

fernwood



Director of Development Opportunity Guide

fernwoodbotanical.org

About Fernwood



Fernwood Botanical Garden is a special property situated on the beautiful St. Joseph River in southwest Michigan. Berrien County is famous for its fruit production, wine country, and lakeshore communities. Only minutes from South Bend and the University of Notre Dame and just 90 minutes from Chicago, Fernwood has been a popular destination for more than 55 years. Fernwood's mission is to enrich people's lives by awakening and deepening their appreciation of nature. Now more than ever, Fernwood Botanical Garden and other public gardens across the country play an important role in offering a safe place of beauty, healing, reflection, and celebration.

Fernwood comprises 105 acres of gardens and natural areas and is a birder's paradise. The property features at least 10 unique ecosystems and 36 plant species that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has deemed threatened, endangered, and plants of special concern. Visitors may enjoy Fernwood's natural areas with miles of walking and hiking trails, garden paths that wind throughout special botanical collections, and a visit to the Sims Education Center for drop-in educational features and a bird viewing area at the wooded edge of the preserve. New garden features are on the horizon.

Emerging from the pandemic of the past three years, Fernwood has its sights on furthering and strengthening its educational programming for all ages in the areas of sustainable practice, art, and gardening in response to climate change. Under the careful planning of visionary Executive Director, Carol Line, Fernwood is poised for significant growth over the next decade with a Master Plan that encompasses not only the garden but the philanthropic landscape as well. The Master Plan is a comprehensive blueprint to take Fernwood into the next decade, and the new Director of Development will play an integral role in raising capital to execute the goals. Several key areas include strengthening and expanding programming and special garden features to attract young children and families, and improving earned income by focusing on and enhancing venue rental space. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to cultivate and expand on a dynamic development program to assist Fernwood in reaching its envisioned potential with the full support and encouragement of the Board of Directors and Executive Director.

The Opportunity: Director of Development



In this newly redefined and expanded role, the Director of Development (DOD) will identify, renew, and strengthen key relationships for Fernwood within the community. This externally focused leader will explore and present compelling opportunities for interested individuals, foundations, and corporations to support the organization's mission and subsequent outcomes. In year one, the DOD will be tasked with envisioning, organizing, and implementing a comprehensive and diverse philanthropy program. It will be of utmost importance for the DOD to increase/renew funding and to ensure consistent support for Fernwood through various means including the garden's annual fund, membership, and events. These means provide general support for Fernwood to remain an important community asset and magical place for all to visit, learn, and connect with gardens and nature.

Reporting to the Executive Director, the DOD will be an enthusiastic, relationship-focused team member who will work with Board and staff leadership to encourage donor engagement resulting in maximum philanthropic investment in the organization's mission and programs. As the sole development professional for Fernwood, the DOD will have a strong understanding of all elements of the development pipeline and will have the freedom to both create and implement their ideas with strong support from Board and staff leadership.

Performance Objectives



Strategic Leadership

- Serve as the primary face and subject expert for all things relative to fundraising for Fernwood.
- Collaborate with the Executive Director and Board Members to assess current fundraising goals and create attainable but ambitious goals for the next 3-5 years.
- Develop and implement a substantive, actionable, and measurable strategic development plan. Implement and monitor progress toward short- and long-term fundraising strategy and goals. Maintain accurate progress reports of revenue and expenses towards goals.
- Steward a culture of philanthropy at all levels of the organization, including staff, leadership, volunteers, and the Board of Directors.
- Foster a culture of teamwork and collaboration among the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and the community.

Donor Relations and Stewardship

- Develop a consistent pipeline of donors who have the capacity to give annually at a level of \$5,000 or higher. Create and implement strategies to grow the donor pipeline at all gift levels.
- Identify and cultivate the next generation of major donors with recommendations from stakeholders and other means to identify and qualify donors for solicitation and stewardship opportunities.
- Partner as appropriate with leadership volunteers to identify and secure visits with those in their peer networks and other stakeholders and groups.
- Establish a thoughtful and consistent stewardship plan for donors at all levels. Ensure excellent customer service is provided to donors through accessibility to staff and leadership (when appropriate), timely responsiveness, quality in all interactions, and personalized communications.
- Maximize relationships with current and former Fernwood members and volunteers in the area.

