

## Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH) Executive Director

*The hub of culture, creativity, and community in Santa Cruz, which has seen unprecedented growth and impact in the last several years, seeks an experienced leader and manager to further strengthen its organizational ability, continue increasing its funding sources, and set the vision for the 2020s.*

### KEY TO THE ROLE

- Collaboration with the variety of stakeholders who are now engaged with the MAH, a rigorous approach to fundraising and operations that will strengthen the organization's fiscally strong track record and deepen its community engagement as it continues to grow and mature.
- Ability to harness the MAH's physical, cultural, and human strengths to remain a vibrant community catalyst in the 2020s and beyond.
- Understanding all that the MAH has done and, at the same time, bringing new insight into how the many pieces of the MAH – art, history, community connectedness, marketplace – can best work synergistically in the next decade.

### ABOUT THE MAH

[The MAH](#) is more than an art and history museum. It's an inclusive and vibrant cultural hub that connects the diverse Santa Cruz community through creativity, culture, and participation. MAH serves the whole Santa Cruz County community, and places a high value on developing and co-creating programs, exhibitions, and experiences with as many of its communities as possible. The organization has worked diligently and successfully to create a visitor base that accurately reflects the diversity of Santa Cruz County. The MAH has worked with more than 2,000 local artists, storytellers, and community organizations annually to co-produce exhibitions, educational programs, cultural festivals, workshops and live performances.

The MAH is committed to being a bilingual institution. Signage, exhibition labels, school tours, and guest services staff are bilingual in Spanish and English.

Rather than being a place for art and history to be simply displayed, the MAH is a place that uses art and history as a launch point for communities to better know themselves and plan their futures.

As one example, the 2017 [Lost Childhoods](#) exhibition showcased the stories, struggles, and triumphs of children who are aging out of foster care. It was co-created by more than 100 local foster youth, advocates, and artists. The exhibition garnered the attention of others around the state, and there are plans to replicate it in other museums.

A Santa Cruz County institution for more than 20 years, the MAH has undergone a radical transformation – inside and outside its walls -- in the last eight years. It raised \$5M to establish the [Abbott Square Market](#) in 2017, expanding the MAH's operations scope significantly. A next-door extension of the MAH, Abbott Square is an indoor/outdoor public space, drawing thousands of people to the MAH's doorstep, and hosts a half dozen restaurants, bars, weekly events, performance areas, and open seating. They've just begun to tap the potential for the Abbott Square/MAH interchange.

The MAH is a vital center of downtown Santa Cruz, and its leadership can play a pivotal role in the future development of the nearby Riverwalk and Santa Cruz Warriors arena. New dining, shopping, and recreational activities will bring more and more people to the area. As MAH has asserted itself in the geographic and cultural center of the city, the new Executive Director can help to define and lead the development of Santa Cruz into the next decade.

The footprint of the MAH allows for flexible programming. It's comprised of more than 8,000 square feet of exhibition/gallery space/community space and more than 2,750 square feet for collections/archives. The MAH also operates three historic structures/sites: Evergreen Cemetery, Davenport Jail, and the Octagon. It maintains a research library, archive, and a curatorial collection. The art collection (300 objects) contains sculpture, paintings, and prints of California/greater Monterey Bay area artists. The history collection holds more than 7,000 items. Most are from the early 1900s with significance to the 150-year-old history of Santa Cruz County.

The MAH has a dedicated staff of 22 full time and 14 part-time workers and three contractors, and is governed by a community-connected, 23-person Board of Directors. The operating budget is approximately \$2.4M with contributed revenue generated from individuals, grants, and events and earned revenue from membership, facility rental, some programming, and income from Abbott Square. It has operating and facility reserves and a small endowment.

### **THE POSITION IN BRIEF**

After eight years of rapid growth, the MAH seeks an Executive Director who will strengthen the operational infrastructure, create an expanded fundraising strategy to engage new and legacy supporters, and develop a vision for the future. She/he/they will lead an inclusive, collaborative culture, working with staff, Board, partners, artists, and funders.

### **IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES**

The priorities for the new Executive Director fall into three categories:

**VISION:** In order to build on the momentum and impact the MAH has had in the last years, the ED will quickly get to know the current state of the organization and community and then chart a course going forward. Strategic planning will incorporate:

- Further activating the MAH's spaces, creating opportunities for new or enhanced public engagement
- Leading a cohesive fundraising strategy that best drives both existing and additional sources of earned and contributed revenue
- Planning mission-based exhibitions, refreshing as the needs of the MAH demand
- Optimizing organizational effectiveness and inspiring staff to be future leaders of the MAH

**FUNDRAISING:** As Fundraiser-in-Chief, the ED will lead and resource activities to identify, engage, solicit and steward new and legacy donors;

**CREATE STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE:** In collaboration with the staff, the ED will review all operations, systems, processes, procedures, finances, contracts, HR, IT, marketing, grants, contributed and earned revenue activities, marketing, exhibitions, and education and outreach programs, and will develop plans to further develop the MAH's organizational strength and resilience.

