



**LCM**

LOUISIANA  
CHILDREN'S  
MUSEUM

# LEADERSHIP PROFILE

## Chief Executive Officer Louisiana Children's Museum

New Orleans, LA

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"When you make a child's potential visible, wonderful things happen."

*—Louisiana Children's Museum mission statement*

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# The Opportunity

**Thriving children are at the core of a thriving community.** For more than 35 years, the Louisiana Children’s Museum (LCM) has engaged children in intentional, immersive experiences and interactive play to support optimal social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth. Far more than a destination for entertainment, the Museum is a powerful hub for discovery, connecting and hands-on learning that is committed to strengthening communities one child and one experience at a time.

**The organization is at an important nexus of opportunity and change.** LCM is navigating the recent transition of a long-serving CEO and the continuation of successful efforts to manage revenue and programs in response to the pandemic and Hurricane Ida. In addition to managing through these events, the Museum is learning how to optimize and shape the activities of a new, world-class facility and fully realize its potential. To lead these efforts, the Museum seeks a bold, innovative and collaborative individual who will lead the organization with an unwavering commitment to providing optimal opportunities for young children to learn and develop, to broadening accessibility and to ensuring that the Museum is fully engaged in its community. To support these aspirations, the new CEO will work with a talented staff and committed board to make certain that the Museum remains financially secure such that current and future generations can experience its magic.

Several important themes help define LCM. These include a commitment to sustainability; stewardship of the Louisiana environment, ecosystems and unique relationship with water; passionately serving all Louisianans; and supporting early healthy childhood development.

Very much emblematic of New Orleans, the Museum is a special place, led and supported by



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special people. LCM's next leader will inherit a stable and aspirational organization and will be charged with successfully leading the Museum through its next phase of growth and development, achieving measurable outcomes in educational and experiential impact, and increasing levels of connection and consistent positive engagement with diverse communities throughout the Greater New Orleans area and Louisiana.

### Key priorities for the new CEO include:

- Ensuring that the Museum builds on its current momentum and implements the systems necessary to deliver program, operational and financial success.
- Establishing themselves as an engaged, committed and credible partner in the Greater New Orleans area and Louisiana communities.
- Leading and advancing healthy, transparent and collaborative relationships with the board, staff, community leaders and the many individuals and entities that support the Museum.
- Being an inspired leader who will engage broad support for the Museum and work to attract, retain and develop committed and talented staff.

## The Organization

Housed for thirty years on a site in the Warehouse District of New Orleans, and now in its inspiring and joyous new 56,000 square foot, \$47.5 million facility in New Orleans City Park, the Museum is a central part of the New Orleans landscape and a testament to the resilience of the city and its commitment to children and families. LCM's focus is on children birth to eight years of age and their caregivers. The facility **welcomes more than 225,000 visitors annually**, and a literacy-

focused portion of the facility provides regular programming free of charge during museum hours. In a state and city known for being near the bottom rankings in children’s well-being and education, the new campus and its programs, exhibits and approach to engaging children and their caregivers represent a bold effort to improve outcomes for Louisiana’s children.

**The new museum space is as special and unique as the organization’s commitment to Louisiana’s children is deep.**

LCM has garnered more than 20 different awards for architectural, exhibit and graphic design, environmental sustainability and programming impact. Awards include the [2022 AIA COTE Top Ten Award](#), the [Society for Experiential Graphic Design Honor Award in 2020](#) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services National Medal from First Lady Michelle Obama among several others.

The 8.5-acre site has a LEED Gold certification and is the first LEED certified building in New Orleans City Park. Sustainability is paramount for LCM; the project preserved the site’s trees and 125 additional trees were added to the landscape. An interactive 15,000-gallon cistern collects rainwater and the lagoon the museum overlooks was restored to include freshwater and brackish wetland environments. Award-winning design partners included [Mithun](#), a Seattle-based architecture and planning firm, Waggoner and Ball (local architectural partner) and [Gyroscope, Inc.](#), an exhibit design studio headquartered in Oakland who created the innovative learning environments.

The site also includes an interactive fog sculpture by Fujiko Nakaya, her first and only commission to date in the American South.

**An authentic, collaborative and evidence-based approach to learning and wellness grounds the museum and its programming.** Exhibits and programs are the product of conversations, focus



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groups and extensive planning that involved early learning experts, grassroots community and civic partners, healthcare professionals and higher education leaders and children. These efforts focused on infant and toddler mental health, physical development, caregiver engagement, early literacy, culture, heritage and the arts and informed the design of the five exhibit galleries at LCM: [Play with Me](#), [Follow that Food](#), [Dig into Nature](#), [Make Your Mark](#), and [Move with the River](#).

