

A top-down photograph of a group of people's hands arranged in a circle on a dark, textured ground. Each hand is making a peace sign (V-shape). The hands are of various skin tones and are wearing different accessories like bracelets and watches. The background is a dark, possibly asphalt, surface with some lighter patches.

MISSION
PARTNERS

**2018 SOCIAL
IMPACT REPORT**

“Individually we are one drop.
Together we are an ocean.”

—*Ryunosuke Satoro*

A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear Friends,

When I set out to launch Mission Partners in 2017—nearly 14 years after launching C.Fox Communications—I had a vision to build something far greater than another communications or strategy firm. Together, with some very special people, our vision was to create a new kind of business—one that was inextricably linked to our commitment to sustainable, strong, and equitable communities.

From the outset, we took great care in developing each one of our policies and procedures, and we were intentional about engaging employees, vendors, and clients in meaningful conversations that would foster a supportive and dynamic work environment.

Now, as we enter our firm's third year in business, I am delighted to share that it is with the designation of a Certified B Corporation®. B Corps™ use the power of business to address society's greatest challenges. They meet the highest verified standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability. Mission Partners joins a rapidly growing movement of more than 2,500 Certified B Corporations® from 130 industries, across 60 countries including many companies we admire, such as Patagonia, Warby Parker, and Ben & Jerry's.

Three years in, I am so proud of the foundation we've built and the company we keep. This report is designed to share some of the highlights from this first year as a Certified B Corporation®, but it's also a report of love and appreciation—for my staff and colleagues who believed in this process, and who bring their hearts to work every day, and for our clients who inspire us to be at our best in every moment.

I invite you to read on for more about our commitment to building a more just and equitable world.



Carrie Fox

Carrie Fox
CEO + Founder, Mission Partners
Pronouns: she/her/hers



ABOUT MISSION PARTNERS

We operate at the center of public relations, policy, and philanthropy.

As a Certified B Corporation®, Mission Partners guides purpose-driven organizations in realizing their greatest social impact. Under the direction of Carrie Fox, we understand what it takes to innovate and move forward big agendas to drive measurable outcomes.

Since launching the firm, we've counseled hundreds of nonprofit organizations and social service organizations across the U.S. and around the world, as well as the partners who fund and support their work. We've helped organizations refine their strategies, center equity, increase their impact, and amplify their stories.

We guide organizations through major strategic initiatives that improve lives and the well-being of communities. We track and measure progress every step of the way. And we regularly invest our own dollars and time back into the clients we represent. All because we know that every bit we can do to share and strengthen a powerful idea will leave this place, a better place.

- » WE ARE woman-owned + women-led.
- » WE CHALLENGE assumptions + each other.
- » WE CARE deeply about our community.
- » WE TURN good intentions into greater impact.
- » WE WORK to create a better future for our children + yours.
- » WE BELIEVE communication + collaboration can change the world.

OUR APPROACH

At Mission Partners, we are successful for our clients because we believe in them, and we allow that belief to inspire our work. We challenge ourselves daily to think bigger and broader to achieve meaningful results for the organizations that we support.



We Listen

Often between the words

We believe that setting the right strategy and executing it well is the ultimate driver of success.



We Strategize

Your road map for success

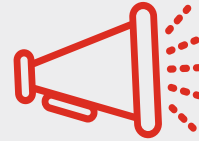
We align your big vision with an achievable plan for success.



We Develop

Messages and materials to own your moment

We help you find the right words that get to the heart of why your work matters, in ways that compel people to act.



We Amplify

Your mission and impact

We're not just your partners in big ideas, we're your team of seasoned doers.