### **ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **LEADERSHIP & GENERAL MANAGEMENT**

- In partnership with the Board and staff, provide an assessment of the state-of-play of in-process opportunities and areas that need to be immediately addressed.
- Lead the development of a compelling vision and new strategic plan for the MAH with corresponding metrics for measuring progress and success; ensure the concerns of staff, board and stakeholders are fully considered; work closely with the Board to address high-level organizational issues that could hinder progress toward goals.
- Maintain an organizational climate that attracts, retains, motivates and develops a high-quality, multi-cultural staff and Board; create an environment that embraces collaboration, innovation, inclusion, accountability and diversity of opinion; communicate clearly and effectively to staff and Board.

#### GENERAL MANAGEMENT

- Ensure that day-to-day operations and programs are professionally and efficiently organized and administered; ensure proper administration of contracts, including compliance with relevant employment laws and other legal requirements.
- Maintain the organization's fiscal health and ensuring it adheres to a sustainable financial plan based on a Board-approved annual budget and that financial performance positively tracks budget and operating plans; and foster an atmosphere of transparency and accountability in matters relating to the organization's financial condition.
- Review workflows and develop systems and processes so that all departments are working in concert, that there are understood and consistent organization-wide standards for communicating both internally and externally, and that work environments always support and meet high standards for diversity and inclusivity.
- Encourage a proactive approach in preserving and maintaining the MAH's physical assets, including exhibitions, the building and infrastructure, creating a welcoming, accessible and inviting space for the community to gather, create, celebrate and learn.

#### CONTRIBUTED/EARNED INCOME AND MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS

- Work with the Board and senior staff to drive annual fundraising solicitations; set high expectations for increased contributed revenue; develop relationships that may lead to appropriate gifts to amplify programming and exhibitions; expand and diversify earned revenue streams; strengthen fundraising systems, workflows and donor recognition; and provide coaching and support to Board members' own solicitation efforts.
- Through events, exhibitions, performances, and demonstration projects, enhance the MAH's commitment to the Santa Cruz community and its reputation among regional, national, and international audiences.
- Act as lead liaise with elected officials, nonprofits, sponsors and local businesses; develop supportive collaborations and partnerships in the community; keep informed of challenges, progress, activities and emerging community issues, along with offering recommendations and solutions as appropriate.
- Develop a communications plan to target current and prospective supporters, members, residents, and tourists using conventional and new tools (social media, mobile, etc.) to build enthusiasm for the MAH's programs and events.
- Actively seek opportunities to publically advocate for the organization, assuring the intent and interests of the MAH are advanced and fully understood; serve as public and media spokesperson for the organization.

#### EXHIBITS, EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

- Deepen relationships with community partners to develop new, culturally appropriate, inspiring, participatory exhibitions, outreach, and educational programs.
- Take a refreshed view of the galleries and public spaces to be activated; leverage the galleries in ways that deepen the visitors' experience; explore cooperative and reciprocal exhibition relationships with other institutions whose art, programs, and community engagement values align with the MAH.
- Work collaboratively with other like-minded, community- and arts-focused organizations, thought-leaders in the field, schools, universities, patrons, volunteers, and other community members; develop programs serving from youth to senior populations and other affinity groups that tap into their artistic/historic/community interests -- all to create a new cadre of MAH evangelists and bring new people into the ecosystem.

## BOARD RELATIONS

- Become familiar with the MAH's governance policies; develop, recommend and implement policies, fundraising, and program goals and objectives; provide ongoing communication to the Board on critical matters related to the MAH.
- With the Board Chair and Executive Committee, coordinate the efforts of regular and ad hoc committees; develop meeting agendas, schedules, retreats, and other activities with the Executive Committee; ensure that all committees achieve objectives; encourage Board members' appropriate involvement in the MAH's range of activities.
- Assist the Board in identifying and recruiting new Board members whose talents, backgrounds, commitment, and interests are congruent with the needs and mission of the MAH.

## IDEAL EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- The ideal candidate has the following experience and qualifications:
- A minimum of five years' experience leading and managing a similar sized organization or program. A bachelor's degree is required, and master's degree preferred.
- Strong management background in a cultural organization, school, or associated institution that engages community and is also known for innovative programming, cultivating strong community ties, and fundraising success; a delegator who sets high expectations, values follow-through and recognizes accomplishments; a person that others want to work for.
- Experience shaping a highly effective and collaborative operating environment; a demonstrated ability to recruit, lead, and develop staff, and build teams.
- Understanding of nonprofit best practices; a systems-thinker to develop processes for workflow, accountability, and for facility and staff safety and well-being; data-driven; financial and business acumen.
- Experience working both as a fundraising strategist and directly cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding new and potential donors; working with community leaders and Board members to financially strengthen institutions; measurable success increasing earned and contributed revenue.
- Experienced and entrepreneurial in conceiving and delivering exciting, relevant programs, experiences and events.
- A high level of integrity and values that demonstrate inclusivity, equity, and participation.
- Outstanding public speaking, oral and written communication skills and contemporary understanding of how to use digital, mobile, and social media to best advantage.

The MAH is an equal opportunity employer committed to involving and empowering people of all backgrounds. Bilingual (Spanish/English), bicultural, women and people of color are encouraged to apply.

To apply, nominate another or for more information please contact:

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