

Biography

Kaya Matthews El



Teacher, Author, Holistic Healer,
Life Coach, Philanthropist

EDUCATION

PhD Human Services, Capella University, Minneapolis, MN, Pending
M.A. Organizational Management, University of Phoenix, Phoenix, AZ - 2003
B.S. Environmental Science, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA – 2001
B.A. International Relations, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA – 2001
A.S. Electronic Communications, LA Trade Technical College, Los Angeles, CA – 1995

Kaya Matthews was born in Belize on December 20, 1955. She attended grade school and primary school in Belize City, where she won a scholarship at age 12 to attend St. Hilda's College, a girl's high school from the Anglican Diocese, where she excelled and graduated with GCE in English, Spanish and Geography. Upon graduation, Kaya started her first real job as a Spanish instructor in her old high school. She later worked as a post office clerk for three years before migrating to the U.S.A. as a young adult.

Kaya migrated to the United States of America as a single mother with two young children in 1978 and started working as an executive secretary with Prudential Insurance Company in 1980. Kaya resigned and later rejoined the same company in the Public Relations Department on a Class Action Task Force for two years starting in 1998, working in several positions including Remedy Letter Writer, Call Center Clerk, receiving several certificates for effective rock-solid calls to customers, Tax Evaluator, and later Senior Mediator for settlement arbitration.

Kaya has worked in Accounting and Bookkeeping field under several capacities for 15 plus years. Relevant employment in this field included Accounts Payable Supervisor at Carlin Foods in Gardena, California, and Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. She also held positions in this field as Credit Manager, Accounts Receivable, and Inventory Control.

Kaya started her academic journey to higher education earning her first minor degree in Electronic Communications in 1995. She went on to study two years of Electrical Engineering, and later changed her course of study to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Studies (Science Track), and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from University of Southern California. She continued her academic journey to earn a Master of Arts degree in Business two years later, specializing in Organizational Management with focus on Organizational Culture from the University of Phoenix in 2003. Kaya plans on returning to finish a doctorate degree from Capella University in the study of Human Services, specializing in Management of Nonprofit Organizations, having successfully completed all the course work, she is determined to complete her PhD degree.

In 2000, as she juggled college, rearing her youngest son, Kaya found employment with Sea Breeze Entertainment as Project Manager for an annual reggae festival at Queen Mary Park in Long Beach, CA for four years. During this time, she was also self-employed as a business consultant for several reggae artists. It was also during this period that Kaya became a member of the Ethiopia world Federation (EWF) Chapter 25 in California, where she served as secretary for a period of eighteen months, and chaired the Ways and Means Committee where she worked with the membership and other committees to raise funds for the organization. Since then, Kaya has been on several boards of directors, including The Theater of the Consciousness of the Arts as secretary, where she also participated by being a member of the cast in several plays. She currently serves as Treasurer on the board of directors of the Twelve Tribes of Israel in California, a Rastafari Organization.

Kaya was born into herbal lifestyle and remembers picking herbs with her mother as early as for years of age, and learning to treat every ailment with herbs from the rainforest. She remembers the sweet fragrance of the earth and lush vegetation of her childhood. It's no wonder that over the years as an adult, Kaya consciously chose the holistic approach to healing. She studied and learned about different healing herbs for any disorder of the body, and alternative healing therapies. Kaya would share this information with her friends and loved ones and practiced this natural way of life for herself and her family. She became the one that many people in her community would call to ask which herb they should use for a variety of conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart issues, respiratory disorders etc. She would research the natural cure and share the information. This had become a part of how she defined herself. In 2001 after the 9/11 attack, when the entire population was stressed and worried about terrorist attacks, she looked around trying to figure how she could help, and there the concept of a healing program was born.

Kaya Retreats was created to encourage a holistic lifestyle for optimal health and happiness. The retreats are thematic, but always introduce breathing techniques, meditation, yoga and/or qigong, sound healing, healing circle, healing crystals and more to participants. The focus of this program is healing and wellness with mindfulness at its core, using a holistic approach to healing. Kaya has practiced Quantum healing for more than fifteen years, and has experienced transformation of mind, body, and spirit, which she endeavors to share with the world.

In 2003, soon after receiving her master's degree in business, Kaya changed career to return to teaching at the secondary school level... a job that brought her great fulfillment. She worked as a Science teacher for Los Angeles Unified School District for two years. In 2005, Kaya relocated to

Florida, where she taught with Broward Public Schools and earned Professional Teaching Certification/Biology 6-12 and specialized in teaching ESOL by earning a Reading Endorsement for K-12. She continued working as a teacher until 2014 when she returned to Los Angeles. Over the span of twelve (12) years Kaya taught Environmental Science, Marine Biology, Biology, Physical Science, Health Science, and Language Arts (Intensive Reading) as a secondary school teacher while working at keeping her Holistic Healing program active.

