



MISSION
PARTNERS

**2019 Social
Impact Report**

A decorative pattern of white hexagons on a red background, arranged in a staggered grid. Some hexagons are solid white, while others are outlined in white. The pattern is concentrated on the left side of the image.

“ ”

A good head and
a good heart are
always a formidable
combination.

—*Nelson Mandela*

A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear Friend,

When we launched Mission Partners in 2017, it was with a vision to build a business that was inextricably linked to our core values; a business that could be a force for good, and that could help scale the impact of organizations like yours through a special blend of strategic visioning, planning, and communications services.

We know with certainty that when we live our values—fully and universally across our team—we can achieve our greatest impact, and 2019 was a solid reminder of that.

- » We supported **more than 30 nonprofit organizations, foundations, associations, and social enterprises** who are advancing breakthroughs in children's health, housing, education, journalism, technology, and workforce development.
- » We created communications tools designed for social impact professionals to lead **systems change efforts through an anti-racist framework**—tools that we are now developing into on-demand programming for social impact leaders.
- » We partnered with Slack, The Last Mile, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation who trusted us to document the findings from their inaugural cohort of **Next Chapter**, a bold and transformative initiative to help formerly incarcerated individuals secure wealth-building careers in the tech sector.

- » We launched an application-based **Social Impact Fellows program** at Loyola University Maryland.
- » We hosted a powerful community conversation on the soaring maternal mortality rates among Black women in the United States—**led by and featuring the experiences of Black women.**
- » We cemented our commitment to build a more just and inclusive society by joining as a founding signatory of **#WeTheChange**, 400+ women leaders of Certified B Corporations® and other purpose-driven enterprises who share our belief that capitalism should work for everyone, and for the long-term.

I write this letter, in April 2020, COVID-19 is challenging every single one of us, on many levels, and it will continue to challenge our work, our health, our communities, our businesses, and our society for a long time to come.

What I know for sure is that our community is a profoundly kind one and we will rise from this. For Mission Partners, we've built our business on a commitment to using business as a force for good, and we don't intend to stop now. Sending you strength, health, and good things to come.



Carrie Fox.

Carrie Fox (she/her)
carrie@mission.partners
Founder and CEO

ABOUT MISSION PARTNERS

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

Mission Partners is a woman-owned strategic communications firm and Certified B Corporation® with offices in Maryland, Minneapolis, and Montreal. Our specialty lies in guiding purpose-driven organizations in realizing their greatest social impact.

As a B Corp™, we pledge to foster a radically inclusive and richly regenerative economy. Our company voluntarily invests in meeting significantly higher standards of sustainability, governance, and giving back to the community in our daily operations. We believe business is a force for good and we are committed to providing an environment of mutual respect, which celebrates the diversity of thought, background, and experience. We believe the more inclusive we are, the better our work will be.

Since launching the firm, we've counseled hundreds of nonprofits, foundations, and socially responsible businesses 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've guided organizations through major strategic initiatives that have improved 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.





OUR COMPANY VALUES

- » **We value people first.** We are more than what happens during our office hours. We are people first, and we strive to show a deep respect for everyone inside and outside our company.
- » **We value equity.** We acknowledge that our current social, economic, and political systems are unjust, predominantly due to a history of racism and oppression. We marshal our resources to advance equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.
- » **We value integrity.** We are honest, open, ethical, and fair. People trust us to adhere to our word, and we work hard to earn and maintain that trust.
- » **We value kindness.** We are guided by gratitude, and we take extra measures to appreciate one another.
- » **We value courageous leadership.** We act with courage, challenge the status quo, and find new ways to grow our company and each other.
- » **We value progress.** We are continuously moving forward, innovating, and improving. We do this work because we believe it in and we allow that belief to inspire our actions.

OUR APPROACH

At Mission Partners, we are successful for our clients and community partners 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

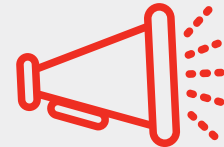
We align your big vision with an achievable plan for success.



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.