Performance Objectives



External, Community, and Partner Relations

Together with the head of marketing and community engagement,

- Serve as a passionate and visible spokesperson for Fernwood, ensuring the organization is known as a trusted community organization dedicated to preserving its natural beauty through education, enrichment, and conservatorship.
- Maintain a strong presence in professional organizations, community groups, and other spaces relevant to the work of Fernwood and its mission.
- Act as a liaison to local businesses, government, and public entities. Develop a network of organizations in the local community that can contribute volunteer and financial support for years to come.
- Work with the local counties' funding entities and foundations, representing the organization at meetings and presentations and provide impact and other reports throughout the grantmaking cycle.
- Network at regional Chamber events and with other service groups to be familiar with area organizations and to place Fernwood's work and image in the forefront of these community groups.

Administration and Management

- Support all organization fundraising events' strategy, including coordination of board committees, staff, and ensuring other relevant partners are included, invited, and stewarded.
- Assist all major events to help guarantee success including Fernwood's LIGHTS holiday show. Be a strong player in the functions and logistics of all special events with support from the Special Events Manager and select Special Events Committees.
- Create a system and structure for effective grants/grants management. Support the Executive Director, directly or through outsourced support, on governmental and large Foundation grants.
- Become familiar with and adapt a thorough record-keeping process using the ALTRU CRM system and make certain donor records are updated and maintained.

The Qualified Candidate

Fernwood seeks an experienced and strategic Director of Development to spearhead the development of a comprehensive fundraising plan that will ensure long term sustainability and support for Fernwood's mission. The successful candidate will be adept at both "big picture" strategic development and successfully implementing and fulfilling plans to meet goals. A skilled relationship manager, the DOD will spend the majority of their time in the field identifying opportunities to diversify Fernwood funding by matching the interests of high-profile donors, foundations, businesses, and local organizations to the needs of Fernwood.

Specific Requirements Include:

- A minimum of 5 years of progressive experience in fundraising, public relations, and leadership, with the ability to work collaboratively in small teams.
- Proven ability to build strong relationships with a variety of volunteers, public leaders, partner organizations, and other stakeholders and leverage those relationships for partnership and fundraising opportunities.
- Demonstrated commitment to accountability, measuring outcomes, and a results-oriented culture.
- Familiarity with donor tracking systems, such as Blackbaud's CRM product suite.
- Ability to engage with diverse audiences, including donors, board members, volunteers, youth, staff, executives, etc.
- Established track record of increasing revenue through diverse fundraising streams, e.g., individual giving, grants, corporate partnerships, planned giving, etc.
- A track record of stable tenures in previous roles.
- Knowledge of and connections to funding communities in Michigan's Berrien, County and South Bend desirable.



How To Apply



Compensation will be determined based on experience and skills. Full-time employees are eligible for health, dental, and vision insurance, generous PTO, sick days, select holidays, a 401(k) plan, and professional development.

Fernwood is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other occupationally irrelevant criteria.

To assure confidential tracking of all applicants, no applications will be accepted via email. ALL INQUIRIES WILL BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE. All candidate submitted materials and credentials will be reviewed for consistency and accuracy. Candidates can expect that KEES will verify employment/academic/background information both in the screening process and for the finalist(s) in a formal background check.

This search is being managed by Heather Eddy (President) and Stacy Harker (Consultant) of KEES. Questions may be addressed to sharker@kees2success.com.

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About KEES

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a nonprofit executive search firm that builds diverse teams with dynamic leaders in the nonprofit and public sectors. A woman owned and operated firm, KEES offers a full array of nonprofit consulting services including executive search, leadership development, interim staffing, and HR support. For more information, please visit www.kees2success.com.