Kaya was an enthusiastic, creative, and passionate bilingual educator (English/Spanish) who utilized a visionary approach with consistency to help students to move from the threshold of *not-knowing* to *knowing* and encourage development to their fullest potential by instilling habits of life, known for enhancing learning skills and building cognizance. Her teaching career required a variety of skill sets and knowledge. As a teacher, Kaya was tasked to provide an **effective learning environment** that fostered diversity and constituting a variety of techniques and tools for students' acquisition of knowledge and skills. **Advanced knowledge of Computers and Technology** was incorporated into lesson planning and teaching, with application software usage, such as Apple Computer and component software (including: iMovie, iComic, iGarage and Keystone); Microsoft Windows, MS Office (Including: Word, Excel, Outlook, Access, PowerPoint, Publisher); Internet access using various search engines through browser program; Adherence to **Education Accomplished Practices (EAP)** – including Assessment, Communication, Continuous Improvement, Critical Thinking, Diversity, Ethics, Human Development, Learning, Knowledge of Subject Matter, Learning Environments, Planning, Role of Teacher, and Technology. Set **High Expectations** for all students with planned instructions, incorporating motivational strategies and multiple resources to provide comprehensible instructions with a strong focus on **Common Core, and State Standards/Benchmarks** to advance college and/or vocational preparedness. She used **Innovative Methods**, tools and materials including cooperative learning, thematic instruction, team playing, differentiated lesson planning, test taking strategies, infusing technology, such as the Internet, District and other websites, presentation software, Promethean board, on-line library research; and conduct multiple assessments in compliance with district and state regulations. Kaya's highlighted achievements in teaching included being Chair for the Science Department which entailed coordinating and chairing weekly, and responsibility for lab supplies and safety; and serving on Discipline Committee to create and implement school-wide consequences for behavior reinforcement.

In her early years of teaching, Kaya came face to face with what she interpreted as a dire need for intervention among the teenagers she encountered. This was the catalyst for the formation of the Rites of Passage Girls Camp as a component of Kaya Retreats, Inc. She developed a desire to help teenage girls to successfully bridge the gap between teenage and adulthood. From this desire to intervene, Kaya launched a teenage program with a vision to provide critical intervention to historically at-risk adolescent girls ranging from 13 - 17 years of age through a program that offers a week of comprehensive workshops. As a grassroots organization, she partners with sponsors, nonprofit organizations and concerned citizens in the community who pursue a common goal to reach our target population.

The [Rites of Passage Girls Camp](#) is a one-week camp constituted by comprehensive workshops and activities with integration of post mentoring and support to participants for one year. The intense transformational program includes daily breathing exercises, yoga, meditation, guest

speakers, and workshops that address topics including but not limited to Career, Financial, Depression and Anxiety, Drug and Alcohol Dependency, Safe Dating, Anti-Bullying, Character, and so on. This is a comprehensive program geared towards girls who commit to a transformation for seven days and six nights. [Rites of Passage Girls Camp](#) was designed to challenge participants into making positive changes in their lives, and to be convicted and confident as each participant step forward to make a difference in their communities. The Rites of Passage Girls Camp had its first annual event in the summer of 2011 at Quiet Waters Park in Deerfield, Florida.

CERTIFICATES & PROFESSIONAL COURSES

Child Abuse Certificate, Broward Public Schools, FL
Sexual Abuse Counseling, Broward County Non-Profit Agency, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Past Life Healing, Gail Thackery - GAIA, Los Angeles, CA
Neuro Linguistic Programming Masterclass Level I, Kaya Redwood NLP, Pasadena, CA
HIV/AIDS Educator, Minority Aids Project, Los Angeles, CA

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Volunteer Broward	Volunteer	Aug 2005 - 2014
Theatre of Creative Consciousness	Director	Jun 2010 to Present
Rites of Passage Girls Camp	Director	Jan 2013 Present
Lighthouse of Broward, Fort Lauderdale, FL	Volunteer	Oct 2009 – 2014
Union Rescue Mission	HIV Outreach	Jan 1991 to 2005
Salvation Army/Bethesda House	HIV/Counselor	Jan 1991 – 1996

ASSOCIATIONS & CERTIFICATIONS

National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), National Education Association, Human Watch Society, Lighthouse of Broward/Volunteer, Minority AIDS Project - HIV/AIDS Educator, Broward Children Services Council, Women in Distress, Volunteer Broward, Friends of the African American Research Library, Theatre of Creative Consciousness of the Arts, Rites of Passage Girls Camp. Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) Master Class Level I, Child Abuse Certification, Professional Teaching Certificate in Biology with Reading Endorsement.