PRACTICE AREAS



Strategic Planning + Visioning

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



Training + Facilitation

- Board Retreat Facilitation
- Board and Staff Trainings
- Meeting Facilitation
- Message and Presentation Training
- Media Training



Message + Brand Development

- Audience/Perception Research
- Focus Group Facilitation
- In-Depth Interviews
- Landscape and Competitive Analysis
- Communications and Brand Audits
- Mission, Vision, Values Development
- Message Development and Issue Mapping
- Brand Development
- Inclusive and Equitable Communications and Marketing



Partnership + Program Development

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



Campaign Development + Activation

- Communications Plan Development
- Executive Writing and Thought Leadership
- Media Relations
- Digital Strategy
- Content and Material Development



Community Conversations + Continuing Education

- Speaker Series
- Community Meals + Conversations
- On-Demand Webinars (*Coming Soon*)
- On-Demand Tools for Social Impact Professionals (*Coming Soon*)

OUR ISSUE AREAS

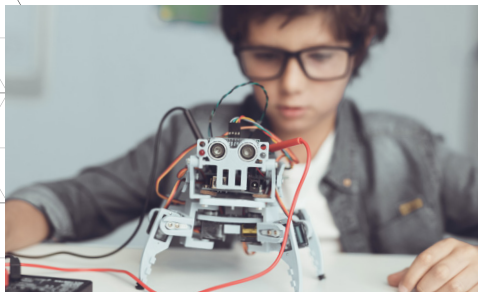
We are committed to justice—equitable access to opportunities, privileges, and wealth, and our clients are often on the forefront of this work. We believe that without a commitment to justice and anti-racism, our communities and our country will never achieve its full potential.

Photo credit: Jubilee



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

We believe strong, healthy, and connected communities benefit us all. And we know that the issues a community faces are often interrelated. From access to affordable housing to protecting our planet, it's exactly why we're committed to supporting issues that impact the places where we live, learn, work, and play.



EDUCATION + TECHNOLOGY

Access to education is one of those most powerful tools that people can have to create a better life for themselves and their family. Mission Partners supports educational institutions, social impact programs, and community leaders to help people ready themselves for the jobs and careers they want.



HEALTH

We believe the health of an individual includes physical, mental, and social well-being. Many of the organizations we support are working to implement a holistic approach to individual and community health. We take an intentional focus on the health of children, supporting healthy habits early in life that will lead to well-being later in life.



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 most deeply affected by systemic barriers, in supporting academic success and in bridging cultural divides.



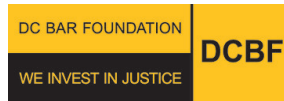
WOMEN + GIRLS

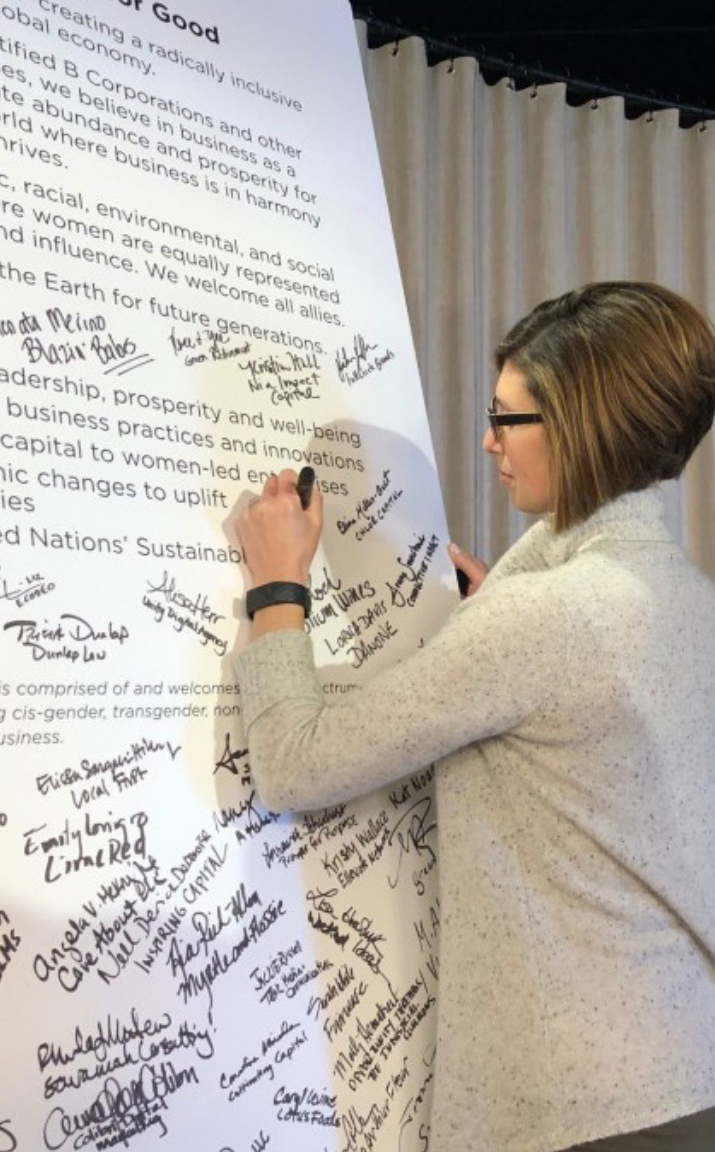
As a woman-owned firm, we know the unique challenges that women and girls face in every aspect of their lives. We firmly believe that if women and girls have access to all of the resources they need to reach their full potential, our society as a whole will benefit. We know the power of women and their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

