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INTRODUCTION

Charis Circle, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation was formed in 1996 to support and to grow programs and community outreach and service projects that had formerly been created and facilitated by the staff of Charis Books and More. Through fundraising among individuals and granting institutions and through events and other outreach venues, Charis Circle has grown, both in budget and in programs, since its beginnings. Our commitment to feminist principles, diversity in community, and mentoring for girls and women of all ages continues to form our identity and guide our work.

Our vision: We want to create a feminist world where racism, sexism, homophobia and all other oppressions do not exist.

Our mission: Charis Circle exists to foster feminist community and to create social change. Charis Circle offers educational and cultural events and programs to the Atlanta community and beyond that empower women, men and children to honor themselves and work for justice in the world.

Working within the context of this vision and mission and in continuity with our history and heritage, Charis Circle Board members both embody and continue to shape the ongoing growth and developing goals of Charis Circle. Welcome to this dynamic organization!

CHARIS CIRCLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Board shall consist of the following positions: Chair, Chair-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Board Development Coordinator, Community Liaison, Individual Donors Coordinator, Fundraising Events Coordinator, Workplace Giving Coordinator, Grants Coordinator, Publicity Coordinator, Newsletter Coordinator, Internet Coordinator, Database Coordinator. Specific responsibilities differ among various board members, but all are equal members of the board with equal and shared responsibility for the vision and mission of Charis Circle.

TERMS AND TERMS OF SERVICE

Each board member shall serve a two-year term with the possibility of serving two consecutive two-year terms. Six months prior to the end of her first term, each board member will be contacted to see if she wishes to serve another two years in her present capacity or fill another open position on the board or rotate off the board.

After an absence of at least one year from the board, a board member may return to serve one two year term or two consecutive two-year terms. (See above.)

The board chair will serve only one two year term as chair. The chair elect shall be selected prior to the last year of the chair's term and will assume the position of chair of the board upon the expiration of the former chair's term. Thus each chair will serve one year as a chair elect and two years as chair. As with other board members, after an absence of at least one year, she may rejoin the board.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

The Statement of Agreement that each board member will sign when joining the board articulates the general expectations for each board member's service to Charis Circle. It states:

As a board member of Charis Circle, I understand that my duties and responsibilities include the following:

I am fiscally responsible, with the other board members, for this organization. It is my duty to know what our budget is and to take an active part in planning the budget and the fund-raising to meet it.

I am morally responsible for the health and well being of this organization. As a member of the board, I have pledged myself to carry out its mission. I am fully committed and dedicated to this mission.

I will give what is for me a significant financial donation. I may give this as a one-time donation each year, or I may pledge to give a certain amount several times during the year.

I will actively engage in fundraising for this organization in whatever ways are best suited to me. These may include individual solicitation, undertaking special events, writing mail appeals and the like. There is no set amount of money I must raise because I am making a good faith agreement to do my best and to bring in as much money as I can.

I agree to serve on the board for a two-year term. I will attend a minimum of nine board meetings every year and communicate with other board members and staff by email and phone conversations when needed. I will also attend the annual board retreat and special meetings of the board when they are called. I understand that commitment to this board will involve a good deal of time, probably no less than fifteen hours per month on average.

I understand that no quotas have been set, that no rigid standards of measurement and achievement have been formed, and that annual evaluations take the form of self-evaluations. Every board member is making a statement of faith about every other board member. We trust each other to carry out the above agreements to the best of our ability, each in our own way, with knowledge, approval and support of all. I know that if I fail to act in good faith, I must resign, or the board may ask me to resign.

I will contribute to board meetings with good will, a sense of humor, respect for all present, and a spirit of cooperation.

I will maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive information.

In turn this organization is responsible to me in a number of ways:

- I will receive regular financial reports at board meetings.
- I can call on the staff and other board members to discuss programs and policies, goals and objectives.
- I will receive cooperation and support from board members and staff as I seek information necessary to carry out my fiscal, legal and moral responsibilities to Charis Circle.

