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GUIDE DOG FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND AMERICA'S VETDOGS (Smithtown, NY) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

BACKGROUND

Since 1946, the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind (GDF) has improved the quality of life for people who are blind, have low vision, or have other special needs. GDF began with the mission to provide guide dogs and training free of charge, and has expanded opportunities, enhanced mobility and companionship, increased independence, and improved the lives of those they serve for more than 70 years. Since the 1950s, the Smithtown, NY training center has continued to meet students' changing needs through innovative training enhancements and by providing an environment where students can learn safely with caring instructors.

In 2003, GDF created America's VetDogs (AVD) to enhance the quality of life for disabled veterans, active-duty service members, and first responders, enabling them to honorably live with dignity, self-reliance, and renewed independence. Today AVD is the largest organization of its kind in providing assistance (Guide, Service and Hearing) dogs for veterans and first responders. PTSD service dogs have helped mitigate the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder; hearing dogs assist those who have lost their hearing later in life. AVD facilitates the rehabilitation process in military and VA hospitals by placing physical and occupational therapy dogs in military medical centers to work with service members recovering from amputations or other injuries. In 2006, AVD became a separate 501(c)(3) corporation.

GDF/AVD produce and train 120 guide/service dog teams annually with a staff of 100 FTE, 1500 national volunteers, and a combined budget of \$15M. The organizations' integrated client-driven and continuously refined programming, along with the dedication of their stakeholders and volunteers, guarantee service and guide dog users fewer boundaries, a newfound sense of independence and pride, and individualized services and support for applicants. People with disabilities become part of the organizations' welcoming community full of highly empathetic team members, including certified trainers who build a meticulously constructed curriculum (individualized for personal needs) and have an unwavering commitment to excellence.

GDF's and AVD's guide and service dogs provide support in daily activities as well as motivation to tackle new challenges. GDF and AVD are internationally recognized for innovative excellence in service and guide dog training, and dedication to providing the best resources and services possible to people with disabilities.

In 2008, the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind became the first assistance dog school in the United States to be dual certified by the International Guide Dog Federation and Assistance Dogs International. In 2013, America's VetDogs became the second assistance dog school in the United States to be dual certified by the International Guide Dog Federation and Assistance Dogs International.

Accreditation reinforces the organizations' reputation in the assistance dog movement by affirming the consistently high standards for the highest quality, humane and ethical treatment of dogs and dedication to maintaining educational benchmarks.

To learn more about the history of the Foundation, please visit www.guidedog.org.

THE POSITION

With the current CEO of 28 years scheduled to retire in January, 2018, the GDF/AVD Board seeks in its next CEO, a dynamic leader who will continue to build on the vision and strategic direction of this mission-driven organization. The CEO is accountable to the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Board. He/she will manage a team of professionals with designated responsibilities as needed to fulfill the organization's mission and implement its vision. The CEO's direct reports include the CFO, the Chief of Training Operations, Chief Canine Care Officer, Director of Administrative Services, Director of Service Dog Programs, Director of Marketing, and Director of Development.

The CEO is tasked with ensuring that GDF/AVD is recognized as a national leader in producing the highest quality guide and service dogs along with strong support services for consumers. He/she is responsible for ensuring superior standards of care and service delivery, progressive service growth and sound business execution and expansion, a positive reputation with stakeholder groups and ethical conduct throughout the organization.

S/he must have an entrepreneurial mindset in looking for growth and service opportunities. With growth and service a key organizational focus, the CEO will be expected to ensure that the organization's current resources and structure are optimized to support efficient and effective expansion. The CEO must be a data-driven executive able to design an infrastructure that is responsive to client need and marketplace realities.

The Board expects the CEO to be an active participant and leader in driving a diversified fundraising program. While the organization has a strong annual fund and planned giving program, the CEO will work with the Director of Development and executive team to build and solidify additional revenue streams.

Lastly, in this highly visible role, the CEO must be a strong communicator with both internal and external audiences. An effective CEO must be able to harness the energy of dedicated staff, volunteers, and Board in such a way where there is clarity and transparency of purpose followed by the need for action.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategy

- Drive the creation and implementation of strategic plans.
 - Engage and motivate Board of Directors, management and staff in the development and implementation of plans.
 - Evaluate progress and impact.
- Seek new opportunities for service growth, strategic alliances and business opportunities to support the mission and vision of the organization.