Unique among its peers, LCM places what children notice, think and do at the forefront of the Museum’s planning, experiences and work. The Museum follows the [Reggio Emilia](#)® approach to learning - an early-childhood, experience-based, play-based and child-led approach that actively engages children in the process of learning as opposed to them merely listening or watching. Ideas, quotes and artwork from children are present throughout the museum and guide the Museum’s brand, work and messaging. The logo that represents LCM, as just one example, is the work of a child.

Visitor [experiences at LCM](#) focus on five key areas: Literacy, Environment, STEM, Arts & Culture and Health & Wellness. Programs that support young visitors and their caregivers are robust and include [camps](#), [mental health resources](#) designed to support healthy relationships between the child and the adults who care for them, [Connections at Home](#) - a video tutorial series that relies on a child’s natural curiosity as a springboard for ages birth through eight, and [resources for caregivers](#) that provide guidance for talking with young children about complex topics.

The organization has approximately 4500 active members, 18 full-time staff, 35 part-time staff and a 2022 annual budget of approximately \$3.5 million (which is higher than recent years due to pandemic support funding). Revenue sources are a combination of earned income (admissions,

memberships, group events, the Museum store, etc.) and contributed income. At present, earned revenue is responsible for slightly less than half of all annual income. The organization is financially stable with a roughly \$6.5 million endowment and an operational reserve fund of \$1 million.

Admission prices are \$16 for adult and children (\$13 for seniors and active military), and the Museum offers free admission on the second Sunday of each month, made possible through the support of The Helis Foundation Art for All program. The Museum is also home to [Acorn](#), an on-site restaurant operated by Dickie Brennan & Company.

For more information about the Louisiana Children's Museum, go to [www.lcm.org](http://www.lcm.org).

## The Responsibilities

The CEO is the Museum's primary leader, ambassador, and fiscal agent. The new leader will have a strong managerial skill set built on a foundation of relevant experience, an authentic desire to work collaboratively, and a passion for the potential of LCM to improve outcomes for regional children, families and communities. The new leader will bring the talents required to ensure that the Museum realizes its ambitious aspirations and will enthusiastically share the joy of the work and the uniqueness of the Museum's mission and experiences. Additionally, the new leader will bring the skills necessary to assess, sustain and optimize the Museum's fiscal health.

More specifically, the CEO will:

- 1. Guide the next phase of LCM's growth with skill and focus.** The CEO will steadily guide the organization to optimize the potential of the new facility, eliminate boundaries to access, and develop enduring ties to the community. The CEO will calibrate the business model, human and financial resources and program



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opportunities to ensure that operations thrive and that experiences are equal to the Museum’s beloved legacy and ambitious vision. The CEO will lead LCM staff to establish annual financial goals, internal systems and operational processes that are responsive to current realities and that will inform future planning.

**2. Be a strategic, inspiring leader who will lead the Museum with purpose and an authentic passion for actualizing each child’s potential and making learning visible.**

The CEO will develop and lead strategy for LCM in close partnership with the board. The new leader will honor the vision of the Museum, gracefully balance progress and legacy, and guide the organization with humility, quiet confidence, gravitas and palpable passion for the mission. The CEO will collaborate with leaders in early childhood to inform museum programs and invest in ongoing staff education.

**3. Be a humble servant leader who embraces a strong organizational culture as a critical priority.**

The CEO will be guided by the Museum’s [values](#) and be approachable, respectful, authentic and a good listener. They will be a person who will lead with a strong commitment to DEIB, transparency and inclusion; who will capitalize on opportunities to expand the diversity of the staff and board; and who people from all walks of life can trust. The CEO will be a proven developer of great talent and effective teams, as well as a leader who is gifted at fostering an environment of shared vision, values, high standards and alignment around mission. Further, the new leader will work collaboratively and transparently with the Museum’s Board of Directors to responsibly steward the organization and its facility while realizing a bold vision for the future.

**4. Build relationships and grow both earned and contributed revenue.** The CEO will be a credible, engaging and trustworthy leader who will develop and deepen relationships with Board members, civic leaders, donors and partners. The leader will be the internal and external face of the Museum and its most public champion. With transparency and courage, the CEO will develop strategies that enhance financial performance and further LCM's mission through program excellence with measurable outcomes. The CEO will work to enhance current relationships, develop new opportunities, and advance the Museum's financial sustainability.

