

Cayton Children's Museum Chief Executive Officer

The Board seeks a relationship builder and visionary to: refine the museum's brand and strategy; shape content-rich play-based education for children ages 0 to 8 years; grow museum attendance and community engagement; and provide regularly refreshed programs for Santa Monica and Los Angeles-area families.

BACKGROUND

The Cayton Children's Museum activates the power of play to help children ages 0 to 8 to learn, socialize and have family fun!

The Cayton is rooted in a 30-year history, and was previously located on Museum Row in Los Angeles as the Zimmer Children's Museum annually serving 90,000 visitors. While the Zimmer referenced Jewish values and traditions, the renamed [Cayton Children's Museum](#) broadens programs to integrate other cultural reference points, languages and traditions. The museum will continue to advance the original mission of strengthening social-emotional, cognitive and behavioral development, and fosters universal understanding and cross-cultural engagement. The Cayton Children's Museum's vision is to have a rainbow of families from different walks of life come together to play, learn, celebrate, socialize and share joy.

Play is the cornerstone of the museum's approach to education. Specially tailored programs are shaped for kids and their families, some of whom have limited access to safe, creative, active, purposeful and enriching play. Collaborations with schools, other nonprofits and outside experts ensure that different communities and families can enjoy and help shape Cayton programs for their children.

The Cayton Children's Museum strives to:

- **Nurture children** of all backgrounds and abilities, and help them to become engaged citizens of the world as they play and grow;
- **Facilitate** collaboration, experiential learning, empowered creative expression, and the development of social skills and bonds; and
- **Make programs accessible** both in the museum space and in the community, seeking to bring the Cayton experience to children throughout Los Angeles.

A \$15 million capital campaign tripled the square footage of the museum and funded its relocation to Santa Monica just blocks from the Pacific Ocean. This move resulted in upgrades to its facilities, programs and exhibits, and its renaming to the Cayton Children's Museum. The completely new museum opened in 2019 just months before the pandemic and offers 21,000 square feet of discovery-based exhibits, immersive play, art studios, a theatre, adaptable community spaces, and a robust calendar of activities including public programs, festivals, camps, classes, workshops and more.

The Cayton has 40 full-time and part-time staff; is governed by an 18-member Board; has annual operating budget of \$6 million with approximately 50% funded through earned revenue (ticket sales, membership, events, camps) and 50% through contributed revenue; and benefits from strong fiscal management and controls and has no debt. Financial strength and quality programming are viewed as being equally critical to the museum's future.

The CEO, staff and Board will develop bold strategies that: increase the Cayton's visibility in the community; deliver interesting, thoughtful, and fun education programs in the museum and through off-site offerings; develop new sources of philanthropic and earned revenue; and forge productive partnerships.

BASIC FUNCTION

The CEO will lead and financially strengthen the Cayton as it continues its evolution as a unique institution that engages children through play and exploration to discover their own capability to learn, serve, lead and build. Celebrating five years in Santa Monica, this is the beginning of a key chapter at the Cayton. The CEO will be an inspiring leader who is active in the community and engages new supporters through genuine, authentic, strategic and consistent outreach.

The newly appointed CEO will passionately and enthusiastically reintroduce the Cayton Children's Museum to post-pandemic audiences, ensuring Santa Monica and Los Angeles children, families and educators are tuned into the museum's meaningful philosophy, dedication to accessibility and program excellence. The CEO will be part advocate, marketer, strategist, community cheerleader, relationship builder and revenue impresario.

Reporting to the Board, the CEO is accountable for managing all aspects of the museum's exhibitions, education and public programming and operations, revenue generation, and for developing and implementing a strategic plan and fund development strategy. The CEO works closely with the staff to ensure that the museum:

- Continues to build a reputation as a distinctive, exciting, thought-provoking place for young children and their families to enjoy and want to return again.
- Retains current members and constituencies and builds memberships and constituents among a new generation of children, students, parents, caregivers, and supporters, including diverse audiences of different ethnicities and backgrounds, and both tourists and residents of Santa Monica and surrounding areas.
- Is financially and operationally strengthened through systematic major gift fundraising that supports Cayton priorities, development of earned revenue streams (including facility rentals, paid programs, etc.), and through efficient use of museum resources.
- Effectively manages and activates its exhibitions, educational and public programming, encouraging innovative play that connects to real world values.
- Grows the Board by recruiting new Board members and actively engaging Board participation in an effort to build true community.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

The CEO's immediate priorities will be to:

- Understand all facets of the Cayton, including the museum's history, culture, staff, exhibits, finances, events, education and public programs, facility, infrastructure and operations, and the museum's potential; understand the diverse local and regional constituencies in Santa Monica, and tourists that visit the area to encourage their interest and engagement in the museum.
- With the Board, develop a vision for the future of the Cayton, and a strategic plan based on the Board's expectations for success. Working with the Board and staff, begin executing the plan and adjust annual operating plans to include new priorities.
- Work with the Board to ensure that key leadership roles – particularly in Programs and Fundraising – are in place to effectively execute against the strategic plan and are driven by thoughtfulness and benchmarks.