OUR PRACTICE AREAS



Executive Counsel + Strategic Planning

- S.M.A.R.T.I.E. Goal Setting
- Theory of Change
- Board Development
- Strategic Plan Development
- Competitive Research and Design
- Policy and Procedures Reviews, Salary and CEO Surveys



Brand Development + Positioning

- Audience, Perception Research
- Focus Group Facilitation
- In-Depth Interviews
- Landscape and Competitive Analysis
- Communications and Brand Audits
- Mission and Vision Development
- Message Development and Issue Mapping
- Message and Presentation Training
- Brand Development
- Stakeholder Buy-In



Partnership + Program Development

- Evaluation and Measurement Design
- Nonprofit Brand Alignment
- Landscape Analysis and Partner Research
- Partnership Pitch Development and Activation



Training + Facilitation

- Board Retreat Facilitation
- Board and Staff Training
- Individual Coaching for Emerging Leaders and Staff Development
- Racial Justice Training



Communications Planning + Activation

- Content and Materials Development
- Executive Writing—Speeches, Commentaries, Issue Briefs, and White Papers
- Media Outreach, Interview Coordination and Media Training
- Media Planning, Tracking and Reporting

— MISSION —
FORWARD

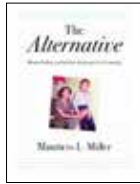
Community Conversations + Continuing Education

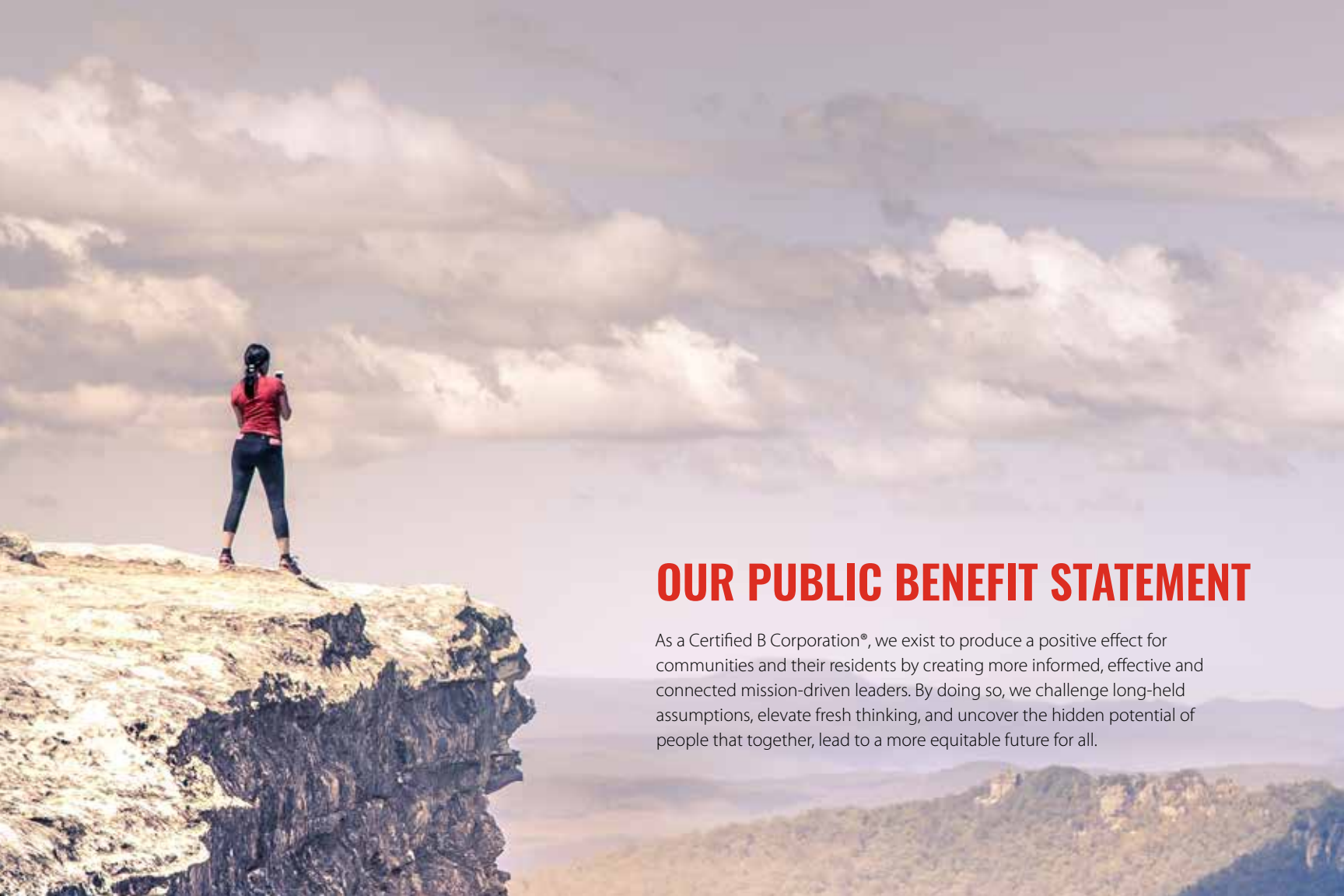
- Speaker Series + Community Meals
- Podcast
- Equity + Design Thinking Days
- Race + Identity Workshop