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

CHAIR: Oversees strategic plan implementation and revision; convenes and facilitates meetings; meets monthly with Executive Director and with other staff as needed; supports other board members in fulfilling their duties.

CHAIR ELECT:
Elected at the beginning of the chair's second year of service, the chair-elect serves for one year in that capacity. Observes the work of the chair, learns the organization and develops her leadership goals. At the termination of the chair's tenure, assumes the position of chair.

SECRETARY:
Takes minutes at all regularly scheduled board meetings and distributes them in a timely fashion. Archives minutes and other documents of the organization as needed.

TREASURER:
Oversees accounts of the properties, funds and expenditures of Charis Circle. Helps develop and track adherence to budget; makes financial reports to Board members at each regular meeting.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR:
Oversees recruitment, screening, selection and orientation of new Board members; participates in annual Board self-evaluation process; conducts exit interviews with departing Board members. Maintains current Board member profiles.

COMMUNITY LIAISON:
Builds collegial and collaborative relationships between Charis Circle and other organizations and institutions having compatible missions.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS COORDINATOR:

Facilitates Board's written and in-person solicitations of individual donors.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS COORDINATOR:

Recruits, convenes and supports committees to plan and carry out fundraising events.

WORKPLACE GIVING COORDINATOR:

Interfaces between Georgia Shares and Charis Circle Board to maximize workplace giving.

GRANTS COORDINATOR:

Researches grant-making institutions (corporate, foundation, government, faith-based); researches personal connections between Charis Circle and prospective grantors (e.g. among Board, former Board, other supporters); supports staff in proposal development, follow-up and ongoing relationship building with funders.

PUBLICITY COORDINATOR:

Plans and carries out publicity strategy using print and broadcast media and other opportunities (flyers, tables at festivals, etc.)

NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR

Working with staff, manages the production and distribution of the Charis Circle Newsletter.

INTERNET COORDINATOR:

Maintains and maximizes the organization's use of the internet for programs, publicity and internal communication.

DATABASE COORDINATOR:

Maintains records of donors and mailing list; upgrades database as needed to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

BOARD RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

The following procedures guide the recruitment of board members whether the opening occurs because a board member resigns or is at the end of her tenure.

1. Identification of prospective board members: The Board Development Coordinator, (BDC) working with the nominating committee, the other board members, and the staff, will develop a list of prospective board members on an ongoing basis. If any current board or staff member has objections to the person being considered, the concerns will be discussed at a board meeting, and the person's name may be removed. Each prospective board member will be contacted by phone to assess her interest and will be sent a Prospective Member Questionnaire (see appendix 2 of this handbook.) The BDC will keep records of the phone conversations and a file of the returned questionnaires and will report regularly at board meetings the names on the list.
2. Recruitment for a specific position: When there is an opening on the board, the BDC will contact the person(s) whom step one identified as potentially qualified for and interested in that position. If the person is still interested, the BDC or another designated board member and the Executive Director or another designated staff person will meet with the prospective board member. At that time, the prospective member will be given a copy of the Board Handbook and all other Charis Circle documents that may be helpful including literature on Circle programs.
3. Recommendation: The board and staff persons who conducted the interview will report their findings to the board at the next board meeting. If the recommendation is favorable, the board will vote.
4. All board members will be elected by a unanimous vote of the board members present and all absentee votes that have been submitted in writing prior to the meeting.

5. Notification: The BDC will notify the prospective board member of the outcome of the vote. If the person was voted onto the board, the BDC will help to make available to the new member whatever resources she needs for a smooth transition onto the board, including, where appropriate, a meeting with the retiring board member.

BOARD EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The conditions of board membership are articulated in the Statement of Agreement that each board members signs when she joins the board.

Because so much of our work together is based upon mutuality and trust, there is no formal review process by which staff or board members evaluate the “performance” of others.

Instead, as a way to help board members maintain focus on their overall responsibility and board commitment, each board member will fill out a Self-Evaluation Form each year. (See appendix 4 of this handbook.) She will then meet with the BDC and one staff person and another board member of her choice to discuss the self-evaluation and to explore the resources available to make the changes, if any, that the process suggests.