**5. Help LCM fully realize its mandate to improve outcomes for children and communities.** The CEO will be a collaborative leader and a creative thinker who listens well and embraces new ideas. They will work with the Board and staff to broaden reach and connection with the Greater New Orleans area and Louisiana communities, education and early childhood leaders, program partners, New Orleans City Park neighbors and other stakeholders with the intent of improving outcomes for young children. Additionally, the CEO will successfully find ways to grow LCM's impact while celebrating its history and most special traditions.

## The Candidate

The ideal candidate is an engaging leader with significant experience, perspective, knowledge and demonstrated success in contexts relevant to leading the Louisiana Children's Museum. The next CEO is a person who is passionate about the role that LCM can play as an early childhood education leader and partner in the local and regional community. A proven track record of leadership, working successfully with a nonprofit board and



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staff, fundraising, cultivating relationships and program management in an organization of similar complexity is paramount.

The CEO will have an established history of supporting a talented operational team and ideally, leading a facility of similar scope and complexity. Additionally, the candidate will have successfully cultivated and stewarded the relationships and funding necessary for an organization to set high goals and attain them.

Assets being sought in the new CEO include:

- Passion for the mission of the Louisiana Children’s Museum and an unwavering belief in the dividends of investing in young children and their communities
- High emotional intelligence, authenticity, integrity, charisma and outstanding interpersonal, communication and listening skills
- Ability to thrive in nuanced environments
- Demonstrated adaptability and innovation
- Commitment to the stewardship and sustainability of natural resources, economic resources, family resources and LCM as a resource for all
- Ability to balance the responsibility of LCM’s mandates and the joy of the work and to create an organizational culture and mindset that celebrates both
- Strong business acumen
- Experience developing and integrating high-performing internal systems
- Ability to lead, inspire and empower people to accomplish important goals
- Cultural competence

- Genuine capacity to embrace diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging
- Success in gaining the trust of a wide spectrum of community stakeholders
- Strong commitment to the professional development of staff
- Ability to lead a strong organizational culture that is defined by productive, positive relationships with Board and staff members, donors, and community partners
- Proven capability in strategy, planning and driving consensus
- Courage to lead, implement change and make key organizational decisions with confidence
- Direct experience with key themes and concepts in STEM and early childhood education
- Excitement about embracing the Greater New Orleans community and its distinct personality
- Fun! A leader who is warm and can engage with young children

## The Relationships

<b>Reports to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Louisiana Children’s Museum Board of Directors</li> </ul>
<b>Direct Reports:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Operating Officer</li> <li>• Chief Learning Officer</li> <li>• Chief Financial Officer</li> <li>• Chief Advancement Officer</li> <li>• Chief Human Resources and Diversity Officer</li> <li>• PR/Marketing Consultant</li> </ul>
<b>Other key relationships include:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCM staff</li> <li>• New Orleans City Park</li> <li>• State and local elected officials</li> <li>• Local, state, regional, national and global leaders in the children’s museum community</li> <li>• Peers and colleagues in the local and regional cultural community</li> <li>• Current and potential donors and supporters of the Museum</li> <li>• Early Childhood and STEM experts and partners</li> <li>• Educators and leaders in the public and private school systems throughout Louisiana</li> <li>• Civic, foundation and philanthropic leadership</li> <li>• On-site partners including Dickie Brennan &amp; Company</li> </ul>

## The Location



The Louisiana Children's Museum is in central New Orleans on 8.5 acres in New Orleans City Park. Consistent with the intention of being a multi-dimensional learning resource for young children and their families, accessible to all, and a part of the natural ecosystem of the region, the facility sits adjacent to a lagoon full of indigenous wildlife, is close to several family neighborhoods and is easily reached by the streetcar, five bus lines or a nearby exit to Interstate 10.

The Greater New Orleans area and its five parishes are legendary. Some observers highlight the culture, others the challenges, all of which contribute to a complex urban setting in which issues facing most big cities are magnified by the environment. For a variety of perspectives, visit these and other websites: [Visit New Orleans](#), [NOLA.com](#), [City of New Orleans](#), [Greater New Orleans, Inc.](#), [Greater New Orleans Foundation](#), and [Nonprofits in New Orleans](#).

The Louisiana Children's Museum is an equal opportunity employer, and a diverse slate of compelling candidates is being sought.

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To be considered or to suggest a prospect, please email [LCM@BoardWalkConsulting.com](mailto:LCM@BoardWalkConsulting.com)

or call **Lysondra Somerville** or

**John Sparrow** at 404-262-7392.

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