



# MICHELLE MATTHEWS

## 👤 Profile

Dynamic Executive Director with over twenty years of nonprofit experience. I am adept at implementing innovative fundraising initiatives, resulting in a seven-fold increase in annual revenue. I have a proven track record of leading impactful community projects and fostering inclusive environments. Skilled in team development, operational efficiency, and transparent financial reporting. My strengths lie in creativity, decision-making, problem-solving, communication, and leadership.

## 📁 Employment History

### Executive Director at Arlington Garden , Pasadena, CA

July 2017 — Present

- Implemented strategic fundraising initiatives and diversified revenue streams, growing the organization's annual budget from \$50k to \$400k in earned revenue over five years
- Directed major capital improvements including the installation of a Pasadena Craftsman tile-inspired fountain and an electrical drinking fountain, aligning with and implementing the organization's strategic plan
- Spearheaded the development and implementation of the organization's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access statement through a collaborative and inclusive process, addressing key challenges and fostering a more inclusive environment
- Established and refined company operations to ensure full compliance with all regulatory and legal requirements, enhancing operational efficiency and accountability
- Recruited, trained, and developed a high-performing team of 4 part-time employees and 5 independent contractors, significantly improving team capability and organizational performance
- Effectively liaised with the board of directors, advisory council, community partners, donors, and City of Pasadena staff to foster strong collaborations and advance organizational goals
- Led the efforts that resulted in Arlington Garden receiving the 2019 Nonprofit of the Year Award from the 25th Senate District through impactful community projects and enhanced public engagement
- Cultivated a collaborative and transparent organizational culture through targeted initiatives, leading to improved team cohesion and engagement
- Conducted thorough assessments of budgetary needs and streamlined the creation of comprehensive financial reports, enhancing transparency and stakeholder trust
- Designed and executed successful fundraising campaigns and events, increasing donor engagement and identifying new opportunities for organizational growth

## Details

Monrovia, CA  
(323) 595-1158  
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## Skills

Leadership

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Creativity

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Communication

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Decision Making

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Problem Solving

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## Links

[LinkedIn](#)  
[michelleannmatthews.com](http://michelleannmatthews.com)

- Developed and implemented targeted marketing strategies to effectively promote the organization's mission and "voice," resulting in increased public awareness and support, including unique communications initiatives and publications, like our 5th grade Field Guide; horticultural guide and Annual Reports
- Refined and developed the organization's mission and vision to align with strategic goals, enhancing clarity and direction

### **Design Director at Sundance Institute, California & Utah**

2014 – 2016

- Used the festival staff structure for the Sundance Film Festival to create an in-house design team, saving the organization \$100k annually that was previously spent on outsourced design firms
- Successfully motivated, supported, and managed remote teams in Utah and Los Angeles, ensuring seamless collaboration and project efficiency
- Streamlined design processes and managed timelines, enhancing overall efficiency and delivered festival graphics on time
- Oversaw and optimized multiple environmental graphic production budgets, and strengthened vendor relationships
- Provided comprehensive art direction and design for the Sundance Institute Sundance Film Festival and its sister festivals in London, Hong Kong, and Los Angeles, ensuring brand consistency and creative excellence

### **Founder at Zanja Madre, Pasadena**

2008 – 2013

Co-managed a design/build landscape contracting business, overseeing proposals, estimates, client relations, payroll, purchasing, scheduling, hiring, and managing subcontractors and vendors. Installed gardens at commercial and residential landscapes including Environmental Charter School in Lawndale, CA and the “Public Fruit Theater” at EATLACMA.

### **Senior Designer at Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles**

April 2007 – November 2008

Design of layouts for the Contemporary magazine, environmental signage, special event invitations, gallery guides, building and street pole banners, print and web ads, website mock-ups, membership materials, t-shirts, brochures, and educational materials. Attended press checks, garnered quotes and took photos for use in multiple publications. Collaborated with various departments including communications, education, development, curatorial, exhibitions, operations and the MOCA store.

### **Senior Designer at American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California**

August 2002 – March 2007

Responsible for the design of all printed materials from concept-through completion, as well as the website and various campaign websites for communications, advocacy, fundraising and legislative purposes. Designed and created original concepts for annual reports, special reports, membership recruitment brochures,

general brochures, press-kit folders, monthly newsletter, special event invitations and designed more than fifteen tribute books for over a dozen awards dinners. Worked closely with the executive director of ACLU/NC to art direct a statewide voting campaign. Created a photographic tour of Los Angeles County Men's Central Jail for board and task force presentations.

## ★ Leadership Development

**Climate Resilience Leadership Network, CORO**

2024

**Leadership Pasadena**

2023

**Justice Outside Rising Leaders Fellowship**

2023

**Annenberg Alchemy**

2022

**Executive Service Corps' Developing Development**

2021

**Executive Service Corps' Executive Director's Leadership Institute**

2019

## 🎓 Education

**Master of Fine Arts, University of Southern California**

- *Full Scholarship & MPAS Teaching Assistant*
- *The Pedagogy of Space, MFA Thesis Paper*

**Bachelors of Fine Arts, School of the Art Institute of Chicago**