In addition, if, in the course of a member’s service, problems arise that need to be addressed, all board members are empowered and responsible to help one another carry out their tasks and express their needs and viewpoint.

Appendix 1

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT

As a board member of Charis Circle, I understand that my duties and responsibilities include the following:

I am fiscally responsible, with the other board members, for this organization. It is my duty to know what our budget is and to take an active part in planning the budget and the fund-raising to meet it.

I am morally responsible for the health and well being of this organization. As a member of the board, I have pledged myself to carry out its mission. I am fully committed and dedicated to this mission.

I will give what is for me a significant financial donation. I may give this as a one-time donation each year, or I may pledge to give a certain amount several times during the year.

I will actively engage in fundraising for this organization in whatever ways are best suited to me. These may include individual solicitation, undertaking special events, writing mail appeals and the like. There is no set amount of money I must raise because I am making a good faith agreement to do my best and to bring in as much money as I can.

I agree to serve on the board for a two-year term. I will attend a minimum of nine board meetings every year and communicate with other board members and staff by email and phone conversations when needed. I will also attend the annual board retreat and special meetings of the board when they are called. I understand that commitment to this board will involve a good deal of time, probably no less than fifteen hours per month on average.

I understand that no quotas have been set, that no rigid standards of measurement and achievement have been formed, and that annual evaluations take the form of self-evaluations. Every board member is making a statement of faith about every other board member. We are trusting each other to carry out the above agreements to the best of our ability, each in our own way, with knowledge, approval and support of all. I know that if I fail to act in good faith, I must resign, or the board may ask me to resign.

I will contribute to board meetings with good will, a sense of humor, respect for all present, and a spirit of cooperation.

I will maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive information.

In turn, this organization is responsible to me in a number of ways:

- I will receive regular financial reports at board meetings.
- I can call on the staff and other board members to discuss programs and policies, goals and objectives.
- I will receive cooperation and support from board members and staff as I seek information necessary to carry out my fiscal, legal and moral responsibilities to Charis Circle.

Board Member _____ Date _____

Board Chair _____ Date _____

Executive Director _____ Date _____

Appendix 2

PROSPECTIVE BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Address:

Phone numbers:

Email address:

Please give us a short history of your relationship with Charis Circle:

Do you consider yourself a feminist? If so, how do you understand the term?

Have you previously worked with/in a feminist organization (in any capacity)? If so, how would you characterize that experience?

What skills and experience do you bring to Charis Circle?

(Please use additional pages if necessary!)

Appendix 3

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

The information on this form is for Charis Circle Board and staff use only. The demographic data helps us to fulfill our commitment to diversity. Information gathered here will be reported to those outside Charis Circle Board and staff only in the aggregate.

My name is _____.

I joined the board on _____.

My board position is _____.

I was born on _____ which makes me _____ years old.

My racial/ethnic background is _____.

I am single_____, not single_____, additional details are optional(!)_____.

I ___do ___do not have children.

My sexual orientation is _____.

Here is a brief employment history.

My previous volunteer experience has been

My current community involvement including religious organizations is

My hobbies are

I have the following skills and experience that you'd **never** guess from the previous three answers

I have some experience in, or knowledge of these fundraising areas

- Special events (What kind? _____)
- Gift contacts
- Foundation/corporate contacts
- Planned giving experience
- Academic studies/grants

Signed

Date

Appendix 4

SELF – EVALUATION FORM

The following statements are based on our Statement of Agreement that each of us signs when we join Charis Circle Board. Please read each carefully and write a sentence or two about things you're pleased about and other things you want to change.

1. I am very familiar with the financial situation of Charis Circle, including a general sense of our overall budget.

2. I have participated in most if not all of our fundraising efforts this year, including: the concert, the yard sale, and the ask letters.

3. I have solicited donations to Charis Circle.

4. I have given what is for me a significant donation to Charis Circle.

5. My attendance at board meetings has been good (I promised to attend at least 9 Board meetings.)

6. I have also attended special meetings of Charis Circle, including the retreat.

7. I have fulfilled the obligations and responsibilities of my specific board function and met at least some of my goals.

