

**Windmill School
LaureL Education Center
Executive Director**

The Board seeks a business, education or nonprofit professional committed to growing and sustaining a platform for play-based learning while also fostering a deeply connected community. The Executive Director will:

- ***Ensure effective management of Windmill's infrastructure, operations and finances***
- ***Increase enrollment to capacity and develop a pipeline of future Windmill families***
- ***Develop a strategy to identify individual and corporate donors and engage in direct solicitations***
- ***Expand enrichment and community programming within the Portola Valley and surrounding communities.***

BACKGROUND

For 60 years, Windmill School has been deeply woven into the fabric of the Portola Valley, CA community. As a nonprofit preschool and community center, Windmill provides play-based learning and open-ended exploration for children ages two to five, and addresses the whole child by instilling a lifetime love of learning and nurturing the whole family by providing a welcoming place for family education and community connection. Using the fundamental principles of play-based learning, Windmill specializes in combining techniques and advancing learning approaches that prove to be particularly effective for each student. What all students have in common is an experiential learning approach with a high degree of focused interaction between each child, their peers, and their teachers.

For years Windmill functioned in a little house but they had grown out of the space. In 2013 the board embarked upon a capital campaign that raised \$9.25M from generous donors, allowing the organization to purchase some land. Soon after construction began on a new campus consisting of three classrooms, an administration building, outdoor amphitheater and the LaureL Education Center, designed to inspire learning and foster collaboration after school hours and on the weekends. Set among redwood trees and gardens, it's an idyllic environment to nurture children's play and curiosity, and build strong community. Completed in 2018, Windmill has an enrollment capacity of 100 students across three classrooms and a 'caregiver and me' toddler class, a team of 14 gifted educators with more than 80 years of collective teaching experience at Windmill, two administrative staff, and 15-member board of directors. Windmill has graduated over 1000 young people to date. The operating budget for FY25 is of \$1.3M, of which tuition accounts for \$1.12M in earned revenue. The school will raise approximately \$100k in contributed revenue and will draw \$80k in interest income from reserves to balance the budget. For FY2025/26 the fundraising goal under the new Executive Director will increase to \$200k. The Executive Director currently oversees the Director of Operations and Admissions and the Interim Director of Education.

Through its preschool and associated programming, Windmill is a highly sought after place for children and families. As the organization looks toward its next phase of its evolution, it is poised for growth to face the changing landscape of early childhood education and to fully build out its family and community educational programming. The LaureL Education Center, nestled within the Karen

Tate Family Hall and Windmill School, provides a welcoming environment designed to inspire learning and foster collaboration. When the new campus was conceptualized the vision was to create spaces designed for community groups and individuals in Portola Valley, Woodside and the surrounding areas, whose use was consistent with Windmill's mission. The Executive Director will oversee the growth of the LaureL Education Center, fulfilling the mission to build out robust programming for children, families and the community.

THE POSITION

In this newly created position, the Executive Director ensures that the organization is financially, operationally and educationally strong, and the facilities are utilized for community-based events and activities. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director has overall responsibility for operations, finances, facilities, partnerships, student and parent recruiting, optimizing earned and contributed revenue streams, community programs, and all branding, communications and marketing. Windmill's Education Director reports to the Executive Director; however, that role operates distinctly as it relates to curricular content, the child's preschool experience, and interactions with parents. The two leaders are envisioned as collaborators in the truest sense. The Education Director orchestrates enriching experiences for children in close consultation with their parents, and selects, counsels, trains and evaluates teachers. The Education Director has a considerable measure of autonomy on decisions of curriculum, teacher hiring, program expansion, and other educational decisions that impact finances. This will also be agreed and coordinated with the Executive Director.

RESPONSIBILITIES

PRIORITIES IN THE FIRST 90 DAYS:

- Quickly get to know Windmill School – its people, culture and constituents; funding and finances; facilities and operations; educational approaches and programs. Ensure the effective management of facilities, administration and processes related to the functioning of the school.
- Establish strong working relationships with the Board, the Education Director, staff, partners, funders and others in the field; strengthen and sustain a culture of transparency, collaboration, communication, teamwork and integrity.
- In collaboration with the board, develop and promote a multi-year strategic vision that prioritizes a high-quality preschool, vibrant programming at the LaureL Education Center, and sustainable finances.
- Work with the board to develop an annual plan and goals for advancing Windmill. The plan will outline budgets and success metrics and will minimally include sections on: finances, operating infrastructure, fundraising, marketing and communications (including activities & recruiting events), programs, and staffing.
- In consultation with stakeholders and the community, determine the desired extracurricular and educational programming for the LaureL Education Center; set the strategy and implementation of a robust parent, community and family educational programming calendar.

