

Andrea Nguyen

Director of Community Relations & Executive Director of Education Foundation, Pasadena Independent School District



From a boat refugee fleeing a war-torn country to an award-winning journalist and now a celebrated educator and nonprofit executive, Andrea Nguyen came from a humble beginning before becoming a formative and effective leader in the world of education foundations.

Andrea was a child on a small boat of 15 Vietnamese refugees that escaped Communist Vietnam in 1984. The perilous trip resulted in the death of two children after the group's damaged vessel drifted nine days in the South China Sea without

food or water. Andrea survived, she said by the grace of God and her will to live. After being rescued by an oil tanker, Andrea and her family settled in Pasadena, TX.

After college, Andrea dreamt big and became a news reporter, working for various TV stations in four different states. She thought what better way to exert the democracy her family fought so hard to attain than through accurate and unbiased journalism.

During her decade-long career in news, she broke an international story, was featured

on Dateline NBC, and covered thousands of compelling stories and breaking news. Having children made her rethink her career. She segued to PR and marketing and worked her way up to become general manager of one of the nation's largest RV resorts. Although Andrea was very successful as a business professional as was a journalist, she couldn't ignore her growing desire to impact young minds. To her, education is a cornerstone of democracy and teaching is one of the noblest professions.

In 2012, she made the leap into the classroom working for the very school district that made her who she is today. Pasadena ISD allowed her to combine her passions: education, journalism, leadership, and technology. Andrea taught 12 different high school subjects over the span of nearly eight years before district leaders tapped her for the role of Director of Schools and Community Relations and Executive Director of the Education Foundation.

When COVID forced the foundation to cancel all of its regular in-person fundraising events for 2020, Andrea created an online fundraising site for the foundation's first-ever virtual telethon. The eight-hour live-streamed event, which took place in December 2020, surpassed its fundraising goal by \$100K, netting over \$327,000 in donations to help support the district's 54,000 or so students and teachers. Andrea's goal is to make a positive impact in her community by serving others, building relationships, and championing public education.

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