Rec League which reinforces my commitment to service and building strong, well-run organizations.

What skills, experience, or perspective do you bring that would strengthen the FYHA Board?

I bring executive level leadership experience, operational discipline, and a long-term perspective focused on sustainability and accountability. In my professional role, I oversee multiple departments, manage budgets, build processes, and hold teams accountable to performance standards. That experience translates directly to board work, making sound decisions, asking the right questions, and ensuring the association operates responsibly and efficiently.

From my time as both a Director and Webmaster, I bring institutional knowledge of how the FYHA board functions, how communication impacts families, and where systems can be strengthened. I understand the importance of transparency, consistency, and clear expectations.

I also believe board service is about work, not titles. I've seen firsthand that organizations are strongest when members step up to contribute meaningfully rather than simply hold a position. My commitment is to roll up my sleeves, do the work, and make a measurable difference for our players, families, and coaches.

I believe in steady leadership, putting the right people in the right roles, and building on what works rather than constantly reinventing the wheel. My focus is on the long-term health and stability of the association.

Are there specific areas or committees you would be willing to support if elected?

In addition to continuing to support social media and fundraising efforts, I would like to help strengthen accountability and behavioral standards within the association. I believe youth sports should build character just as much as skill. Players and coaches both benefit from clear expectations, consistent standards, and firm but fair leadership on and off the ice.

Strong foundations create stronger athletes and stronger young adults. My goal would be to help ensure that expectations around conduct, sportsmanship, and representation of FYHA are clearly communicated and consistently upheld. Structure, discipline, and accountability are not negative, they create stability and pride within an organization.

By reinforcing those principles while continuing to grow our fundraising and communication efforts, we can build a culture that families are proud to be part of and that players carry with them long after their time in the program.

Board service sometimes requires supporting decisions that are unpopular but necessary. Describe a time when you had to make or support a difficult decision in the best interest of an organization, team, or group.

During my time involved with FYHA, I supported decisions that reinforced standards of conduct for players and families, even when those decisions were unpopular. In youth sports, emotions can run high, and it can be tempting to overlook behavior for the sake of avoiding conflict. However, I believe consistency matters.

In one situation, expectations around sportsmanship and code of conduct were not being met. Supporting accountability measures was not easy and there was pushback. However, maintaining clear standards was necessary to protect team culture and ensure fairness for all players and coaches.

While not everyone agreed in the moment, reinforcing expectations ultimately strengthened the environment. I believe organizations thrive when leadership is willing to make principled decisions that support long-term character development and integrity, even when they are uncomfortable in the short term.

How do you handle disagreements or conflicts when working with other adults who may strongly disagree with you?

When disagreements arise, I focus on staying calm and keeping the discussion centered on facts, policy, and what is best for the organization. I believe most conflicts escalate when conversations become personal or emotional, so I work to separate the issue from the individual.

I listen carefully to understand the other perspective, ask clarifying questions, and make sure we are working from accurate information. Once all viewpoints are on the table, I am comfortable stating my position clearly and respectfully, even if it differs from others.

At the end of the day, I believe healthy disagreement is part of strong governance. Once a decision is made, I support it and move forward professionally. The goal is not to “win” an argument with someone, it is to reach the best outcome for the association.

Do you understand and commit to these expectations for the full term of service?

Yes

If no, please explain.

Do you acknowledge and accept these responsibilities?

Yes

If no, please explain.

Why are you seeking election to the FYHA Board, and what do you hope to contribute during your term?

I am seeking election to the FYHA Board because I care deeply about the long-term future of the association and believe we are capable of more. Over the past two years, we have made meaningful progress in communication, visibility, and fundraising. However, I believe we are at a point where we need to move beyond incremental improvements and take deliberate steps forward.

I would like to help position the association for larger initiatives, including pursuing major sponsorships and continuing conversations around long-term facility growth, including the potential for a new rink. These types of advancements require structure, planning, and consistent leadership.

I also believe we need to broaden engagement and bring more people into meaningful roles. Too often, the same small group carries the majority of the workload. For the association to grow, we need to expand ownership, recruit outside support, and build systems that allow more families and community members to contribute effectively.

During my term, I hope to help move the needle by strengthening fundraising efforts, elevating our external partnerships, reinforcing standards and culture, and ensuring we are building not just for this season but for the next generation of players.

Is there any additional information you believe is relevant to your candidacy for board service?

I am committed to continuing to drive thoughtful growth and meaningful progress within the association. I am not someone who holds a position passively. I believe in contributing, taking ownership, and following through. When I commit to something, I see it through.

That mindset carries into all areas of my life. Whether in my professional leadership role, my volunteer work, or my personal commitments such as marathon running in support of causes I believe in, I value discipline, preparation, and perseverance. I believe those traits are important in board service as well.

FYHA has strong potential. With steady leadership, expanded community involvement, and a willingness to think bigger, we can continue building an association that develops not just strong hockey players, but strong young people.

Why are you seeking election to the FYHA Board and what do you hope to contribute during your term

Is there any additional information you believe is relevant to your candidacy for board service

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