OUR 2019 CLIENTS

We worked and partnered with a diverse set of social impact organizations in 2019, including the following:







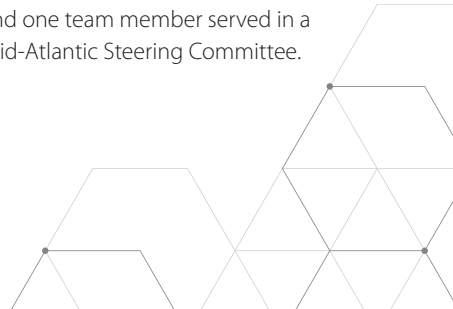
OUR PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

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 just and equitable future for all.

OUR SECOND YEAR AS A B CORP

In our second year as a Certified B Corporation, Mission Partners expanded its involvement with the B Corp community, finding new ways to engage and leverage the growing network.

- » We cemented our commitment to build a more just and inclusive society by joining on as a founding signatory of #WeTheChange, 400+ women leaders of certified B Corporations and other purpose-driven enterprises who share our belief that capitalism should work for everyone, and for the long-term. Read more about our commitment to building business as a force for good at wethechange.net.
- » We doubled down on our commitment to the B Corp community in the Mid-Atlantic region. Nearly all team members attended a B Local Mid-Atlantic event in 2019 and one team member served in a leadership capacity on the B Local Mid-Atlantic Steering Committee.

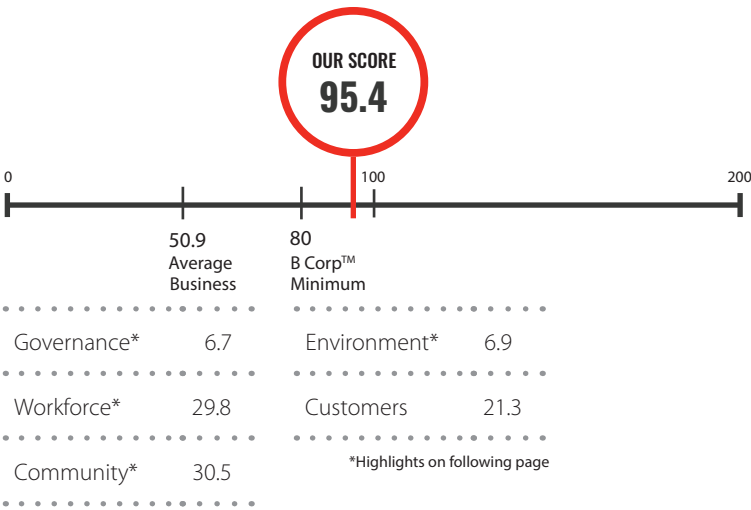


OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

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 certify as a B Corp, a company must achieve a minimum verified score of 80 points on the B Impact Assessment. Mission Partners is proud to have achieved a score of 95.4. The questions in the B Impact Assessment are organized into five Impact Areas: Governance, Workforce, Community, Environment, and Customers. [See the full breakdown of our score.](#)



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. We have been verified as meeting the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability. And, we are legally bound to consider our social impact in everything we do, and in every business decision we make.

