

The Children's Museum

(permanent name TBD)

Founding Director

Set to break ground in June 2020, The Children's Museum seeks a visionary, dynamic leader to set the strategy for opening and operating a world-class, STEAM-focused destination designed to inspire visitors to dream, act and contribute.

A hybrid children's museum and science center in El Paso, Texas is about to break ground, and local enthusiasm and support is palpable. [The Children's Museum](#) will spark imagination, curiosity, creativity and critical thinking through interactive exhibits, programming, and special events. It will be a bicultural, world-class destination for residents, a must-visit for tourists, and a model for STEAM-focused bilingual programming. The Museum is expected to officially open in 2022.

Design firm [Gyroscope](#) engaged a wide swath of the community to learn what is unique about El Paso, what educators would like to see, and how families can interact in ways that respect their culture. Several foundational themes emerged, the result of which will be nine age-appropriate zones for layered programming, including a shared exhibit with [La Rodadora](#), the children's museum in El Paso's sister city of Juárez, allowing youth at both museums to interact in real time. Internationally renowned firm [Snøhetta](#) was selected to design the four-level, 70,000 square foot building. An experienced owner-representative is managing the construction process.

The museum will be located in the heart of El Paso's Downtown Arts District, a destination for more than 1.5 million local, national and international visitors annually. The Arts District is home to the El Paso Museum of Art, the Museum of History, the nation's only bilingual Holocaust museum, the new Mexican American Cultural Center, artist lofts, performing arts venues, stadiums, a convention center, public art, festivals, green spaces, restaurants, hotels and more.

About El Paso

With a population of more than 700,000 (ranked 19th nationally), El Paso is a progressive and dynamic community, and has been rated as one of the safest large cities in the U.S. for more than ten consecutive years. Situated on the Rio Grande across the international border from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, El Pasoans and their neighbors in Juárez considers themselves one community, united in culture, family, and commerce. With a combined population of over 2.6M, the aptly named "Borderplex" (El Paso, Juarez, and Southern New Mexico) is the largest bilingual, bi-national workforce in the Western Hemisphere, and is the world's largest international border community. A thriving international city that plays a key role in world trade, manufacturing and logistics, El Paso serves as a regional center to six universities, three medical schools, and four technology incubators. In the past ten years El Paso has seen \$2 billion in capital investments made in life sciences, education, research and commerce.

The Museum and Position

The Children's Museum is a supporting organization of The El Paso Community Foundation, which has invested more than \$60M into the Arts District, and has committed funds for exhibition development and start-up operations for the new Museum. The City of El Paso has allocated \$40M for the project and has committed to fund one-third of annual expenditures in perpetuity. Through an MOU, the Museum Board of Directors requires the Museum to raise capital funding over a 10-year period. The Board has been very successful to date, and the Director will be integral to ensuring a successful campaign culmination.

The Director will be responsible to lead fundraising efforts on an ongoing basis for operating expenses and additional exhibitions or events in advance of opening in 2022. The projected operating budget upon opening is \$3.5-4 million. It is anticipated that the Museum will be

established as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization within a year after opening, though the Community Foundation will continue to be a financial contributor and will manage the endowment.

The Director will embrace the vision and intent of the Museum and will lead the institution as it ignites a love of lifelong learning. There is ample opportunity for the Director to make his/her imprint on visitor experience and programming. The Director will ensure that the building and exhibitions are of the highest quality and are at the cutting edge of innovation and education, creating exceptional visitor experience and community engagement.

Reporting to and collaborating with the Board of Directors, the Director will work effectively with exhibition and architectural firms, the construction manager, and will be the Museum's lead champion with the community, city government, businesses, potential funders, supporters and other stakeholders.

The Director will join the organization with a skilled, bilingual (English/Spanish) administrator in place, and will build a team as the project scales and approaches opening. S/he and will be responsible for developing staff and operating plans, earned and contributed revenue, marketing/external relations and outreach, and educational programming.

