



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PRETEND CITY CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

TITLE: Executive Director

MUSEUM: Pretend City Children's Museum

MISSION & ORGANIZATION: Pretend City is a nonprofit interactive children's museum that builds better brains through fun, whole body learning experiences, educational programs, and creative exhibits. This mission is driven by a vision to empower children and their grown-ups to meaningfully connect with and expand their world. Pretend City is a place to discover, learn, explore, play and be creative in a fun environment. Developed for children infant to 10 years old and their grown-ups, the museum is a community resource, where families, educators and community agencies come together to help each child reach his or her greatest potential.

Pretend City was designed with an important goal in mind, to build better brains in children infant to 10 years old. We have combined specific learning objectives with an informal immersive learning environment that is developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers, and young children.

After being closed for almost a year, Pretend City reopened in April 2021. Before the Covid-19 pandemic Pretend City had a strong membership base (2,800 households), a diverse \$3 million budget comprised of 60% earned income, over 220,000 annual visitors, a strong team of professional staff (24 full and part-time staff), and over 100 active volunteers and 23 committed, energetic, community-connected board of directors.

Pretend City recently received 6 acres of land in the Great Park in Irvine, CA. Ambitious fundraising plans are underway with a Capital Campaign. This new facility will more than double exhibit space, add an outdoor component and additional parking and is projected to increase attendance by 50%. Campbell & Co has been retained as fundraising counsel, Griffin Structures has been retained as the owner's rep and the architect has been identified.

LOCATION: Pretend City is in Irvine, California.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS: This position will report directly to the Board Chairperson. The Executive Director will directly supervise and manage five full-time positions including a Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Sr. Director of Education and department heads in finance, HR and education as well as an administrative assistant. Indirectly, the Executive Director will provide inspirational leadership to over 24 FTE employees.

EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE and CAREER PATH: The Executive Director will have at least eight to ten years of relevant senior level leadership experience at non-profit organizations with an

emphasis in education, early childhood or health. Demonstrated successful experience in fundraising and comfort in all or most of the areas of museum programs, membership, marketing, government, and external relations is essential. The ideal candidate will be a skilled communicator who has shown success in building and growing an organization and fostering a culture of equity, trust and respect. The candidate will have a good understanding of effective fiscal management, administration, visitor experience, and demonstrated ability to build widespread support for an organization through collaborative efforts. Experience working with a non-profit board is highly valued; experience serving on a board is a plus.

Specific responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Vision and strategic planning.** In partnership with the Board of Directors and working with the Senior Team, defines the strategic direction of Pretend City consistent with its vision, mission, and culture. Collaboratively develops the big picture and vision with the ability to think strategically and creatively about setting and achieving the Museum’s priorities. Combines a vision of the untried with a data-based calculation required to evaluate and act upon considered risk.

- Fundraising.** Has a track record of securing significant gifts or comparable examples of work that evidence strong relationship building skills that will aid our fundraising efforts for the campaign. Oversees fundraising planning and implementation, including stewarding a growing portfolio of major gift donors and capital campaign prospects. Takes a personalized approach to donor relationships at the major gift level and ongoing stewardship. Works with the Chief Development Officer in identifying, cultivating and soliciting gifts from individuals, corporations, foundations, the public sector, and other sources. Understands that growing philanthropic support is essential to the success of the current and future Museum, and as such, instills a culture of philanthropy both internally and externally.

- Fiscal/Operations Management.** Ensures the organization is operating on a sound fiscal basis. Works with the COO/Director of Finance to oversee the development of the budget, manages within the budget, and keeps the Board of Directors regularly informed of the financial status of the organization. Proficiency in understanding, analyzing, and communicating the organization’s financial position including budgets, P&L statements, balance sheets, and audits is essential. Focused on providing exceptional visitor experience.

- Early Childhood.** Serves as a thought leader in the development of new initiatives and partnerships with other groups, agencies and organizations to advance the mission, vision and goals of the Museum as an essential part of the Orange County community. Active in the field of children’s museums and studies/benchmarks against other museums.

- Leadership.** Leads a senior team to strengthen and support the programmatic, financial and operation goals, including attracting, retaining, developing, and motivating diverse, qualified staff. Ensures opportunities for ongoing staff development and mentorship, including the setting of goals and measuring of results to drive organizational performance and outcomes.

Provides consistent and clear leadership to staff and ensures the development of an organizational culture that is characterized by a commitment to quality, collaboration, transparency, diversity, inclusivity, and mutual respect. Leads and manages move to the Great Park.

•**Board Administration and Support.** Develops a strong partnership with the Board of Directors, recognizing and activating their individual expertise and passion for the institution, together building a vision to take the institution to the next level. Utilizes their talents and networks, when appropriate, to support operations. Facilitates and supports the Board by advising and informing Board members of the ongoing status of business operations, industry trends, needs, and opportunities for the field. Interfaces between Board members, Museum members and staff. Ensures an environment that is conducive to creative and good governance and productive Board work. Consistently focuses on Board development to grow the group's diversity, expertise, and philanthropic capacity.

•**Business Development.** Encourages an entrepreneurial culture that identifies opportunities to generate new earned income revenue sources while improving existing revenue categories. Earned revenue currently comprises close to 60% of the budget, and includes admissions, membership, educational programming, facility rentals, ticketed events and public programs, and museum store.

•**Public Relations.** In partnership with the marketing department, ensures Pretend City is consistently presented in strong and appropriate images to relevant stakeholders. Ensures that the Museum is recognized nationally and locally through well-conceived branding strategies. Serves as the chief spokesperson and advances the museum's position as a leader and innovator in the field. Works with the City of Irvine, First Five OC, and other community stakeholders to position Pretend City as a recognized leader and a hub for early childhood development.

Traits and Characteristics. It is crucial that the Executive Director both feels and communicates a genuine passion for and joy in children and their process to think, play and create. The Executive Director will be a compelling and charismatic leader whose passion for children energizes Pretend City's stakeholders around institutional values and mission. The exceptional candidate will be an entrepreneurial leader who will be thoughtfully adventurous while also engaging in institution building and enhancing organizational capacity. The ability to mobilize, motivate, sustain, engage, and grow the Board is also important. The ability to be an inspirational and visionary leader, both internally to staff and externally to the various constituencies and interested public is essential. The ideal candidate will be a visible and approachable leader who can interact comfortably with a wide range of people, recognizing their specific interests and aspirations while creating a community of shared values. As such, the Executive Director should have in-depth experience with fundraising, institutional image building, marketing, and external relations. A successful and proven background in capital campaign fundraising. Equally important is a passion for and ability to move programs, ever changing exhibits and new initiatives forward through well formulated plans. The successful

candidate should have exceptional organizational, administrative, and financial skills. Knowledge of fiscal management is critical including the ability to increase both earned and contributed income. As such, the Executive Director should be diplomatic but decisive and able to accomplish goals through motivation and delegation. The Executive Director should be a decisive coalition builder who can instill a high level of accountability in team-based decision-making. The candidate should also be a model of integrity and fairness. The ideal candidates should not only possess strong personal communication skills but should also be able to create an environment that is conducive to open and direct communication.

COMPENSATION: Pretend City offers a competitive salary based on the candidate's experience, along with health, dental, vision, and paid time off benefits.

Application Procedure:

To be considered for this recruitment, please submit a cover letter and resume to Phi Nguyen, HR Director, at phi.nguyen@pretendcity.org. The email subject line **MUST** include the following: Executive Director Position.

Pretend City Children's Museum is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and actively seeks a diverse pool of candidates.