

October 8, 2025

Dear friends and neighbors,

My name is Kate Malarney, and I've been asked to share part of my family's story. This is out of my comfort zone, especially because we're still learning to navigate our "new normal." It's ongoing and messy—not your typical happy-ending story. But I believe that when we speak up about hard things, it helps build a stronger, more compassionate community.

I grew up here in the Cleveland area. I met my husband, John, when I was working at a coffee shop on Chagrin Blvd. after college. We stayed near family to raise our three daughters in the Chagrin area.

Life didn't exactly unfold as we expected.

Our middle daughter, Abbey, was diagnosed on the autism spectrum at age 4, but when she was 12, she started showing signs of mental illness. In 2015 she was diagnosed with early-onset schizophrenia. It was heartbreaking, confusing, and isolating as we watched our child lose touch with reality.

Just as we were finding our footing on this new path, our youngest daughter, Margaret, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic lymphoma. She started chemotherapy in 2020 and experienced a rare side effect of hemorrhagic pancreatitis. She started bleeding internally, lost oxygen to her brain, and slipped into a coma. She spent 14 months in the hospital, during the pandemic, and even entered hospice care at one point. But she defied the odds and survived. She came home miraculously cancer-free, but with serious injury to her brain and in a wheelchair.

It was during these dark and difficult years with our daughters that we found Two & Company. And even though our story is far from over, the Two has become a part of it, which brings real hope and joy into our lives. If you've ever visited the Two, you've probably seen these phrases on their walls:

Life without labels.

We're better together.

Celebrate strengths and diversity.

I can tell you from experience that those aren't just slogans. Two & Company actually lives by them.

What stood out to us the most when we first connected with the Two was how they treated Abbey. It wasn't just kindness; it was dignity. They showed a desire to know and understand her.



Here's our family on the day Margaret came home after 14 months in the hospital. Clockwise from left: Easy (the dog), Abbey, Margaret, John, Sarah, and me, Kate.

They didn't focus on her diagnosis; they focused on *her* — her creativity, her sense of humor, and her unique abilities. Abbey first joined one of the Two's summer camps, and at the time she was trying to cope with the intense internal stories, sometimes sad and sometimes scary, that characterize her mental illness. I'll never forget when the camp director, Johanna, called to tell me she was sitting outside with Abbey, talking her through one of her stories. She wasn't flustered or uncomfortable, just calm, present and caring. That kind of response is rare.

Two & Company doesn't see problems to fix. They see people to believe in.

The Two helped Abbey find her first part-time job last summer, with one of their new business partners. And Margaret started their job readiness program this fall. We don't know what the future holds. Abbey is still settling into her new job, Margaret is still adjusting to her new reality. But whatever comes, knowing the Two is walking with us makes a big difference.

My husband always says society tends to offer families like ours straight lines: *Here's the system; take it or leave it.* But we live in a wiggly line world — and Two & Company gets that. They have stretched to meet our family where we are. They've advocated for our girls in the school system. They have shown us a different way of integrating our world with individuals of all abilities. Most importantly, they have loved, respected and believed in our daughters.

This is a difficult story to tell. But my husband and I are willing to do it because we want you to know what kind of place the Two really is. And we want you to know what kind of impact you can have by supporting them. As you are considering year-end charitable giving, please include Two & Company in your plans. **Because when you give to the Two, your gift doesn't just support a program; it supports *people* — young adults like Abbey and Margaret, and families like ours.**

Thank you for taking the time to read more about my family and about the Two. It matters more than you think.

With gratitude,

Kate & John

Kate & John Malarney

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PS: If you're like me, you might set this letter aside with every intention of sending something later. Instead, **please take a minute right now and write a check to The Two Foundation and mail it back in the included envelope.** Supporting the Two has helped me connect to something bigger and more beautiful than I expected. Because when you give to the Two, you're not just making a donation — you're becoming part of this inspiring movement.