- With the Chief Development Officer, develop a strategy for engaging a new generation of supporters; strategy should define goals by segment i.e., individuals (major gifts and annual fund), events, corporations, foundations, and government grants.
- Build and diversify earned and contributed income; ensure that expenses are effectively managed and that capital is effectively invested in improved programs and facilities.
- Cultivate relationships with existing and new key stakeholders in the community in order to enhance and develop support for programs, including partnership opportunities with tourism, educational and other related institutions; and with local educators, community and business leaders.
- With the Chief Programs Officer, review the current status of the museum's programming and take charge of in-process work related to educational programming, events, school and community partnerships, and such; in conjunction with the staff, develop exhibits and programs that can be administered within appropriate budgetary constraints that will inform, attract and engage the diverse interests of children and families in the area.
- Work with the staff to understand their contributions, strengths and concerns; instill a strong sense of partnership and cohesion across the organization; use open channels of communication and transparency to reinforce a culture of excellence toward achieving the highest standards of practice in children's museums.

ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES

LEADERSHIP & GENERAL MANAGEMENT

- Work with the Board to define and execute upon the museum's Strategic and Development Plans; refine and interpret the mission of the museum; and articulate its place in the community.
- Manage the business affairs of the Cayton with the intent of remaining financially strong; oversee the preservation and maintenance of the museum's physical assets.
- Hire, supervise, motivate, develop and evaluate staff, ensuring that staffing is appropriate to meet the organization's goals; ensure that approved policies are consistently implemented.

REVENUE DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Serve as the chief fundraiser for the museum and actively court philanthropic relationships; set high expectations for increased financial support from individuals, foundations, corporations, governments, events and other philanthropic sources for the museum's programs, exhibitions and capital projects.
- Work closely with the staff, Board, and advisors to expand and diversify earned revenue streams from admissions, licensing, facility rentals, Museum Store, camps, etc.
- Serve as an articulate and persuasive spokesperson for the museum; represent the Cayton to all of its constituencies, including funders, current and prospective visitors; cultivate strong and supportive relationships with other institutions in the region and in the community.
- Work with the Board to establish and grow the reserves to fund new programs, upgrade exhibitions, enhance the facility, and provide financial stability as the institution matures.
- Identify and nurture strong community partnership, solidifying the Cayton's reputation as an exceptional children's museum, and continuing to raise awareness among regional, national and international audiences.

EXHIBITS, EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

- Provide direction for the development of new, fun, inspiring exhibitions, outreach and education programs; ensure that best practices are employed; leverage the galleries in ways that deepen visitors' ability to play, explore and learn new skills.
- Take a leadership role in guiding the development of exhibitions and programming, and for constantly increasing the "play-quotient" for each activity and program, and for the institution as a whole.
- Work collaboratively and appropriately manage various relationships with museums, thought leaders in the field, schools, universities, patrons, volunteers and other community members; serve as an advocate for the organization, assuring that the interests of the Museum are advanced and fully understood.
- Work with staff to develop a comprehensive plan to strengthen, continually refresh and enrich the museum's programming and visitor experience; develop relationships with others that have an interest in similar museums, and that may lead to appropriate gifts to strengthen programming and continually upgrade the exhibitions.

GOVERNANCE

- Identify and help recruit new Board members whose talents, interests and commitment will help to further the Cayton's mission and programs and will help to expand funding opportunities; work with the Chair to ensure an effective Board committee structure and active engagement of Board talent and resources in support of the institution.
- Set the strategic direction for the Cayton and cultivate meaningful relationships with Board members; implement Board policies, goals, priorities and objectives; keep the Board informed of all relevant issues; attend all Board meetings and committee meetings as required.

EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS and CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate has the following experience and qualifications:

- Strong management and leadership responsibility in a museum, school, children's entertainment, or experiential learning environment that attracts a similar audience and is known for innovative programming; a deep understanding of ways to engage and build audience; and cultivating strong ties with the community in which their institution is located.
- Deep and current experience in relationship building and raising the public profile of learning and play environments for children; an extensive background or passion for the education process would be an advantage.
- The ability to work successfully with donors, community leaders, educators, artists, community members and the museum's Board to strengthen the museum; measurable and successful results in raising funds and in identifying, cultivating and soliciting donors and other sources of revenue, and in managing change.
- A thorough understanding of operations and financial management, particularly in a museum or similar nonprofit environment; an understanding of nonprofit revenue and expense models would be an advantage.
- Experience working with scholars and educational leaders as active and valued collaborators; demonstrated ability to forge mutually respectful and effective relationships with a diverse group of personalities in a collegial and cooperative manner.

- Outstanding oral and written communication skills, including the means to address issues in non-confrontational and non-polarizing ways, but nevertheless with determination; a history as an effective manager.
- A leader adept at planning, prioritizing, organizing and following through; a hard worker with a high energy level who promotes accountability; a team player and builder who is a good listener and strategist comfortable receiving input from many sources; a graceful communicator able to connect with a broad spectrum of people.
- A person who cultivates trust and engages the interest of constituents; an individual who is straight-forward, shares information easily, receives as well as gives advice, and respects the abilities of others; someone who imparts trust, integrity and solidity and guides others in a similar vein; an ability to disagree without being disagreeable.
- Someone who enjoys working in close collaboration with the Board; comfortable engaging in an open and forthright manner.
- A person with a sense of humor and perspective on play as a medium for healthy development.

COMPENSATION

Salary Range: \$175,000 - \$200,000 annually

The Cayton Children's Museum is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, disability, political affiliation, marital or family status, age, military service, or other non-merit factors.

For more information please contact:

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

Oscar Quiros
(415) 972-9946 or oscarq@moppenheim.com

Steven Oppenheim
(202) 803-6673 or steveno@moppenheim.com

m/Oppenheim Executive Search