

**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**A statement of intention**  
**between SVCCreates and Los Gatos**  
**from January 2023 through December 2027**

**Setting the Stage:** SVCCreates is a regional non-profit on a mission to build the capacity of Silicon Valley's arts and culture ecosystem, raise the visibility and voices of our creative sector and increase access to the arts for high need communities. The Town of Los Gatos has a population of about 32,000 and is nestled at the base of the Sierra Azules in the southwestern portion of Santa Clara County.

We are entering this partnership with a shared appreciation for the value of the arts to our community and an awareness of our region's unique qualities and corresponding challenges and opportunities.

**Santa Clara Valley Context:** We live in a broadly diverse county – spanning from a tech centric Palo Alto to the north to the urban core of San Jose to the rural hills of Gilroy and everything in between. Our dynamic “start-up” culture changed the world through technology and innovation. Iconic Silicon Valley became a global economic force and the envy of many regions by creating an abundance of highly skilled jobs, fueling extreme wealth and attracting talent from across the globe. This unparalleled success, however, has come with a cost. It has strained our transportation systems, driven up housing costs and widened the income gap which in turn has made recruiting and retaining talent difficult. Living in Santa Clara County is challenging, especially for those who are not part of the tech-employed workforce.

These factors are exacerbated by: 1) 90% of our philanthropic giving that leaves our region; 2) a transient workforce that weakens our collective attachment to place; 3) a suburban development pattern that divides us; 4) the opportunity and complexity of a broadly diverse population; and 5) the challenges of navigating the impacts of digital culture first.

To varying degrees, these challenges impact everyone who lives and works in Silicon Valley but they are magnified for the creative sector trying to: 1) retain an artist community; 2) find affordable creative spaces for the arts; 3) serve multicultural arts audiences; 4) create a sense of place; and 5) build community through the arts.

**Importance of the Arts:** While we acknowledge that arts and culture are not the “main event” in Silicon Valley we stand firmly behind its value to the health and well-being of our community. The arts have the power to heal and transform our lives. The arts drive social change. The arts preserve cultural heritage and connect us to our humanity and to each other. The arts help shape and define our community and drive small business activity. The arts fuel creativity, innovation and self-expression. And the arts are integral to the healthy development of our children.

The sector's contribution comes at a time of a racial reckoning, pandemic exhaustion, the challenges facing our democracy, the weaponizing of immigrants, and negative impacts of social

media to our children and society. The arts can be part of the solution. And our sector challenges highlight the need for us to work together, to leverage the assets that we have and to ensure that each unique community benefits from the power of the arts.

### **Partnership Goals:**

- Leverage SVC resources and civic and cultural assets within each community to strengthen the arts.
- Raise local awareness and support for the arts.
- Build a region wide network of arts advocates for private, state and federal investment in the arts.

### **Guiding Principles:**

- Each town, village and city in Santa Clara County has its own unique characteristics, priorities and aspirations.
- Knowledge about our local arts and cultural ecosystem informs public policy and local investment in the arts.
- We embrace the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit and multicultural community of Silicon Valley and seek to leverage what we already have.
- A regional network of civic leaders who care about the arts strengthens our ability to advocate.
- An equity lens helps us to prioritize our efforts

### **Partnership Responsibilities:**

#### **SVCcreates agrees to:**

- Deepen our understanding of Los Gatos' cultural sector through research, interviews and engagement.
- Customize a suite of SVC program and initiative offerings for Los Gatos based on interest, available resources and the unique needs of the community. Examples include:
  - Operating, project or access grants for local arts organizations
  - Workshops, conferences, roundtables, leadership training, coaching and peer support for arts leaders
  - Artist or leadership features across Content Media Platform
  - Networking events for civic and arts leaders and local creatives
  - County Poet Laureate and Content Emerging Artist nominations
  - ArtsEdConnect teacher grants for k-12 arts education
  - Fiscal agency in support of fundraising efforts for the arts.
- Share arts ecosystem research. This includes copies of The Business of Arts and Culture publication and Civic Leadership Briefings upon request.
- Provide Content Magazine subscriptions to city staff liaison and elected officials.
- Invite designated arts and civic leaders from Los Gatos to SVC events, workshops and convenings.

**Los Gatos agrees to:**

- Designate a contact person for SVC from the Town of Los Gatos.
- Co-create customized approach to serving arts community within Los Gatos.
- Promote SVC program opportunities to Los Gatos artists and arts organizations through city communication channels.
- Host an Arts and Civic Leadership Briefing on the Business of Arts and Culture.
- Be open to public policy proposals and debates impacting the arts.
- Help to find any “unmapped” artists or arts organizations within your community that might benefit from SVC resources.
- Identify any private or institutional funding candidates for the arts within Los Gatos.
- Consider local “matching funds” when opportunities are presented.

**SVCcreates Leadership**

**Name:**

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Connie Martinez, CEO SV Creates

**Title**

**Los Gatos Leadership**

**Name:**

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**Title**

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