Mission

- Create an organizational environment that reflects an absolute commitment to mission and the continuing pursuit of quality improvement throughout the organization.
- Ensure that policies, procedures and practices facilitate a mission driven culture.
- Assure that all programs and services are consistent with the mission, vision and values of the organization.
- Continually assess organizational performance against plans and external benchmarks to validate the organization's position as a premier provider of services for people with disabilities.

Fundraising/Communications

- With staff and board, plan and execute a strategic, long-term sustainable approach to raising financial support from corporate, foundation, strategic partners, and individual sources with the goal of increasing private fundraising dollars to support ongoing, high quality programs and services consistent with the organization's mission.
- Ensure an effective communication program is developed and maintained to promote positive relationships with stakeholder groups (consumers, families, funders, state agencies, Veterans Administration, business partners, donors and the public at large).

Management

- Promote a culture of workforce inclusion, professional development and recognition to enhance employee performance and the pursuit of best practices throughout the organization.
- Build depth in managerial and professional leadership structure to assure ongoing stability throughout the organization.
- Provide experiential and development opportunities for staff at all levels throughout the organization.
- Motivate, evaluate and inspire staff by creating a collaborative, transparent and inclusive culture that allows for an open dialogue to address both the challenges and goals facing GDF/AVD.
- Oversee the collective bargaining process with union.

Finance and Operations

- Ensure efficient and effective operations through sound business and fiscal practices throughout the organization.
- Assume responsibility for the financial health, stability, capacity, and planned growth of the organization.
- Assess and assure financial feasibility of current programs as well as that of all new initiatives, based on changing consumer needs and priorities.
- Direct staff processes for developing the annual budget and work closely with staff members to ensure a financially sound operation.
- Assure and monitor compliance with all related statutory and regulatory requirements.

Board Relations

- Inform and advise Board of Directors with regard to significant environmental trends such as new service delivery models, changes in government policy, funding opportunities or challenges,

technologies, health matters, and market trends that could impact organizational directions and activities.

- Working with Board leadership, create a dynamic, collaborative partnership between the organization's voluntary Board of Directors and senior management to advance short and long term objectives, with particular emphasis on community outreach and fundraising activities.

External Relations

- As the face of the organization, continually seek and cultivate relationships on behalf of GDF/AVD with individuals who might serve as volunteers, supporters, donors or otherwise promote and advocate for the advancement of GDF/AVD and the people it serves.
- Work with leaders at the government and nonprofit organizations on systemic changes relevant to the sectors of blindness and veteran needs.
- Establish strategic relationships and partnerships with complementary organizations that enhance and advance leadership role in fulfilling mission and objectives.
- Develop and leverage an ongoing communications, public relations and branding strategy.

QUALIFICATIONS

Professional

- Minimum of 15 years of progressively responsible leadership experience in related field. Understanding of human services sector is preferred.
- Should have demonstrated success in leadership role(s) managing complex organization(s).
- Demonstrated success in diversifying and growing revenue streams (with a particular emphasis on fundraising) and enhancing national brand and awareness.
- Proven entrepreneurial abilities in looking and developing new opportunities and skillfully and quickly addressing needs and desires of consumers and advancing mission.
- Experience in non-profit management working with voluntary Boards is desirable.
- Financial acumen, business, management and forecasting skills – ability to link strategic and operational goals to fiscal realities and program priorities.
- Reputation as a team builder with demonstrated success leading, motivating and collaborating with a large group of professional and direct service staff.
- Successful relationship builder with a proven track record of attracting new funding sources.
- Ability to articulate GDF/AVD's message to a broad range of constituents and the general public.
- Ability to use, apply and embrace use of technology.

Personal

- Passion and dedication to GDF/AVD's mission.
- Inspirational leadership skills.
- Unquestioned integrity and values.

- Commitment to change/improvement – creating a culture that always looks to improve.
- Sound judgment/decision making in order to deal with the complexities and uncertainties in the nonprofit marketplace.
- Intellectual/emotional intelligence.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Prudent risk taker/results oriented.
- Flexible/responsive to feedback.
- Innovative/entrepreneurial/creative/high energy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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TO APPLY

Please submit a resume and cover letter.

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This position description is based upon material provided by Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, an equal opportunity employer.

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