Position Description

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

THE NEW CHILDREN’S MUSEUM
(San Diego, CA)

THE NEW CHILDREN’S MUSEUM

Mission: The New Children’s Museum is a new model of children’s museum whose mission is to stimulate imagination, creativity and critical thinking in children and families through innovative and engaging experiences with contemporary art.

Originally founded in 1983 in La Jolla, the Museum moved in 1993 to a downtown San Diego warehouse as the “Children’s Museum/Museo de los Niños.” In 2008, after having closed to construct a new building, the Museum reopened as “The New Children’s Museum” – with the word “new” signifying its unique model focusing on commissioning contemporary artists to create full scale art installations for children to engage with and explore. The Museum is located in the heart of San Diego’s marina district and is housed in a modern, dynamic space designed by visionary and award-winning architect Rob Wellington Quigley. The Museum’s fully paid for, dramatic, three-level 50,000-square-foot building includes a series of transparent, flexible spaces which visibly expose the building’s construction and design. In 2018, the Museum celebrated 35 years in San Diego and 10 years as The New Children’s Museum. Looked to as a thought leader, the Museum is recognized nationally and internationally for its innovation and community engagement. In 2019, the Museum was awarded the prestigious National Medal by the federal agency, the Institute of Museum and Library Services. It was one of only five museums in the nation to win the honor, and the only children’s museum to do so.

With over 317,000 visitors annually and over 6,800 member families, The New Children’s Museum empowers children to think, play and create by commissioning and collaborating with contemporary artists to create hands-on, interactive, one-of-a-kind, room-sized art installations. With the belief that all children should have access to art and the creative process – regardless of age, ability, gender, socioeconomic status, or other life situations – The New Children’s Museum strives to make interactive art installations, programs, and public areas as inclusive and accessible as possible for all visitors. For more information, please visit www.thinkplaycreate.org.

RESPONSIBILITIES

As visitorship increases dramatically and the current strategic plan sunsets in 2020, the Executive Director & CEO of The New Children’s Museum will be responsible for current operations and performance as well as be instrumental in visioning and leading the future of the Museum.
Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director & CEO oversees over 80 Museum staff with the following direct reports: the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer, the Deputy Museum Director, the Vice President of Marketing & Communications, and the Vice President of Development. 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 The New Children’s Museum 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.** Oversees fundraising planning and implementation, including stewarding a growing portfolio of major gift donors and prospects. Takes a personalized approach to donor relationships at the major gift level and ongoing stewardship. Works with the Vice President of Development 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 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 CFO/COO 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. Focuses on providing an exceptional visitor experience.

- **Arts and Culture.** 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 San Diego arts community. Active in the field of children’s museums, attends and participates in conferences, 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 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, and mutual respect.

- **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 in order 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 70% of the budget, and includes admissions, membership, educational programming, facility rentals, ticketed events and public programs, museum café, museum store, and the parking garage.

- **Public Relations.** In partnership with the Vice President of Marketing & Communications, ensures that The New Children’s Museum 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 travels on the Museum’s behalf. Advances the Museum’s position as a leader and innovator in the field.

**TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

It is crucial that the Executive Director & CEO both feels and communicates a genuine passion for and joy in children and their process to think, play and create in a contemporary art setting.

The Executive Director & CEO will be a compelling and charismatic leader whose passion for children and the arts energizes The New Children’s Museum’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 publics of the Museum 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 & CEO should have in-depth experience with fundraising, institutional image building, marketing and external relations. Equally important is a passion for and ability to move programs, everchanging 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 & CEO should be diplomatic but decisive and able to accomplish goals through motivation and delegation.

The Executive Director & CEO 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 candidate 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.

CAREER PATH LEADING TO THIS POSITION

The Executive Director & CEO will have at least eight to ten years of relevant senior level leadership experience at organizations with interactive exhibits, a child centered philosophy or an arts and culture focus. 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 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 nonprofit board is highly valued; experience serving on a board is a plus.

COMPENSATION

Annual compensation will be competitive and relocation assistance, if needed, is negotiable. A comprehensive benefits package will be provided.

TO APPLY

Please direct inquiries, nominations, and applications, including resume and a letter of interest in confidence to:

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Electronic submission is encouraged.

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