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MINNESOTA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM  
PRESIDENT  
POSITION DESCRIPTION

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PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

SUBMITTED BY:  
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PRESIDENT  
MINNESOTA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



<http://www.mcm.org/>

**THE OPPORTUNITY**

Minnesota Children's Museum (The Museum) is seeking a new President to lead the organization. The new President will have the opportunity to build on the solid foundation of The Museum, which has served more than 6 million visitors since its inception in 1981. Minnesota Children's Museum is dedicated to providing children with a fun, hands-on and stimulating environment to explore and discover. The Museum helps to instill a life-long love of learning by nurturing the real-world skills children need to become engaged citizens in the future. The Museum, in operation since 1981, embraces these core concepts:

- Early learning is the foundation for lifelong learning.
- Families are our children's first teachers.
- All children deserve a time and place to be children.
- Diverse perspectives enrich children's lives.
- Play *is* learning.

Its leaders and staff have built The Museum into one of the top children's museums in the country and it is recognized for its high quality traveling exhibitions. The incoming President will have overall responsibility for leadership, planning and management of The Museum. This opportunity is for someone who possesses strong business acumen and fundraising/development expertise and will advance The Museum's mission of "*Sparkling children's learning through play.*"

**THE ORGANIZATION**

The Museum's founders, Marialice Harwood, Kate Donaldson, and Suzanne Payne, dreamed of building a children's museum based on the philosophy that there would be no "Do not touch" signs. This dream became a reality on December 12, 1981 when the first children entered "Minnesota's AwareHouse," (the precursory to The Children's Museum) in downtown Minneapolis and experienced the wonders of a hands-on children's museum. During this first year, the Museum had over 65,000 visitors and each of these visitors had the opportunity to embrace "thinking small" in a big way.

Attendance grew to 80,000, and The Museum quickly outgrew the original space in downtown Minneapolis. In 1985, The Museum moved to an old blacksmith's shop in Bandana Square, transforming dirt walls into 18,000 square-feet of galleries. At the new location, even more young visitors discovered the fun of playing to learn. Attendance the first year in Bandana Square jumped to 200,000.

By the early 1990s, The Museum's visitors and exhibits again outgrew the space in Bandana Square and plans to build an even bigger museum began. The doors to Minnesota Children's Museum in downtown St. Paul opened with 65,000 square-feet of gallery and program space in September 1995. Today, more than 6 million children and their families have discovered the spark of learning through play and have found a creative, colorful, educational, and safe environment to explore and discover exciting galleries and programs based on sound principles of learning.

Today's Minnesota Children's Museum is located in downtown St. Paul, has an operating budget of approximately \$5M, employs 65 FTE's and a total of 100 employees and has a volunteer staff of 700.

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

The President is accountable to The Museum's Board of Directors and directly reports to the Chair of the Board. He/she is the chief staff person at The Museum and is charged with overseeing all related internal activities and external relations. The President directly supervises a management team of five: the Vice President of Finance and Administration, the Vice President of Visitor Experiences, the Vice President of Learning Experiences, the Vice President of External Relations, and the Chief Development Officer. In addition, the President oversees an Executive Assistant.

### **DESIRED QUALITIES**

The President must be a strong advocate with solid business acumen who is able to clearly articulate a compelling strategic vision for the organization and be able to lead staff, board, and volunteers to turn that vision into a reality. The President must be an entrepreneurial and experienced builder of organizations who can easily make critical decisions, take risks, and meet challenges. This individual must be a creative leader with excellent board, staff, and project management skills and be an effective communicator sharing the Museum's mission, values, and strategic plans to the public and media in a variety of settings and groups of various sizes. As the primary public representative and fundraiser for the Museum, the President will cultivate working relationships with media, governmental bodies, grantors, foundations, corporations, and individuals to expand outreach to and promotion of early childhood initiatives, both locally and nationally. The President is ultimately responsible for the financial stability, smooth operation, and programmatic success of the organization. This will require an ability to step back from day-to-day activities to view the business from a different perspective based on current trends and dynamics of the bigger picture.

### **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Board Relations:**

- Engage the Board of Directors in shaping the vision for the Museum's future, actively soliciting their input on key priority issues in a timely, effective manner, and formulating

recommendations for consideration by the Board and/or its respective committees based on that input and other considerations.

- Communicate, inform, discuss, and guide the Board in affairs of the Museum and in issues that require policy decisions, evaluations, and direction for new policies, procedures, or programs to improve the overall operation and effectiveness of the Museum.

**Community Activity and Public Relations:**

- Serve as the external spokesperson for the organization to constituents and stakeholders including: funders, federal partners, the Governor's office, Legislators, etc.
- Facilitate effective relationships with all external stakeholders including visitors, members, community partners, the press, funders, and politicians.
- Build collaborative strategic alliances to further advancement of our mission.
- Promote The Museum's mission to be a leader in early childhood education and to instill a life-long love of learning in children by nurturing the real-world skills children need to become engaged citizens.

**Fiscal Responsibility:**

- Develop appropriate annual and long-term financial objectives; lead the Museum in consistently achieving these objectives, including a balanced operating budget.
- Manage the budget to strategically grow earned and contributed revenue for the organization and implement growth plans.

**Fundraising:**

- Be responsible for setting and reaching fundraising goals per an annual fundraising plan with monthly assessments.
- Personally nurture and sustain close, productive relationships and collaborations with key donors, colleagues, and friends of the Museum who are in a position to advance the mission of the Museum.
- Actively participate in fundraising for major capital and annual gifts, sponsorships, government grants, and the Museum's annual gala.
- Raise contributed income and grant dollars from individuals, community foundations, corporate foundations, government, and other business partnerships.

**Organizational Leadership:**

- Exhibit leadership in the Legislative/Government Relations and Community arenas.
- Recruit, motivate, retain, and lead the development of a high performance leadership team which provides leadership for staff in a manner that promotes initiative and creates individual growth opportunities.
- Take advantage of opportunities to enhance the image and positive impact of the Museum as an advocate for children in the community and leader in the children's museum field.

**Strategic Planning:**

- Create and communicate a clear strategy for achieving/expanding mission to staff, board, and stakeholders.
- Develop and implement long- and short-term strategies and goals to assure that the Museum fulfills its mission, is true to its core beliefs, and uses its resources effectively.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

- Minimum of 10 years experience working in executive management positions in either the not-for-profit or for profit sector managing one or more functions.
- Bachelor's degree required. Master's degree or equivalent preferred.
- Experience with museums and/or early childhood education preferred.
- Ability to develop creative approaches within the context of a mission-driven organization with a well-defined strategy
- Passion for the mission and values of The Museum.
- Demonstrated ability to personally engage, sustain, and retain relationships that will advance the Museum's outreach and impact.
- Expertise with a visible organization where major gifts were personally solicited.
- Proven fundraising and friend-raising skills.
- Successful experience in board relations.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

## **ENGAGEMENT MANAGERS**

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