AMONG OUR 2018 CLIENTS

*We worked and partnered with
a diverse set of social impact
organizations in 2018.*







OUR PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

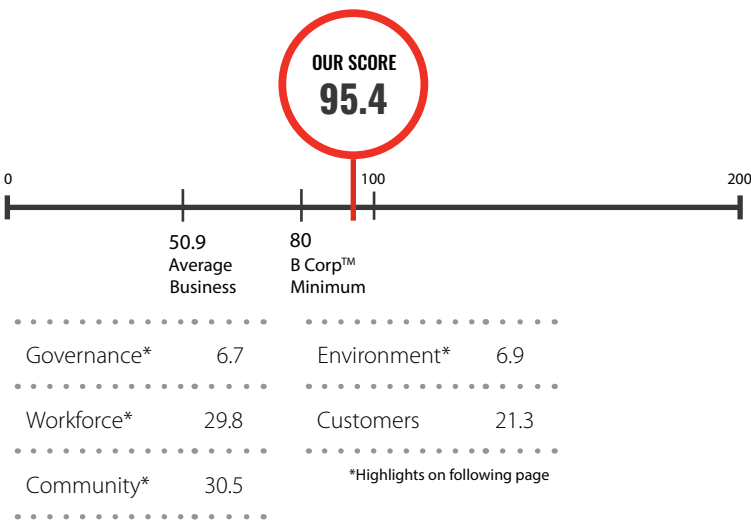
As a Certified B Corporation®, we exist to produce a positive effect for communities and their residents by creating more informed, effective and connected mission-driven leaders. By doing so, we challenge long-held assumptions, elevate fresh thinking, and uncover the hidden potential of people that together, lead to a more equitable future for all.

OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

The process for becoming a Certified B Corporation® meant examining our governance structure, how we support and grow our employee base, how we intentionally benefit our community, and the ways in which we foster a healthy environment.

OUR B CORP™ SCORE

To become as a Certified B Corporation®, a company must achieve a minimum verified score of 80 points on the B Impact Assessment. The questions in the B Impact Assessment are organized into five Impact Areas: Governance, Workforce, Community, Environment, and Customers.



Certified



Corporation

What is a B Corp™?

Certified B Corporations® (B Corps™) are for-profit companies that use the power of business to build a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

They meet the highest verified standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability. As of 2018, there are more than 2,500 B Corps™ in 130 industries and 60 countries around the world.

GOVERNANCE

We took extra steps to ensure that, regardless of its future, Mission Partners would never lose its commitment to social impact.

MISSION LOCK

We further cemented our status as a B Corp™ by amending our operating agreement and reincorporating as a Benefit LLC in the state of Maryland.