As of 2019, there are more than 3,243 B Corps in 150 industries and 71 countries around the world. As of May 2018, about 640, or 25%, of B Corps were women-owned businesses.

WHAT IS A BENEFIT LLC?

Benefit corporations are formed to create a public benefit, in addition to creating profit for its shareholders. In Maryland, a company can be recognized by the state as a benefit corporation by stating in its corporate charter that it is a benefit corporation, getting certified as providing a public benefit, taking into consideration more than just profit, and submitting an annual benefit report to its stockholders.

GOVERNANCE

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



MISSION LOCK

In 2018 we cemented our status as a B Corp™ by amending our operating agreement and reincorporating as a Benefit LLC in the state of Maryland.



PROFIT SHARING

We restructured our employee and contractor agreements, and promoted two members of the team to executive team positions, building achievable pathways for profit sharing and employee ownership.

WORKFORCE

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



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



360° review for employees, part of our substantial annual review process.



32 days of paid time off offered to employees.

\$16.48

The starting wage for interns and fellows, reflective of the livable wage in Montgomery County, Maryland.



100% of employees who received life-skills training for personal development.



4 weeks of paid time off offered via family medical leave, plus an additional 8 weeks of allotted time off, which covers adoption, care for ill family members, and domestic partners.



90%

Employee satisfaction rate, as found in our 2019 employee satisfaction survey.



100% of 401(K) savings accounts transitioned to impact investing accounts.



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.



100% Locally-owned business



100% Woman-owned company

100%

100% Founder-owned company

\$75K

Pro-bono dollars granted to our clients and community partners.

80%

Percentage of our significant suppliers that are owned by underrepresented populations.

\$600

Dollars donated through our charitable match program.



\$2,704 donated to nonprofits, separate from charitable match programs.

ENVIRONMENT

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



1,122

Kilograms of CO2 emissions prevented, due to remote working options.



\$950

Dollars paid to employees to support alternative methods of transportation.



450

Hours of commuting saved, via remote working options.



Our building is LEED Silver Certified.



1,120

Public transportation commutes to the office.



56

Miles commuted to the office on foot.



980

Miles commuted to the office by bicycle.



NEED PROOF?

Read on for some of our stories of impact.



CASE STUDIES

Strategic Planning + Visioning: *The Universities at Shady Grove*

Message + Brand Development: *The New York Foundling*

Campaign Development + Activation: *NewsMatch*

Training + Facilitation: *Social Impact Fellows*

Partnership + Program Development: *ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital*



The Universities AT SHADY GROVE

On November 7, 2019, the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) welcomed more than 600 people to its Maryland campus to celebrate the opening of a fourth academic building—a \$175M Biomedical Sciences and Engineering Education Facility, known as the BSE.

The grand opening event kicked off with a luncheon and program, featuring the presidents of three partner universities: University of Maryland, Baltimore; University of Maryland, College Park; and UMBC. Following the luncheon, guests gathered in the atrium of the BSE to hear from speakers—including Governor Larry Hogan—and to celebrate the official ribbon cutting of the building. After the ceremony, guests explored the building and participated in a Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medical (STEMM) Showcase, which brought aspects of the building to life with displays from 14 academic programs and eight industry partners. Students and staff were stationed throughout the BSE to serve as interpretive guides for guests. The event exceeded the set attendance goal by 20%.