Ongoing Responsibilities

LEADERSHIP & GENERAL MANAGEMENT

- Understand and champion the Museum's mission; communicate its relevance in El Paso, the broader region, and with like-minded experiential, active learning institutions nationally and internationally.
- Work with architect and exhibition teams to build a spectacular venue. This includes interacting with the construction manager, architects, designers, fabricators and other vendors; maintain project schedules, and set and attain high quality standards; monitor payment schedules and cash flows; maintain accurate records; remain in frequent contact with the Board and update progress toward goals.
- Develop the Museum's strategic operating plan for pre-opening and for the subsequent three-five years.
- Recruit, manage, inspire, develop and evaluate staff; ensure that staffing is appropriate to meet the organization's goals.
- Manage the business affairs of the Museum; develop organizational and personnel policies and procedures; ensure finances are responsibly managed, that strong controls are in place, and financial reports and other documents are prepared in a timely and accurate manner.
- Provide for appropriately scaled security, information technology and other management systems.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Work with exhibition developers, designers and staff to create a long-range plan to continually refresh and enrich the Museum's programming.
- Have a keen eye toward the diverse needs of visitors, (families with strollers, accessibility and families with special needs, school groups, etc.) so that museum encounters are effortless and welcoming; ensure that all materials and exhibit text are bilingual English/Spanish to authentically serve the bicultural community.
- Leverage the space in ways that deepen the visitors' experience and motivate return visits.
- Oversee the preservation and high-quality maintenance of the museum's physical assets (exhibits, building, and infrastructure).

EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

- Assume a leadership role in developing robust educational programs/camps for children, teens, and families that inspire them to dream, act and contribute.
- Develop adult and junior docent and volunteer programs, internships, and community college partnerships.
- Develop symposia, lectures, and events that attract technologists, scientists, artists, makers, educators, performers and other leaders in the field to capture the attention of young adult and adult audiences.
- Encourage educators, artists, and artisans in the region to contribute ideas, creativity and resources to ensure the museum stays at the cutting edge of active learning experiences.

REVENUE

- Serve as the chief fundraiser for the Museum; set high expectations for contributed support from foundations, corporations, individuals, and other philanthropic sources for programs and events.
- Plan for earned revenue streams from admissions, retail, café, membership, licensing, facility rentals, concessions and other sources.
- Work with the Board to grow the endowment, enabling the Museum to continually upgrade exhibitions, enhance the facility, and provide for financial stability as the institution matures.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Pre-opening and beyond, expand the messaging reach to position the Museum as a must-visit/experience in El Paso, and to advance its reputation for innovation and cutting-edge practice.
- Reach audiences by both traditional and technological means; deploy social media to target parents, teens, adults, educators, strategic partners, guest speakers, and tourists, etc.
- Steward existing relationships and develop new partnerships with other museums and attractions, schools, universities, patrons, volunteers and other community members; serve as an advocate for the Museum and for El Paso, assuring that the interests of the Museum are advanced and fully understood.

GOVERNANCE

- With the Board, set the strategic direction for Museum; implement board policies, goals, priorities and objectives; keep the Board informed of all relevant issues.
- Identify and help recruit new board members with the intent of deepening the Museum's connection to the community.
- Work with the Board Chair to cultivate mutually supportive relationships with stakeholders that are important to the future of the institution.

Ideal Experience and Qualifications

The Founding Director should have the following experiences and qualifications:

- Strong management and leadership responsibility in a museum, STEAM-focused, cultural, education or related institution that attracts a similar audience, is known for innovative programming, and is deeply rooted to the needs and demographics of the community.
- Led or worked as part of the core team that delivered, built, and/or expanded a cultural institution of a similar scale.

- A deep understanding of how young people learn; a passion for the transformational value of education; the role and value of life-long informal learning environments, experience working with scholars and educational leaders as active and valued collaborators.
- An extensive background and/or the ability to work successfully with donors, community members, boards of directors and other stakeholders to strengthen the institution financially; measurable and successful results in raising funds and in identifying, cultivating and soliciting donors and other sources of revenue.
- A detailed understanding of operations and financial management in the private or nonprofit sector, with a particular understanding of nonprofit revenue and expense models.
- Outstanding verbal and written communication skills, including the ability to address issues in non-confrontational and non-polarizing ways, but nevertheless with determination; and a track record as an effective leader.
- A bachelor's degree is required. An advanced degree in a related field is preferred.

Personal Characteristics

The successful candidate should be:

- One who will embrace and integrate into a vibrant, bi-cultural, welcoming community.
- An individual who is energized by the intentional chaos of active learning; a leader adept at planning, prioritizing, organizing and following through; a hard worker with a high output level; an individual who thrives on start-up tasks, can wear many hats, and enjoys challenges.
- An individual who encourages the team to take risks and think unconventionally; one who cultivates trust and engages the interest of constituents; an individual who is straight-forward, shares information easily, accepts and gives advice, and respects the abilities of others.
- A team player, builder and developer; a good listener and strategist comfortable with input from many sources; a graceful communicator able to connect with a broad spectrum of people.
- A collaborator who thrives on entrepreneurial partnerships of community significance.
- An individual possessing a sense of humor, who is able to maintain balance and perspective.

The Children's Museum in El Paso is dedicated to creating experiences that celebrates diversity, multiculturalism and inclusion, and seeks to build a staff that both represents and embraces that commitment.

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