WORKFORCE

The Mission Partners team is our most valuable asset, we are committed to supporting and growing a world class team.



Supplementary benefits offered to employees include dental, short and long-term disability, life insurance, and benefits for domestic partners, civil unions, and same-sex spouses.



4 weeks of paid time off offered for primary and secondary caregivers.



32 days of paid time off offered to employees.

100%

100% of employees received a bonus in 2018.



75% of employees received skills-based training to advance core job responsibilities and cross-job function training to advance beyond regular job responsibilities.



The percentage of new positions filled by internal candidates.

90%

Employee satisfaction rate.



Degrees of review for employees, part of our substantial annual review process.



5x

The ratio of pay difference from the highest compensated individual to lowest paid individual at Mission Partners.

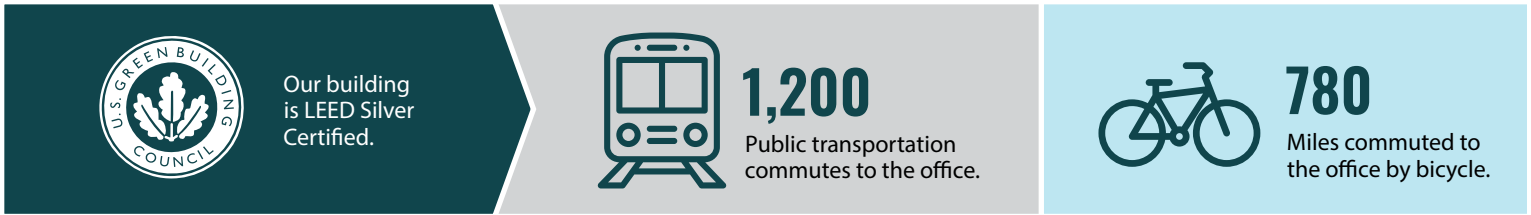
COMMUNITY

We care deeply about the communities where we live, learn, work, and serve, and we believe in investing in those communities



ENVIRONMENT

We care deeply about our planet and take seriously the role we each can play in building a better future.