As a long time, invested partner in Universities at Shady Grove, Mission Partners previously supported USG on the groundbreaking ceremony for the building and managed complexities of project management, communication, and media support for this critical moment in the organization's history, and future. The event boasted a strong print and broadcast showing—eleven onsite media teams—and **coverage of the event garnered more than 7.8M impressions from 13 news stories, including two consecutive days of coverage in *The Washington Post* with an op-ed and feature piece on the front page of *The Washington Post's* Metro section.**



Photo Credit: The Universities at Shady Grove

"The media coverage and the success of the event is truly thanks to so many people's efforts across the USG landscape, but our small team in Advancement could not have possibly done it without Carrie's outstanding team from Mission Partners."

Steve Simon, Interim Director, Marketing & Communications



For 150 years, The New York Foundling has trusted in the power and potential of people. While the Foundling's history and legacy in the field are among its greatest assets, the Foundling knew its brand needed to be updated to showcase the Foundling's evolving suite of services and better convey the organization's transformational impact. The Foundling engaged Mission Partners to create new messaging for the organization, as well as rebuild and redesign the Foundling website.

After conducting a comprehensive audit and peer set review to better understand audience perception, Mission Partners guided the Foundling through the process of establishing a messaging hierarchy, and created updated talking points and concise program descriptors for shared language among team members. Mission Partners then supported the Foundling through the creation of a comprehensive brand book and conducted a series of message training sessions to ensure all team members felt comfortable speaking on behalf of the organization. Lastly, Mission Partners worked in close coordination with the Foundling to completely overhaul their website, making it easy to navigate for the Foundling's many audiences.

With updated messaging and a new website, the Foundling is now well-positioned to work alongside their current and prospective clients and effectively share how their work impacts people's lives.





Photo Credit: The New York Foundling

"Mission Partners' message development surpassed that of a lot of vendors I've worked with, but what really stood out to me was the extent to which Mission Partners sought to achieve and increase buy-in across departments."

Kirkley Strand, Vice President, Development and Communications

NewsMatch

In the summer of 2019, NewsMatch engaged Mission Partners to develop the messaging and strategy for its fourth annual campaign, which runs from November through December. In the wake of “fake news” and powerful politicians’ attacks on the free press, NewsMatch has supported unbiased and independent journalism through a national matching-gift campaign designed to grow fundraising capacity in nonprofit newsrooms and promote journalism as a philanthropic cause. As the media industry continues to evolve, the support NewsMatch provides is more important than ever.

To begin, Mission Partners conducted a comprehensive peer set audit, and then guided NewsMatch and its partner funders through creating a message framework to help align 2019’s campaign. After in-depth interviews with NewsMatch’s newsroom participants and partners, Mission Partners also created the theme of the campaign. Along with messaging, media relations, training webinars, toolkits, and the creation of talking points, Mission Partners updated NewsMatch’s visual brand and created customizable digital and social graphics for newsrooms across the country to utilize. The paid social media strategy was further enhanced by a PSA video Mission Partners worked alongside a third party to create.

The 2019 NewsMatch campaign saw its best-ever #GivingTuesday returns, and of the 198 participating newsrooms, 187 customized or implemented materials provided to them.





Photo Credit: NewsMatch

"Mission Partners is responsive and thorough. They are detailed planners and in the follow-up on those plans. It was very clear they referenced campaign planning documents and gave us regular updates on progress towards goals."

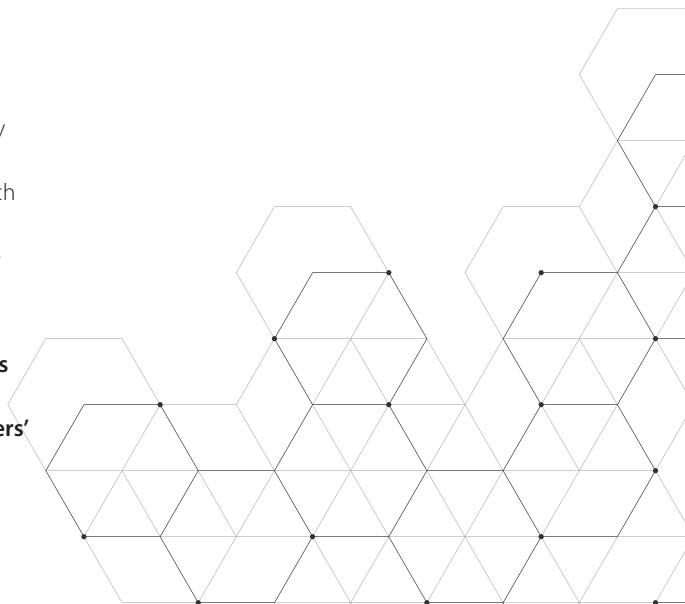
Kip Dooley, NewsMatch Communications Manager

