



eNews | Nonprofit Quarterly | Fall 2014

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We have just launched a new MW&A [website](#) this month, and it is both exciting and symbolic for us, as 2014 marks my 20<sup>th</sup> year as a non-profit consultant.



I've looked at this milestone as an opportunity to not only refresh our online presence and build my [team](#), but to also think about my practice. When I look back, and ahead, three themes emerge.

**Plan for growth, even when times are tough.** It always gets better. Never let the state of the economy, or climate change in the sector overwhelm your sense of purpose, mission and passion for your cause. By staying focused on *why* you do it, the fundamental optimism that brought you to the work will fuel plans for rapidly shifting into 'grow mode' when conditions permit.

**Know what you do well.** Dominate your niche. In other words, if you have a world-class ballet company, don't train an orchestra too. Stick with your expertise. While eventually MW&A broadened our own services to include executive recruitment, we only offer these services for positions focusing on revenue development and donor engagement.

**Relationships matter most.** Twenty years on, I'm still in

## NEW FUNDING

MW&A successfully procured the following grant awards between June and September

### California

***Caterina's Club:***  
**\$100,000** Fresh Produce and Floral Council

**\$25,000** Walmart Foundation

**\$25,000** Weingart Foundation

**\$7,500** Allergan Foundation

***Orange Children & Families Together:***  
**\$35,000** Annenberg Foundation

## ACTIVE EXECUTIVE SEARCHES

touch with so many of my original clients, board members, executive officers and program officers that I can't imagine my practice without them. Relationships bring new business, fresh intelligence from the field, and connections to more people you want to know.

These three ideas have been core to my success in working with you, and in the growth of so many of my valued clients, all doing good works with great passion.

Thank you for making MW&A part of your success! Take a moment to [meet the team](#), see some of our [new placements](#), [grant awards](#), [projects](#), [partners](#) and [client feedback](#)!

I look forward to our work ahead.

My Very Best,



## New Executive Placements

### *MW&A Lures Lincoln Center Exec to Ballet West!*

How do you lure the successful **Lincoln Center Film Society's** Director of Development from New York City to Salt Lake City? You offer him the Director of Advancement and External Affairs position with **Ballet West!**

Fundraising executive **Tom Michel's** philosophy about attracting long-term supporters for the arts is simple: "No one has to give," says Michel. "So truly, our job is to make sure our partners, patrons and supporters are getting something they love, that makes them want to keep giving and coming back." That theory will guide his new advancement initiatives at **Ballet West**, and made Michel successful in the senior Marketing and Development roles at the **Film Society at Lincoln Center** for a decade, and in previous posts at the **New York City Ballet**, **Metropolitan Opera**, and **MTV**.

Now Michel says **Ballet West** is uniquely positioned to deliver to the community as never before. "We have a new \$20 million dollar building, national touring dates, exposure on a national TV show, and a brand new academy. Ballet West is now 50 years old, and ready to take off again," Michel says.

### California

#### ***Ballet San Jose:***

Associate Director of Development

### National

#### ***Central Pennsylvania***

#### ***Youth Ballet:***

Chief Executive Officer

#### ***Saratoga Performing Arts Center:***

Director of Marketing and Corporate Relations

## Completed Executive Searches

MW&A successfully completed the following executive searches between June and September 2014:

### **Orange County United Way**

(Irvine, CA.)

Vice President of Investor Relations:  
Lori Burrill, former Vice President of Individual and Planned Giving at MIND Research Institute

### **Ballet West**

(Salt Lake City, UT)

Director of Advancement and External Relations: Tom Michel, former Director of Development of the Film Society at Lincoln Center (NYC)

"It is an ideal time for deepening the commitment to everything we bring Salt Lake City's robust arts community." Michel was also attracted by the opportunity to press re-set by leaving NYC to move to Salt Lake City.

Ballet West's Executive Director Scott Altman welcomes Michel's arrival as the company grows into its next half century. "Tom brings that national and international perspective that is invaluable. We feel very fortunate to have him on board."

Based on his long-time work with some of the world's most prestigious performing arts groups and presenters, MW&A encouraged Michel to become a candidate for the Ballet West. "I'm ready for this adventure," says Michel.

### ***Project Tomorrow Gains Advancement Guru***

In September, **Greg Nicholson** steps into his new role as Director of Advancement at **Project Tomorrow** in Irvine. "Perfect timing", Nicholson says. He believes the strong recovery from the recession means huge fundraising potential for education-focused programs. "Sophisticated foundations know there are so many worthwhile projects out there," says Nicholson, who joins **Project Tomorrow** after 7 years at the **Cotsen Foundation** in Santa Monica.