OUR ISSUE AREAS



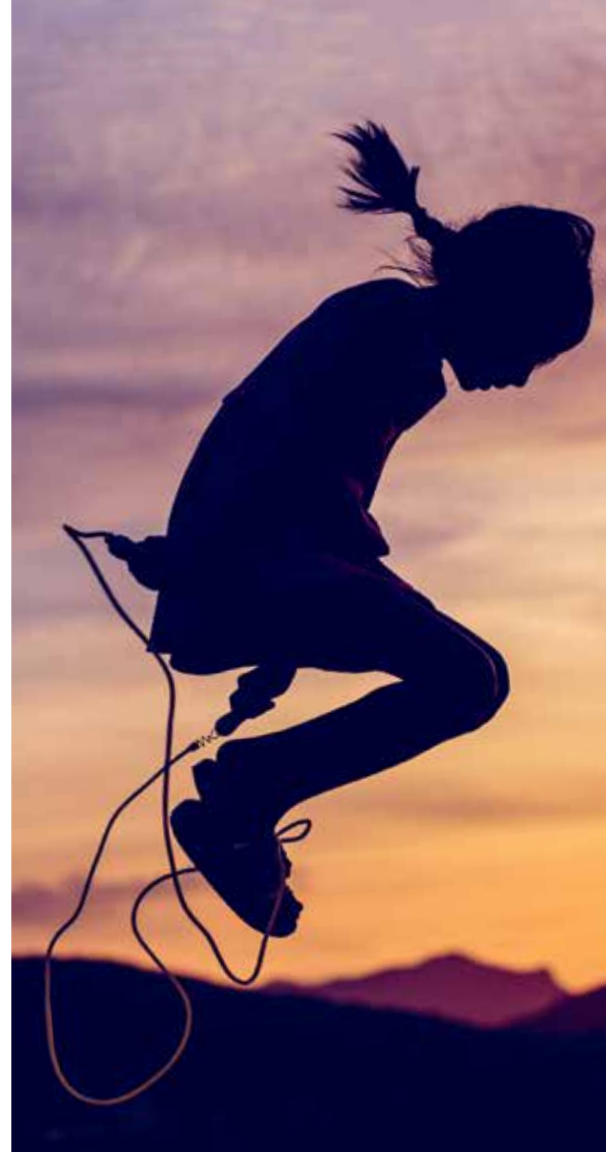
SOCIAL + ECONOMIC JUSTICE

We are committed to justice—equitable access to opportunities, privileges, and wealth, and our clients are often on the forefront of this change. We believe that without a commitment to justice and anti-racism, our communities and our country will never achieve its full potential.



EDUCATION + WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS

A well-paying job is arguably the most important factor in achieving economic security. We know there is no shortage of jobs in our country providing living wages, but there is a shortage of educated, qualified candidates for the growing body of jobs in our increasingly technology-driven economy. Mission Partners has depth and expertise on policies, strategy, and practice that build human capital.





HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

We believe strong, healthy, and connected communities benefit us all. And we know strong communities begin with strong children and families. It's exactly why we're committed to supporting issues that address all of the factors which shape health in the places where we live, learn, work, and play.



JOURNALISM + THE ARTS

In a world where it is increasingly difficult to decipher fact from fiction, we believe firmly in the role of public media, solutions journalism, and the arts to inform, educate, and inspire. We know the power of the arts in bringing together communities that have been torn apart due to systemic barriers, in supporting academic success and in bridging cultural divides.



WOMEN + GIRLS

As a woman-owned and women-led firm, we know the unique challenges that women and girls face in every aspect of their lives. We believe firmly that if women and girls have access to all of the resources they need to reach their full potential, our society as a whole will benefit. We know the power of women and their stories and are determined to amplify those voices.



© Carey Wagner/CARE



When the Jubilee Housing leadership and board adopted a new phrase—*justice housing*—to describe its organizational philosophy towards providing affordable housing, the team struggled with finding exactly the right words to define what they meant by that phrase. Jubilee Housing engaged Mission Partners to create a definition of *justice housing* and messaging to help members of the team communicate about the philosophy. Mission Partners hosted a series of in-depth interviews, followed by a focus group in Washington, DC, to explore perceptions and associations of every word in the proposed definition. Mission Partners assembled a diverse group of residents, board members, donors, and volunteers, leading participants through a variety of structured and unstructured exercises and questions to uncover feelings and emotions associated with every word. Mission Partners then developed all brand elements to support the roll out of the new phrase and brand, including a case statement for support. **Just 9 months after launching the Justice Housing Fund, Jubilee Housing surpassed its \$5M fundraising goal and secured more than 100% of its goal for increasing affordable housing units in the Adams Morgan neighborhood.**



Photo Credit: Jubilee Housing

“Mission Partners employs a degree of thoughtfulness and intellectual investment that exceeds my typical experience with other consultants.”

The Platform of Hope

In the rapidly gentrifying Adams Morgan neighborhood of northwest Washington, DC, six local organizations—Capital Area Asset Builders, For Love of Children, Jubilee Housing, Jubilee Jumpstart, Mary's Center, and Sitar Arts Center—formed a strategic alliance, committed to ending multigenerational poverty in their neighborhood. With start-up funding granted by the Meyer Foundation in October 2017, the Steering Committee engaged Mission Partners to guide the group through the foundational process of creating a model for collective impact called The Platform of Hope.

Mission Partners led the Steering Committee through a Design Thinking process that established a vision and common agenda, guiding principles, governance model, program design, budget, process map, and fundraising plan for a one-year pilot cohort of participating families, with plans to scale over 5 years. Mission Partners developed protocol and trained representatives of each organization to conduct empathy interviews and listening sessions with prospective families. The Steering Committee engaged community members at every step, using their feedback and insights to modify and design the program.