SOCIAL IMPACT FELLOW

In January 2019, Mission Partners and Loyola University Maryland kicked off a year-long Loyola Social Impact Fellowship program with 10 undergraduate students in the inaugural cohort. The program, developed by Mission Partners for Loyola University's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, aimed to engage students in advancing issues of social justice through a Design Thinking lens—identifying the inequities that exist, and advancing solutions to address those inequities.

The fellows met monthly alongside Mission Partners, and dissected social inequity, disadvantage, and bias—both blatant and institutionalized—in their community of Baltimore and on their campus at Loyola University Maryland, through a guided design thinking process. For their cohort project, the fellows focused on advocating for an improved Diversity Core requirement, which they deemed lacked the rigor—and the vulnerability—required to understand and apply issues of equity beyond the textbook. The fellows presented their research and recommendations to the Dean's Office and received positive feedback. Many fellows have found ways to actively stay involved with implementing the proposed changes to the Diversity Core and shift the campus' culture.

As private higher education continues to evolve, programs such as this one add a valuable new type of experience that will impact students' lives long past graduation. The fellows all felt enriched by their conversations with their peers and appreciated the opportunity to learn from each others' unique perspectives.





"Imagine if the majority of the Loyola experience was like this. Think about 40 courses of this kind of experience, and then taking a fellowship of classes. What would that be like? The fellows all said this was a transformational thing, where, in live time, they're talking about changes they made as people. This is the future of good higher education, and these students got to experience it."

Dr. Joshua Smith, Dean of the School of Education at Loyola University Maryland



During the summer of 2019, Mission Partners and the Washington, D.C. regional office of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital worked with marketing executives from the Washington Spirit, Washington, DC's professional women's soccer team, to develop a strategy for St. Jude to become the charitable partner of choice for the Spirit and some of their marquee athletes, as team's ownership looked to raise the profile of its players in the D.C. region.

From those initial meetings, plans developed for a partnership that would both meet the Spirit's community goals, as well as broaden the exposure and fundraising opportunities for St. Jude in the region. Spirit co-captain Tori Huster was named the first-ever Regional Champion for the Mid-Atlantic region, and her partnership with St. Jude was officially announced at a September Washington Spirit game at Audi Field, with more than 18,000 people in the stands. The partnership has involved media spots with Huster on local radio and TV promoting her work with St. Jude, and Huster has been actively engaging with patient families at local St. Jude signature events as well as the St. Jude Memphis Marathon Weekend.

The partnership continues to bring increased exposure to both Washington Spirit and the St. Jude Mid-Atlantic office, and has opened additional doors for fundraising revenue streams. The mutually beneficial relationship exemplifies why St. Jude is a leader in corporate social responsibility partnerships.



Photo Credit: St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital

"We wanted to partner with the Washington Spirit for a number of reasons. We rely on the support from local communities, and they're such great ambassadors, Tori especially. She's not only going to help us make connections with our local patients and their families and support them here in the DC area, but she's also going to support our fundraisers as well."

*Lisa Surprenant, Market Director, ALSAC/St. Jude
Children's Research Hospital*

— MISSION — **FORWARD**

presented by Mission Partners

As a social impact communications firm, we believe communications and 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.

HEAR HER: THE 2019 MISSION FORWARD SPRING CONVENING

Despite boasting the highest rate of spending on healthcare in the world, the United States is the single most dangerous industrialized nation in which to give birth, with American women dying from pregnancy-related complications at alarming rates. And for Black women, the data is even more disturbing. In the U.S., Black women are 243 percent more likely to die from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes than women of other races. This requires our attention. It requires us to listen to Black women. And it requires our collective action.

