Position Specification

Gardens of Golden Gate Park

Director of Programs and Partnerships

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Carlson Beck advises Gardens of Golden Gate Park on the basis of an exclusive consulting assignment. The following details are for your information.
GARDENS OF GOLDEN GATE PARK

POSITION SPECIFICATION

THE POSITION: DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

REPORTS TO: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LOCATION: SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

THE OPPORTUNITY

To improve visitor experience and position the Gardens of Golden Gate Park (“GGGP”) as one of the top cultural and environmental institutions in the country, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors has approved an agreement that will combine admissions, education, and outreach programs at San Francisco Botanical Garden (“SFBG”), Conservatory of Flowers (“CoF”), and Japanese Tea Garden (“JTG”) under the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society.

“Our vision is that the Gardens of Golden Gate Park will become a leading cultural and conservation institution over the next decade with new partnerships, master plan, interpretive plan, museum accreditation, enhanced visitor experience, and robust community engagement,” said San Francisco Botanical Garden Society Executive Director Stephanie Linder.

Key to the success of the vision will be the hiring of an experienced Director of Programs and Partnerships who will sustain and expand GGGP’s social impact through a broad network of community partnerships, timely and responsive public engagement, accountable learning programs, and dynamic, inclusive interpretation. An expansion of the formerly titled Learning and Engagement function and reporting to the Executive Director, the DPP will initiate, manage, and sustain community partnerships, programs, and interpretation. They will broaden and diversify GGGP’s local reach and audience, increase and deepen community partnerships, and emphasize GGGP’s history and relevance.

THE ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY

San Francisco Recreation and Park Department received approval from the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission to expand the nonprofit’s current lease and management agreement to also include the Conservatory of Flowers and the Japanese Tea Garden in late 2021 and received formal approval from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in early 2022. While all three sites are overseen by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department and are located a short walk from one another, their admissions, fundraising, and visitor experience functions have historically been operated by different organizations. Under the proposed agreement, the three gardens will have a campus feel while keeping their individual legacy names. Together, they will be recognized and marketed as the Gardens of Golden Gate Park, a regional organization with national and international recognition and partnerships. Combining the organizations would eliminate nonprofit redundancies, while allowing visitors, volunteers, and school children to experience a combined
educational and cultural experience and attracting greater philanthropic support for capital improvements at each location.

Gardens of Golden Gate Park seeks to establish itself as a top 10 botanical garden in the country over the next five to ten years through new collections and exhibits, expanded public programs, and a larger role in worldwide conservation efforts, including:

- More diverse gardens with new plant collections such as an Afromontane collection
- Expanded global plant conservation efforts protecting biodiversity in the face of climate change and the extinction crisis
- Upgraded accessibility and improved garden designs, pathways, and maintenance
- More public programs like Flower Piano at the Botanical Garden and Night Bloom at the Conservatory of Flowers with existing and new community partners
- Improved interpretation and educational resources including new digital tools
- Major capital projects such as a new Children’s Garden in the west end of the Botanical Garden – building off momentum of recent projects like pagoda restoration at the Japanese Tea Garden and Celebration Garden and new plant nursery at Botanical Garden
- A smoother, more cohesive experience for visitors and volunteers at each location

San Francisco Botanical Garden Society (the legal operating entity and fundraising organization) has managed the SFBG’s educational programs, volunteer efforts, visitor programs, youth programs, special events, and unique horticultural library since 1955. San Francisco Botanical Garden Society has also operated admissions to the Japanese Tea Garden since July of 2020, a function that was managed by SF Rec and Park prior to the pandemic. Under the agreement, SF Rec and Park will continue to oversee maintenance and horticulture at all the gardens. The city department and nonprofit will coordinate management of plant collections. Meanwhile, visitors will enjoy a simpler ticketing system and an enhanced experience.

Since 2010, SFBG has increased annual visits to the Botanical Gardens by 135 percent. More recently, the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society developed the plan and raised the funding to rebuild the San Francisco Botanical Garden nursery as a 34,000 square foot complex that will allow SFBG to acquire rare species and support global conservation efforts. The project broke ground in October 2021.

THE POSITION

Reporting to the Executive Director (“ED”), the Director of Programs and Partnerships (“DPP”) will guide and expand the programs and partnership efforts to advance GGGP’s mission, vision, and strategic plan, strengthening baseline programs and activities while looking ahead to the synergy created by the merged entities.

The DPP will strategically lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of GGGP programs and the cultivation of partnerships to engage the community in advancing institutional missions. The DPP will drive continued development of educational and engagement programs committed to horticulture, botany, plant conservation and improving public spaces.
This role manages an existing team of eight regular education and engagement staff members (plus additional part-time and seasonal staff) through three staff members who report directly to the DPP. It is expected that the staff and role will evolve as the merger transition begins, and as programs and partnerships expand.

QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE

Candidates should possess:

- Proven experience leading, developing, and evaluating programs to align with organizational strategy, and in selecting and successfully operationalizing innovative programs with an organization of similar complexity to GGGP.

- Proven leadership of partnership and engagement in a museum, public garden, or related cultural organization, including at least five years of supervisory experience.

- Demonstrated results in managing within complex systems and proven experience in developing and managing collaborative partnerships.

- Demonstrated leadership, team building, communications, project management, and fiscal management skills.

- Commitment to collaboration, customer service, excellence, strategy, and innovation.

Education: A Bachelor’s degree is preferred; equivalent experience considered.

COMPETENCIES/ATTRIBUTES

The traits listed below are representative of the knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors required to be successful in this role.

- Understanding of and committed to the unique role the institutions play in the community;

- A secure leader who is approachable, willing to actively listen and ask questions, and is comfortable giving and receiving advice;

- A collaborative leader with exemplary interpersonal skills;

- Collaborative and transparent, and able to inspire confidence and trust among multiple stakeholders, including staff, Board, volunteers, donors, and SF Rec and Park officials;

- A motivational leader who inspires others to action; and

- A consensus builder, with a tolerance for ambiguity and the ability to demonstrate flexibility in complex situations.

The successful candidate will have:

- A high degree of emotional intelligence, professionalism, and self-awareness;

- Unquestionable integrity and commitment to personal and professional excellence;

- Excellent oral and written communication skills as an enthusiastic and persuasive communicator; and

- Optimistic in outlook; friendly and people-oriented while also being solutions-oriented.

- An entrepreneurial spirit with the ability to creatively develop a variety of programs and partnerships with individuals from a variety of backgrounds.
COMPENSATION

GGGP offers an excellent benefits package and a competitive salary; the salary range for this role starts at $125,000 annually and is commensurate with experience.

*San Francisco Botanical Garden/Gardens of Golden Gate Park is an equal opportunity employer and encourages candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences to apply.*

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact:

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