The Platform of Hope launched in September 2018 with a cohort of twenty families and has adopted a unique and forward-thinking model in which families develop their own goals and build a strategy plan for accomplishing them.



Photo Credit: Platform of Hope

"The Mission Partners team makes our progress possible by providing a calm head, steady voice, and sharp mind to all manner of mayhem."



In Montgomery County, Maryland, three public education institutions—Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, and The Universities at Shady Grove—have repeatedly experienced the power of education to change the trajectory of the lives of their students. Since 2013, the educational institutions have formalized their work through a collective impact initiative, Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES). Together, the organizations have bridged identified gaps in their own systems by providing a seamless pathway of support that starts in high school, continues to community college, and through the attainment of a bachelor's degree to ensure that college completion is possible for all students.

In 2018, ACES brought on Mission Partners to formalize the messaging that would unite the three organizations and serve as the foundation for a shared set of promotional materials about the programming. Mission Partners worked with leadership from the three educational institutions to reimagine the way in which representatives of ACES talk about the program. Mission Partners conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders from each organization, as well as current students and alumni to uncover the impact of ACES. With a fresh set of messages on hand, Mission Partners developed a case statement, fact sheet, and funder pitch deck to support the work of the ACES team. Additionally, Mission Partners developed an infographic that explains how ACES is experienced by a student at each of the three organizations.



Photo Credit: Montgomery College

"The Mission Partners team provides stellar customer service and tight project management. I never felt like I was chasing after them, they kept us in line."



According to recent estimates, nearly 80% of our overall health is shaped by social and environmental factors—things like food, transportation, and housing. Yet, 7 million people live one crisis away from eviction and 21 million people pay too much on rent. But, what's at stake is more than "affordable housing." It's acknowledging that hard working parents who pay their taxes are increasingly unable to pay their rent or afford a mortgage—and that has damaging impacts on their health and the health of their children. That's the heart of a frame that we developed in partnership with Children's HealthWatch, who has been collecting real-time data in frontline healthcare settings since 1998. As part of that work, they've performed comprehensive research on the impact of economic hardship on the health and development of infants and toddlers under age four. What they have discovered is that housing—its accessibility, its stability, and its affordability—matters a lot. It matters for the growth and development and health and well-being of young children. And it's why we worked together with Children's HealthWatch to develop a message frame that could begin to shift public perceptions and policies about the relationship between housing and health so that a new, more healthful future can emerge for young children and their families. **The outcome of our first project—a message framework that made a compelling case for all housing advocates to reference, was so successful in garnering support that Mission Partners is now working on an expanded version of that framework, to serve as a communications toolkit for children's health advocates across the country.**



"In our 5+ years of working together, Mission Partners has significantly improved our ability to communicate our work across sectors. The messaging Mission Partners developed and tested is now being utilized by a national campaign, has been featured in the media, and sparked several federal policy proposals."



In today's media environment, freelance journalists face the reality of being both vulnerable and valuable. With newsrooms facing ongoing cuts, many journalists work without the support of an institutions—and the resources they provide. And yet, some of the most important works of journalism come from freelance journalists who dedicate long periods of time and resources to their subjects. That's why Mission Partners was thrilled when we were asked to support the Heising-Simons Foundation with the launch of its inaugural American Mosaic Journalism Prize, intended to call attention to these journalists' great promise and give them the freedom to continue their work. The Prize offers up to two \$100,000 unrestricted cash prizes per year to freelance journalists for their excellence in long-form, narrative, or deep reporting on stories about underrepresented and/or misrepresented groups in the present American landscape. Mission Partners developed core messaging, a communications strategy, and media materials to announce and elevate the inaugural winners of the 2018 prize—Jaeah Lee and Valeria Fernández. **Over the course of the 2-month campaign our efforts resulted in 35 earned media stories, including an Associated Press story picked up in outlets across the country, and 286 million media impressions.**



Photo Credit: Heising-Simons Foundation

“Mission Partners was a true partner in every sense of the word, as we thought about how to share the stories of our journalism prize with the greater public and the audiences we knew would most care about this work.”