To spark that collective action, Mission Partners hosted **Hear Her: A Call to Action on Maternal Mortality in the United States**, a powerful community conversation on the soaring maternal mortality rates in the United States—especially among Black women. The panels were followed by an interactive community lunch designed to bring the conversation home, in a way that provided some basic tools to lead systems change efforts in our own communities through an anti-racist framework.

We were joined by Linda Villarosa, director of the journalism program at the City College of New York, and contributing writer for The New York Times Magazine, who authored the magazine's cover story, *Why America's Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life-or-Death Crisis*.

Our conversation also featured Dr. Joia Crear-Perry, founder and president of the National Birth Equity Collaborative, whose advocacy efforts have brought her to the United Nations, where she recently testified to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, urging the development of a human rights framework to improve maternal mortality.

Out of the 80 people who were gathered in the room, attendees shared a variety of actions that they promised to take after the event such as asking where the other Black women and women of color are in the room, challenging their own privilege in spaces, and getting info and data from maternal mortality review committees to people working in women's health and raising more awareness to the work of review committees.





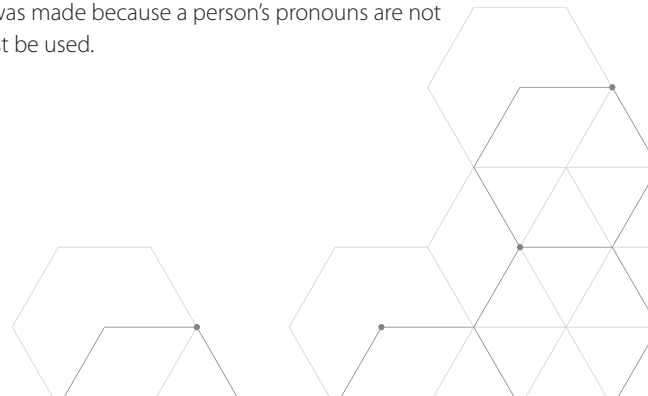
WHY PRONOUNS

Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace can be a complex task, but it is critical to create an environment where people feel comfortable bringing their authentic self to work, and where people can learn in safe and trusted spaces. In 2019, Mission Partners encouraged its team to add their gender pronouns to their email signatures, a step that ensures our communications are more inclusive and models the practice for others to follow.

By sharing pronouns—in introductions, on name tags, or in an email signature—makes spaces more inclusive for all people regardless of their gender identity or gender expression. More importantly, it creates safer spaces for transgender, gender nonconforming, and gender non-binary people. Including pronouns is a first step toward respecting a person's gender identity, working against cisnormality, and creating a more welcoming space for people of all genders.

Gender pronouns are words that an individual would like others to use when talking to or about them. Some commonly used pronouns are “he, him, his” and “she, her, hers.” However, people may choose to use pronouns that don’t conform to binary male/female gender categorizations, such as “they, them, theirs.”

Until recently, you may have heard people inquiring about or sharing preferred gender pronouns, though there has been a shift away from the term ‘preferred gender pronoun’ or ‘PGP’ to simply using ‘pronoun.’ This change was made because a person's pronouns are not just preferred; they’re the pronouns that must be used.



2019 WORKSHOPS

In 2019, Mission Partners hosted five signature workshops on Race + Identity and two signature workshops on Equity + Design Thinking, with 35 participants representing 16 different organizations.

In 2020, we are expanding these offerings to include on demand e-learning courses for social impact leaders. **If you're interested in customizing our workshops for your team, email us at connect@mission.partners.**

“ ”

“It was a great way to think about projects that you are working on and the space really allowed for you to think *limitlessly*.”

Mission Forward Workshop Attendee



OUR TEAM



1. The Mission Partners team at our summer staff retreat in Kent Island, MD.
2. The team at our January 2020 meeting in Mission Partners' office.
3. Amira, Eleni, and Elena enjoy some s'mores at Elm Street Park.
4. The Mission Partners Team after finishing an escape room.
5. Elena, Amira, and Bay at a project management training with The Management Center.
6. The Mission Partners team at the BSE opening at The Universities at Shady Grove.



CREDITS

Cover photo courtesy of The New York Foundling featuring a Camp Felix participant

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