ONGOING:

STUDENT RECRUITING, REVENUE OPTIMIZATION, MARKETING & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- Serve as the organization's point person for recruiting parents and their children to Windmill; maintain, promote and provide visibility for Windmill by serving as a credible, articulate and effective ambassador through involvement in the community, among other schools, pediatricians, parent organizations, libraries, online reviews, education directories, etc., in order to maximize enrollment.
- Drive earned income through tuition, fees, rentals and in-kind contributions, and contributed revenue through solicitations and sponsorships; personally develop fundraising relationships and solicit donations.
- Create a fundraising strategy that leverages staff and board relationships to maximize funding opportunities; develop a pipeline of businesses, community members, and former Windmill families who have the capacity to support the organization; assume responsibility for annual spring auction; research the feasibility of launching a future endowment campaign.
- Design and execute a yearly communications and marketing plan that enhances the organization's brand, position and reputation; ensure Windmill School has a strong and consistent voice.

FINANCE, OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

- Review, streamline, simplify and make transparent Windmill's financial apparatus; review chart of accounts, current accounting systems and control procedures, audit trails, financial documentation and workflows with particular emphasis on strong financial controls; assure that financial infrastructure is lean and cost-efficient but sufficiently robust.
- Ensure that actual expenditures are in alignment with budget plans; review all contracts, insurance, vendor and subcontractor relationships to understand them and identify cost savings; assure that payroll is accurate and processed in a timely way; forecast and manage cash flow.
- Ensure the enrollment process is family-friendly, and documents, contracts and billing systems are in place before the student begins; periodically review tuition structure of other preschools to ensure that Windmill remains competitive.
- Oversee HR-related functions in partnership with the Director of Education; assure paperwork and all documentation for compliance including licensure and background checks are in order; with insurance brokers, review benefits on an annual basis for coverage and cost effectiveness.
- Manage licensing, compliance, credentialing, insurance and governance requirements of the school and physical plant; investigate the potential to expand existing Conditional Use Permit for greater flexibility and programming.

BOARD RELATIONS

- Review board by-laws and governance policies, recruiting, give/get standards, term limits, and oversight responsibilities (finance, fundraising, curriculum, and personnel) and accountability; work with the board to implement agreed changes.

**Windmill School
Executive Director**

- Keep the board updated on Windmill’s operations; with the Chair, coordinate the efforts of various committees and encourage board members to be active in oversight and funding activities, including identifying new programmatic opportunities.
- Help identify and recruit new board members whose talents, commitment, and fundraising abilities are congruent with the needs and mission of Windmill School.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Windmill encourages interested candidates from a diverse pool and seeks individuals who have combinations of education, training, skills, lived experience and voice to lead as Executive Director. Candidates should have a true commitment to play-based education and community engagement:

- Proven managerial, problem-solving and planning capabilities with significant financial, administrative, human resources, fundraising, external relations and day-to-day operating responsibility with a high-touch education, business or nonprofit organization; a person focused on continually improved levels of service to new constituents.
- A mature level of judgment and decision-making in a forward-leaning customer service environment; experience working with children and parents is a distinct advantage, as is familiarity with safety, certification, staff hiring, curricular development and other operating details associated with running a preschool, school or similar environment.
- The ability to be an ambassador and an effective spokesperson for Windmill School; formulates and express ideas concisely, clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing.
- A high energy level with a focus on improving programs and the number of children with access to those services.
- Demonstrated ability to forge mutually respectful and effective working relationships with a diverse group of personalities in a collegial and cooperative manner, including staff and board members, parents, volunteers, prospective supporters, auditors, accrediting orgs, vendors, etc.
- A team builder and mentor with outstanding human qualities; one who is straightforward, flexible, shares information easily, listens as well as gives advice, and respects the abilities of others; someone who projects trustworthiness, integrity, and solidity and guides others in a similar vein.
- Results-oriented, adept at seeing the big-picture, planning, prioritizing, organizing, and following through; a hard worker with a high energy level; emotionally mature with a sense of humor and an ability to maintain balance and perspective.
- A bachelor’s degree is required. A background in early childhood education, child development or a related field, and teaching experience would be an advantage.

The target compensation range for this position is \$135,000 - \$165,000 based on full-time employment. Half-time or three-quarters time employment will be considered.

For more information please contact:

Lisa Grossman
650/323-3565 or lisag@moppenheim.com

Steve Oppenheim
202/803-6673 or steveno@moppenheim.com

m/Oppenheim Executive Search
San Francisco, CA