

Inspiring Philanthropists and Celebrities to Give in New Ways

Name: Heather Hartnett

MUM Degree: BA, [Business Administration](#), 2005

Position: Director of Development

Organization: David Lynch Foundation

Home: Tribeca neighborhood, New York City

Passion: Working to Create Positive Social Change

Career Risk that has Paid Off: Leaving Business for Nonprofit Work

Enthusiasm Quotient: 11 (on a scale of 1-10)



When Heather Hartnett's boss pulled her aside at a fundraiser hosted by their nonprofit foundation and asked her to interview someone on camera, she readily agreed to it. But when she took a seat under the Klieg lights in the small backstage studio opposite Ringo Starr, that was another story.

Next up was Mike Love of the Beach Boys. Then Ben Harper and Sherly Crow. And Russell Brand. Later it would be Jerry Seinfeld.

"I was nervous, you can imagine," says Heather, 29, now Director of Development at the nonprofit David Lynch Foundation, which hosted the gala [Radio City Music Hall concert](#) in 2009. "Ringo was really sweet. Each interview got a little less nerve-wracking."

While Heather still does interviews for the foundation's TV station, [dlf.tv](#), she spends most of her time engaged in a newfound passion: inspiring philanthropists and celebrities to donate their time and resources toward the foundation's mission of healing traumatic stress through the practice of Transcendental Meditation. The focus is on serving inner-city students, veterans, and women and girls who have suffered violence and abuse.

"This wasn't something I ever thought I'd be involved in," says Heather, who works with a talented team at the foundation's midtown Manhattan offices. "I'm from a family of entrepreneurs. But the more I learn about this world, the more I realize that social impact is something I've always been involved in, and always will be."

The seed of that interest was planted during her years as a student at MUM. "I chose MUM because I wanted a holistic education," she says. "What I got was a sense of community and the desire to make a social impact. The students were conscious of the people around them and the community they were creating. We were thinking of ways to give back."





Heather's first jobs out of college included working at a venture capital firm in the San Francisco Bay Area. Then, when David Lynch, auteur filmmaker and long-time champion of TM, gave a talk in Berkeley, Heather was moved to volunteer for the organization.

She worked in schools, with veterans, and taught TM to kids with ADD and ADHD. Later, the foundation's executive director Robert Roth offered her a job at dlf.tv, and she dove in, even though doing nonprofit work hadn't been on her radar screen until then. From there, hard work and a can-do spirit carried her up into positions of leadership in the organization.

"There's a vast world of philanthropy out there," says Heather. She cites a unique advantage held by the David Lynch Foundation in fundraising. "A lot of nonprofits have a tough time connecting their donors to the work they do. But since anyone can learn TM, our contributors get to touch what the populations we serve experience. We've had a huge receptivity because of this."

Heather and her team organize and manage awareness events that are often high visibility, celebrity-studded affairs, such as 2012's [Jazz Gala Benefit](#) hosted by TM meditator George Stephanopolous and featuring jazz greats Herbie Hancock, Wynton Marsalas, and Wayne Shorter.

"All the celebrities have been fantastic," Heather says. "They're so generous, giving their time and connections and contacts to help our mission. This year Katy Perry 'gave' her birthday to the David Lynch Foundation — in lieu of gifts — so that more people could learn TM. It's been incredible."

Heather credits her experience at MUM for opening her up to the power of inspired people working together — and for helping her build the confidence to think big. "I came out of there feeling that I could do anything my heart desired."

Photo Above: Heather interviews foundation chairman David Lynch.

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