The Bay Area’s preeminent organization serving people who are blind and visually impaired seeks an ambitious fundraiser and consummate relationship builder to create strategies and actions to ensure a sustainable organization.

Headquartered in Palo Alto, CA with locations in Santa Cruz and San Jose, Vista Center empowers individuals who are blind and visually impaired to embrace life to the fullest through evaluation, counseling, education and training. It believes vision loss need not be a barrier to independence, and serves clients of all ages with dignity and compassion through programs and services including:

- **Safe and Healthy Living:** In a nurturing environment clients learn skills to navigate their daily lives at home and in the community, accomplish routine tasks, access counseling and support, and become involved in social and recreational activities.

- **Children and Youth Services:** Young people receive training and support to succeed in public school, participate in support groups, and take part in recreational and instructional outings while being mentored by a blind adult role model.

- **Low Vision Services:** Specially trained optometrists make evaluations and recommend suggestions on how to enhance remaining vision and offer suggestions on appropriate devices to improve quality of life.

- **The Technology Program:** Clients receive demonstrations on a variety of computing and mobile devices, are assisted in selecting the best options, and get customized training based on their needs.

- **Community Services and Advocacy:** Vista Center has developed a number of mutually beneficial relationships with companies requesting expertise. It makes presentations and leads educational events for the medical community, community centers, civic organizations, senior residences and corporations. It also plays a role in advocating for improved paratransit, public transit and intersection safety.

With a culture that is open to innovation and experimentation, Vista Center is deeply focused on meeting the changing needs and interests of its clients who say the organization has been transformative to their lives. Vista Center is positively perceived by the public and benefits from considerable goodwill in the community. Many know it through the annual Menlo Charity Horse Show, Vintage Affaire, and Hats Off events. It is regularly called upon by companies such as Google, Facebook, PARC, Kaiser and others to test new products, identify the accessibility technology needs of the blind, or create more accessible workplace environments. With a goal of creating mutually beneficial collaborations that will generate positive business, social and revenue impact, there are tremendous opportunities to expand existing relationships and develop new ones in the Silicon Valley.

In 2020, Vista Center will be celebrating its 75th anniversary. The organization has grown over the years, beginning with a single location in Palo Alto, followed by a merger ten years ago with a like-minded organization in Santa Cruz, and most recently with the acquisition of Santa Clara Valley Blind Center in San Jose. Growth has been strategic and intentional. For example, the San Jose center gives Vista Center the ability to more easily serve clients in the South Bay, and the building in which it located, if further developed, has the potential of generating revenue through other related businesses or tenants. The newly developed facility in Palo Alto provides greater accessibility for Vista Center clients. These initiatives, as well as the cost of providing services to more clients, is presenting financial challenges to the FY19 operating budget. With approximately one-third of the $3.1M operating budget earned through contributed revenue, the Board believes this segment of revenue has the most potential upside and will put Vista Center on a path toward sustainability.
Vista Center has a committed, professional staff of 39 and is governed by a 24-person board of directors. There is an endowment with a current value of approximately $2.6M.

**BASIC FUNCTION**

The Executive Director fosters the culture for the staff and the organization, imbuing that Vista Center is a warm, welcoming environment, particularly for clients who may be frightened or feeling hopeless when faced with the reality that they are losing their vision. The ED will lead a highly motivated, compassionate and self-directed team, and will strengthen Vista Center’s systems and processes, financial position, and talent acquisition and retention while continuing to ensure excellent client service. As the chief fundraiser, the Executive Director will lead the creation of a refreshed fund development strategy with concrete plans for identifying and building a pipeline of next generation and high net worth individuals, targets for corporate and foundation support, focus staff and board energies to align closely to the strategy, develop goals for the participation of current and new board members, and identify and pursue earned revenue opportunities. Measurable results in all of these areas will be key to the new Executive Director’s success.