"Project Tomorrow has everything funders are looking for-- amazing research and data, stable leadership and a strong and diverse funding base." Nicholson also values Project Tomorrow's consistent commitment to bringing the voice of teachers and students into policy decisions.

**Project Tomorrow's CEO, Julie Evans** knew this hire was critical. "Working with MW&A on this search was one of the best decisions that I have ever made in 15 years of being the CEO of Project Tomorrow."

"Michelle and her team provided us with professional consultative support every step on the way to finding a stellar selection of top notch candidates to meet our needs. This position is a new one within our organization, and a very strategic one. It was very important for our future that we selected the best candidate to help us our grow our resource base. And we are so pleased to have Greg join our team!"

**MW&A** concluded the successful executive search after

**Project Tomorrow**  
(Irvine, CA.) Director of Advancement: Greg Nicholson former Program Officer at the Cotsen Foundation in Santa Monica

**Animal Samaritans**  
(Palm Springs, CA.) Director of Development: Kim Laidaw, former Executive Director with Guide Dogs of the Desert.

**Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet**  
(Carlyle, PA.) Director of Development: Elizabeth Mihmet, former Executive Director of the The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS), Central PA Chapter

WWW.  
MichelleWhiting  
AndAssociates.com

The [new MW&A website](#) has officially launched! The new website features [current searches](#), information on [services](#), brief [case studies](#) of MW&A clients, and our latest news on funding opportunities, trends in assessing your development programs,

meeting Greg's mom (!) in Pennsylvania, where she is a friend of the board chair of another MW&A non-profit client. Relationships, right?

## Meet the MW&A Team!



Our clients know that the MW&A team is fully committed to making every grant proposal, search candidate interview, development department assessment and family foundation site visit an unqualified success. And what a team they are!



### **Megan Seltzer, Senior Development Associate**

Megan has been an Associate with MW&A since August of 2012, and manages the MW&A grants development and research services as well as the day-to-day administrative functions of the office. Prior to MW&A, Megan worked as Program Coordinator for **The Caterina's Club** in Anaheim. She has also volunteered extensively for local organizations, such as **Crittenton Services for Children and Families in Fullerton, Planned Parenthood of Los Angeles and the American Heart Association Inland Empire Chapter.**



### **Vanessa Briseno, Foundation Relations and Philanthropic Advisement Associate**

Vanessa brings 15 years of high level philanthropic advisement and grants development to MW&A. For over six years, Vanessa served as program officer at the **Annenberg**

and highlights on our clients' accomplishments.

(Gorgeous new design, thanks to Lentini Design! Team portraits by Sheri Geoffreys Photography.)

## MW&A 20th Anniversary! 1994-2014

### *An interview with one of MW&A's first clients in 1994, Robyn Class, CEO of Orange Children & Parents Together*

"I've always admired Michelle's insights, dedication, directness and humor," says Robyn Class, who hired MW&A in 2013 to create a development plan around foundation support. "Thanks to that work, we received an Annenberg Foundation grant and so many other benefits," says Class.

The relationship goes back over twenty years, as Class recalls Michelle launching MW&A. "I first knew Michelle when I was at Planned Parenthood and she was transitioning from working as a non-profit fundraiser to consulting," Class says.

**Foundation**, providing her with an in-depth knowledge and cultural understanding of foundation and non-profit environments alike.

In addition to assisting with MW&A's grant-making foundation clients, Vanessa is a highly skilled and successful grant writer, including procuring a **\$30M Promise Neighborhoods grant for Youth Policy Institute in Los Angeles**. Vanessa primarily works with MW&A's education and youth and family services clients.



**Stephanie Christian,  
Marketing Associate**

Stephanie assists our clients with marketing and e-communications needs. A skilled social media and online marketing expert, Stephanie also manages all collateral design and production. Prior to joining the MW&A team, she spent six years leading the marketing and development efforts for two local history museums. She also worked for three years supporting the efforts to make Orange County a better place as marketing associate for a local community foundation.

"We were one of her first clients. Michelle started out smart, always understanding both Los Angeles and Orange County clients--and how different the two counties were, and still are. Working from her base in Long Beach, she really had a foot in each community. Over the years, I have seen her grow her business to a national scope with such a deep and impressive client list, that it just really tells the rest of the story," Class says. "I was really eager to work with her again, and I am so glad I've had that opportunity to call on Michelle's expertise. She is always thinking of the broader picture."

**Michelle Whiting & Associates**  
[michelle@michellewhitingandassociates.com](mailto:michelle@michellewhitingandassociates.com)  
[www.michellewhitingandassociates.com](http://www.michellewhitingandassociates.com)  
562.437.3561