8. I have made myself available to other board members between meetings, communicating with them when necessary either by phone or email.

9. I maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive information.

10. I have served as a Charis Circle "ambassador" with individuals and groups with whom I come in contact, talking about Charis Circle, informing persons about our work and inviting them to participate in a variety of ways.

Signed

Date

Appendix 5

BYLAWS OF THE NONPROFIT CORPORATION: CHARIS CIRCLE, INC.

These bylaws constitute the code of rules adopted by The Charis Circle, Inc., a Georgia corporation, for the regulation and management of its affairs.

This corporation will have the purposes or powers as may be stated in its Articles of Incorporation, and such powers as are now or may be granted hereafter by law.

The primary purpose of this corporation is to support varied programs to ensure the continued discussion and development of feminist ideas and practices. The Charis Circle will offer educational and literary programs in the Atlanta community to foster feminist community and to increase understanding of all people.

The principle place of business of this corporation is within the space located at 1189 Euclid Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307.

The location of the initial registered office of this corporation is 1189 Euclid Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307. Such office will be continuously maintained in the State of Georgia for the duration of the corporation.

The corporation will not have members.

The corporation will have an office, a board and a staff to conduct its business.

The Board of Directors is that group of persons vested with the management of the business and affairs of this corporation, subject to the law, the Articles of Incorporation, and these bylaws.

The qualifications for becoming and remaining a Director of the corporation are as follows:

- 1) Directors must be residents of the State of Georgia.
- 2) Directors must be elected to the Board of Directors by a unanimous vote of Board members present at the meeting and all absentee votes submitted in writing prior to the meeting.

The number of Board of Directors will be not less than three at any time.

Meetings of the Board of Directors, regular or special, will ordinarily be held at 1189 Euclid Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors will ordinarily be held at 7:00 p.m. on the second Monday of the month and no fewer than six times per year.

Special meetings of the Board of Directors can be called by any of the Directors, from time to time, as needed.

A majority of the Board of Directors will constitute a quorum.

Decisions will be based upon a majority vote of the members present at a Board meeting.

The officers of the corporation will consist of a Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Other Board members may be elected as required.

The Chair will be the primary governing officer of this corporation and will, subject to the control of the Board of Directors, supervise and control the affairs of this corporation. The chair will perform all duties incident to such office including such other duties as may be prescribed from time to time by the Board of Directors.

The Secretary will keep minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors and will be custodian of all the corporate records and will perform all duties incident to the office of the secretary and such other duties as may be required by law, by the Articles of Incorporation or which may be assigned from time to time by the Board of Directors.

The treasurer will oversee all bookkeeping and accounting functions of the organization, help to develop and track adherence to budget, make financial reports to Board members at each regular meeting and perform such other duties as may be required by law, by the Articles of Incorporation or which may be assigned from time to time by the Board of Directors.

Any officer elected or appointed may be removed by persons authorized under these bylaws to elect or appoint such officers whenever in their judgment the best interests of this corporation will be served. However, such removal will be without prejudice to any contract rights of the officer removed.

Duties of other Board positions are on file with the Board Chair.

The Executive Director will be head of staff and will be accountable to the Board of Directors. The Board will be responsible for hiring, firing, evaluating, and establishing the compensation for that position.

The fiscal year of this corporation will be a calendar year.

Except as otherwise provided by law, checks, drafts, promissory notes, orders for the payment of money, and other evidences of indebtedness of the corporation will be signed by an officer of the Board or a specially designated staff member. Any proposed or actual expenditures, contracts or leases that are not budgeted and that are in excess of \$500.00 must be approved by a majority of Board Members.

The procedure for amending these bylaws is as follows:

Written notice of a proposed amendment to the bylaws must be provided to all Board Members at least one week prior to the Board meeting at which it will be considered. The amendment will be approved and incorporated into the bylaws upon a majority vote of Board Members present at that meeting.

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