Specific responsibilities and oversight duties include:

**LEADERSHIP & VISION**

- In partnership with Board and staff, provide an assessment of the state-of-play of in-process opportunities and areas that need to be immediately addressed; provide fund development and strategic planning with corresponding metrics for measuring progress and success while making certain the concerns of staff, board and clients being supported by Vista Center are fully considered.
- Maintain an organizational climate that attracts, retains, motivates and develops a multi-cultural, diverse, high-quality staff and board; create an environment that embraces collaboration, innovation, inclusion, accountability and diversity of opinion; communicate clearly and effectively to staff and board.
- Implement the post-merger strategy to assimilate San Jose into Vista Center, ensuring facilities, infrastructure, programs, staffing, and outreach are functioning at the appropriate levels.

**FUNDRAISING, COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY**

- Review all current fundraising activities and segmentation by donor type to determine how resources are being allocated; refocus, if needed, to make sure energies are prioritized on activities with greatest ROI.
- Understand the history of the Menlo Charity Horse Show, Vintage Affaire, and Hats Off fundraising events and apply a fresh perspective to donor cultivation, sponsorship engagement, the financial model, volunteer engagement, and Vista Center’s visibility in order to considerably increase net revenue.
- Personally drive the cultivation, solicitation and stewardship of new and existing major donors and corporate funders; make certain appropriate staffing is in place to support fund development strategy; provide coaching and support to board members to assist in their fundraising activities.
- With the Community Relations team, identify processes and procedures for advancing relationships beyond the initial scope; creatively develop programs that provide mutual, long-term benefit.
- Expand the public’s understanding of Vista Center’s work so that its mission, values, outcomes and stories are consistently and effectively conveyed through the website, social media, and printed collateral.
• Conduct public speaking and community outreach with the goal of building increased funding and other kinds of support for the organization; serve as an empathic advocate and knowledgeable spokesperson on issues related to the quality of life and services for blind and visually impaired individuals. Assume a leadership and networking role in state and national professional organizations.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

• 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, make sure 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 offices and 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 inclusivity and accessibility.
• Ensure that information technology is current and stable, that systems are integrated and “talk” to each other, that changes affecting staff are communicated clearly, and proper training and timely support is provided.

PROGRAM SERVICES

• Continually evaluate existing programs and seek ways to improve efficiency without compromising quality of service; define the impact Vista Center can have in addressing unmet needs, changing lifestyles and consumer interests, such as employment training/preparation.
• Foster creativity and innovation in community partner-building activities in support of Vista Center’s programs and opportunities for change.
• Provide for Vista Center’s thought leadership in the field, ensuring that staff is trained in the newest approaches to serving the blind and visually impaired, and remain current with innovations in the field of service.
• Continue to foster a strong service orientation that is innovative, compassionate and professional.

BOARD RELATIONS

• Become familiar with, and follow Vista Center’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 Vista Center.
• 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 Vista Center’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 Vista Center.
QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS
The Executive Director will be a visionary leader possessing the following key qualifications and characteristics:

- An individual with 8+ years’ experience in positions of increasing responsibility, whether from the nonprofit or for-profit sectors. An advanced degree is desirable.
- A track record in attracting financial support, whether as a nonprofit executive or board member, or from the commercial sector, from individuals, foundations or businesses; a strong partnership/relationship builder; one who is creative and can identify and convey the synergies and mutual benefits that come from collaboration. Having contacts in the Silicon Valley would be an advantage.
- Demonstrated ability to build and align essential resources including contributed and earned revenue, administrative infrastructure, and talent acquisition; track record of implementing strategies that improve internal workflows, communications, goal setting and metrics for measuring progress.
- Decisive and resourceful, with the organizational sensitivity to gain the support and confidence of the board and staff at all levels; a team builder, collaborator, confident and competent, with strong skills in management and leadership; one who trusts and empowers the leadership team; understands the subtleties of recruiting, motivating, directing and retaining a diverse group of personalities with different work styles.
- A grounded visionary and lifelong-learner that can see the real-world needs of visually impaired individuals and families based on data and trends, and shape programs that are effective, highly leveraged and sustainable.
- An individual with outstanding human qualities; one who is straightforward, shares information easily, listens as well as offers advice, and respects the abilities of others; someone who imparts trust and integrity, and guides others in a similar vein.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills.
- An individual possessing a sense of humor, and an ability to maintain balance and perspective.

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Vista Center is an equal opportunity employer and makes employment decisions on the basis of merit. We want to have the most qualified persons in every job.