The Toasting Hope Tasting Event would be impossible without the work of our amazing committee members. This year, we were honored to work alongside 20 incredibly passionate and committed members as they tirelessly secured sponsorships and acquired donated items, during a very challenging year no less. To learn more about the committee, we recently interviewed Angie May & Lisa Pigott, our Event Co-Chairs, about their vital role with the Foundation.

How did you first become connected with the Foundation?
We both became involved after our daughters were diagnosed with epilepsy. Ironically, epilepsy is what brought us together, developing a deep friendship that will last a lifetime.

**AM:** Back in 2011, I attended one of the Open Houses with my family; I remember the first person we met when we walked in the door was Brianna Romines, welcoming us with a big hug and a classic, warm Brianna smile. We were hooked! In 2012, we participated in the Summer Stroll for Epilepsy, and we knew that this was an organization we wanted to be a part of.

**LP:** My journey began in 2015, when Angie asked me to be a part of the Toasting Hope committee. This organization was the perfect fit for us, as my daughter Teagan had recently been diagnosed with epilepsy.

What is your role as Toasting Hope Tasting Event Co-Chairs?
We are responsible for working closely with the Foundation to execute their vision for the event. We recruit new committee members every year; communicate information to our team; and keep the committee motivated, excited, and passionate. We meet as a team once a month and focus on gathering auction items, sponsorships, selling event tickets, recruiting volunteers, and more. This year was unique in the fact that we met virtually; we gathered items using virtual wish lists, building auctions baskets from those items, and constantly promoted the virtual event.

What makes the Toasting Hope Tasting Event so unique?
The Toasting Hope is an event that is planned by people who have a personal connection to epilepsy; every ounce of this event is planned with heart and a purpose. We hope for guests to leave feeling inspired and moved by the fact that their attendance has an impact on the epilepsy community. It’s not just another event; we want it to be an experience; through the lighting, the decor, the music, the red carpet, every ounce is intentional and thoroughly considered. We also feature a special video of inspiring stories from persons in the epilepsy community, which is when the night truly commences.

Tell us one of your most memorable moments in your role.

In 2018, for the 10th annual event, we knew that our “toast to hope” had to be memorable. We coordinated a detailed plan to sneak Teagan, Madison, and Ashlyn backstage to bring them onto the stage to help us present the cheers! We were on pins and needles all night trying to keep their appearance a secret! The three of them are the reason why we fight so hard for those in the epilepsy community. It only seemed fitting that they be a part of the most impactful portion of the evening.

What does the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan mean to you?
The Foundation means community—connection to something greater than the challenges epilepsy has presented in our individual lives. Epilepsy has taken so much from us; it has attempted to strip our kids of their childhood and important and special moments in their lives. Through the Foundation, we have been able to gain so much more than what has been lost. The girls have attended summer camp at North Star Reach, and we have had a blast at the last eight Strolls. We both have connections to other families similar to ours and access to incredible resources and support systems that we wouldn’t have if it weren’t for the Foundation.

To find out about our volunteer opportunities, contact Lauren Parrott at (800) 377-6226 ext 1220 or email at lparrott@epilepsymichigan.org.