CARE hosted its 2018 National Conference (CNC) on May 21–23, 2018 at George Washington University in Washington, DC. The event brought together citizen advocates, nonprofit leaders, and policy-makers for three days of advocacy trainings, networking opportunities, congressional meetings, and inspiring discussions.

As CARE's DC-based marketing and communications partner, Mission Partners was charged with helping CARE reach, inspire, and activate new audiences while specifically driving registration for the 2018 conference. The two main objectives were to drive paid attendance and elevate public and media awareness. Throughout our five-week outreach efforts, Mission Partners secured eight CNC Ambassadors, 36 promotional partners, social media and calendar listing coverage, and a media partnership opportunity with POLITICO. **We helped CARE secure over 2 million total impressions through our media efforts, which helped move the work and mission of CARE and its National Conference forward.**



Photo Credit: Carey Wagner/CARE

"Mission Partners has extensive and comprehensive expertise, and the woman-power to back it up—they gave us more value than any other firm we've worked with."

— MISSION — FORWARD

As an organization, we believe communications + collaboration can change the world. And that's why we leverage our Mission Forward® signature education program to drive deeper conversations among innovative thinkers, makers, and doers in social change. Mission Forward includes community conversations, workshops, and tools designed to help social sector leaders challenge their assumptions, their approaches, and their systems in order to build more equitable communities.

And in 2018, we had a breakout year.



We built our skills, and our staff.

We strengthened our skills in bringing Race to the table. In 2017, Mission Partners committed publicly to advance issues of equity in our work, by first introducing an Equity Advisory Board. We closed the year with a frank conversation on the themes in Bryan Stevenson's book, "Just Mercy," and committed to investing in Race and Identity training for all full-time employees. We hired **Becky George** as our full time Director of Community Engagement, who brings these same skills to our clients and network. And we've started to **feature a story in our weekly newsletter** that sheds new light and understanding on issues of race in the workplace. Our personal commitment to addressing individual, interpersonal, institutional and structural racism is a core theme in our firm, and extends into everything we do as a team.



We made a commitment to bold speak equity.

We created new platforms to bold speak. In 2018, Mission Partners launched an exciting new **Social Impact Fellowship** at Loyola University. Twelve students were selected from a panel of judges to journey 2019 together, identifying injustices around them, building the muscles to bravely explore solutions, and boldly speaking out for change. This group of undergraduate students across disciplines are working together to advance issues of social justice in communities where they live, learn, work, and serve.





We created platforms to rethink traditional problem solving.

In 2018 we launch our quarterly Equity + Design Thinking Days at Mission Partners. Each quarter, we welcome up to 8 social impact professionals in our Bethesda office to bring their toughest communications challenges for a day of guided Design Thinking exercises.

This human-centered approach to problem solving is powerful on its own, but we combine it with skills that can help organizations and individuals test their bias, and break down stereotypes in their work. Our Mission Forward Equity + Design Thinking Days help social impact professionals work in real time with a small group of peers to take on their challenges in an out-of-the-box, and most importantly, out-of-their-office environment experience.



We hosted powerful conversations and amplified underrepresented voices.

We brought community together, in new ways. We hosted a spring reception at Mission Partners, featuring Ed Yong of The Atlantic and Liz Neeley of StoryCollider, who talked about building equity and breaking bias in writing. And we hosted our first community meal and fall convening featuring brave young voices from our community who brought new perspective to the national immigration debate. Additional featured speakers included New York Times best-selling author Anand Giridharadas, MacArthur Genius Grant recipient Mauricio Miller and American Mosaic Journalism Prize winner Valeria Fernandez.

OUR TEAM





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