



Executive Director

The Organization

Featured in the Wall Street Journal's travel section on unique places to visit in Oakland and touted by Buzzfeed as "The Most Amazing Place to take Kids" in California, Children's Fairyland is the first storybook theme park in America. In 1950 a group of dedicated and visionary Oaklanders partnered with Oakland Park Superintendent, William Penn Mott, Jr., and garnered support from enthusiastic citizens to build the magical outdoor 10-acre theme park on the shores of Lake Merritt in the heart of Oakland.

Children's Fairyland holds fast to its founding mission to "stimulate a young child's creativity, imagination and desire to learn". High touch and low tech, Fairyland's 10 acres of landscaped gardens house 30 storybook sets, 18 gentle animals, four child-size rides, the longest-running professional puppet theater in the United States, a renowned children's theater program, live performances, weekly Toddler Storytime, hands-on science programs, summer day camp, a retail store, a café, a horticulture program, and more. Though this enchanting family destination is geared for children aged 2-6 years old, it also has programs for children up to age 10. Fairyland is a learning laboratory for Oakland teachers who use field trips to increase reading and science readiness and complement in-school curriculum.

Each of our programs addresses one or more of Fairyland's four pillars of education: Literacy, Science, Creativity, and Social/Emotional Development. Through our community outreach program, free or reduced admission is offered to over 16,000 children and families annually.

In 1994 Children's Fairyland became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization through a public/private partnership with the City of Oakland. Our operating budget is \$3.5M and revenue is generated through memberships, admission fees, retail sales, program fees, and corporate, foundation, and individual gifts. <https://fairyland.org/>.

Our 12 Board Members are chosen through the Board and the Oakland City Administrator and Mayor.

The Position

The current Executive Director is stepping down after 17 years at the helm, and the Board is seeking an entrepreneurial, strategic, and operationally savvy leader. The Executive Director will have overall operational responsibility for Fairyland's staff, financials, programs, strategy, fundraising, and execution of its mission.

Our organization is complex with multiple programs, revenue streams, and intrinsic relationships with the City of Oakland, community organizations, businesses, foundations, and donors. We are seeking a politically savvy community connector with strong business acumen, an entrepreneurial spirit, and deep experience in philanthropy.

To deepen Fairyland's impact, retain its relevance, and drive growth, we will continue to focus on relationship cultivation, fund development, program expansion, team development, and operational effectiveness.

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and oversees a team of 33 full-time and part-time staff. Departments include: Operations, Program, Facilities, Development, Administration, Creative, Community Outreach and Education, and Events.

Priorities for the First Year

- Work with the Board to refine the vision for the future of Fairyland and to design a new five-year strategic plan which will include preparation for the 75th anniversary in 2025 with the potential for a major capital campaign.
- Review the organizational structure to ensure operational and program efficiency through use of data and metrics, including systems, administration, planning, and implementation.
- Actively engage and energize Fairyland's volunteers, Board Members, partnering organizations, and individual and institutional donors in order to build the brand and increase revenue.
- Develop and retain a high performing team that values transparency, collaboration, information sharing, accountability, and a collegial environment.
- Evaluate Fairyland facilities, prioritizing projects and allocating resources.
- Leverage new and existing relationships among Oakland constituencies and stakeholders in order to create a high profile for Fairyland as a premier organization that promotes a young child's healthy development and early language acquisition.
- Plan for a 70th birthday celebration in 2020.

Specific Responsibilities

- Assume responsibility for the day-to-day management of the 10-acre park, ensuring smooth operations of rides, animal care, and a hazard-free environment, complying with various regulations.
- Oversee general Fairyland operations which include: rides, sets, animals, horticulture, programs, facilities, development, administration and finance, community outreach, education, volunteers, food service, retail, and special events.
- Ensure programs and services meet customer needs and achieve optimal ROI for earned revenue activities.
- Oversee planning and implementation of unique programs designed to position Fairyland as a popular destination where families with young children can create, imagine, play, and learn.
- Participate actively in local organizations such as the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club, Oakland Rotary #3, the Chamber of Commerce, California and national amusement park associations, and the local Business Improvement District among others, as well as in local parades, festivals, and public events.
- Use data and metrics to make key decisions, evaluate program effectiveness, and ensure consistent quality of finance and administration.
- Collaborate with and support a strong Board of Directors.

- During the summer, Fairyland is open seven days a week, five days a week in fall and spring, and three days a week in winter. Because Fairyland is always open on weekends, weather permitting, this role requires working at least one weekend day regularly and often participating in special evening events.

Qualifications

In addition to being thoroughly committed to Fairyland's mission and having a respect for its history, all candidates will have proven leadership in growing a business or a nonprofit organization, fundraising, a strong customer service background, and relationship-building experience. Specific qualifications include:

- An undergraduate degree. Advanced degree in a related field is a plus.
- Demonstrated success leading a complex organization, business, or department with a budget of at least \$2.5M and with at least 10 years of professional experience.
- Solid operations background with experience in facilities management.
- Demonstrated ability to build a culture of philanthropy that includes participation in the successful identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of major individual and institutional gifts.
- Experience developing and achieving strategic goals and objectives.
- Exceptional business acumen, viewing park operations and programs through a business lens, and understanding how to evaluate Fairyland elements' ROI and other key performance indicators.
- Cultural competency and ability to engage with all levels of a diverse organization, communities, and stakeholders.
- Politically savvy, and able to work effectively with Oakland's Mayor, Councilmembers, City Administrator, Director of Parks and Recreation, and selected County and State officials.
- Entrepreneurial, visionary, and innovative in approach to business planning and fund development.
- Excellent track record in organizational management including budgeting, operations, and staff development.
- Solid marketing, PR, and brand building experience, with the ability to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and individuals.
- Excellent communications and presentation skills, serving as the primary spokesperson and advocate for Fairyland.
- Knowledge of Bay Area/Oakland culture and philanthropy is a huge plus.
- Personable and charismatic, with a playful sense of humor.
- Ability to prioritize objectives, activities, and overlapping schedules, with solid follow-through and project management skills.
- Being willing to jump in and assist with front line activities when needed.
- Understand the critical importance of early childhood development and literacy.
- Have an appreciation for enchantment, fairy and folk tales, and the importance of imaginative play.

To apply for this exciting opportunity, please email your resume with Fairyland ED in the subject heading along with a cover letter outlining specific qualifications to Donna Davidson, FairylandED@ddavidson.com or call 415-563-1152. All communications are confidential.

Children's Fairyland is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate and support diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ability/disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. We highly encourage our diverse community to apply.