

Executive Director Search

SUNSHINE COTTAGE SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN





Position Overview

Sunshine Cottage School for Deaf Children is seeking an educational leader who will build upon the legacy of the school, working closely with the Board of Directors to secure a lasting vision for the future. The Executive Director has oversight of all organizational activities and serves as Sunshine's leader, fostering a climate of excellence and growth among students, faculty, and staff. At Sunshine Cottage, children with hearing loss become part of a community centered on enriching lives and improving listening, language, and speech. Every child is embraced by a dedicated staff. All children and their families benefit from the outstanding educational environment and strong support system spanning their Sunshine Cottage experience.

Sunshine Cottage is beloved by its core constituents and enjoys fervent support and appreciation from the community it serves. Their next Executive Director is expected to enthusiastically embrace and demonstrate an unwavering commitment to its listening and spoken language environment. As the sole employee of the Sunshine Cottage Board of Directors, the Executive Director implements Board policies and procedures, advises, maintains fiscal policies and responsibilities, oversees the school's day-to-day operations, and represents the school to the public. The next Executive Director will inherit a talented and deeply devoted faculty, an eager student body, dedicated parents, and an engaged Board of Directors. The Executive Director must appreciate the legacy and traditions of Sunshine Cottage and be committed to maintaining the school's local and national prominence in the education of deaf and hard of hearing children.

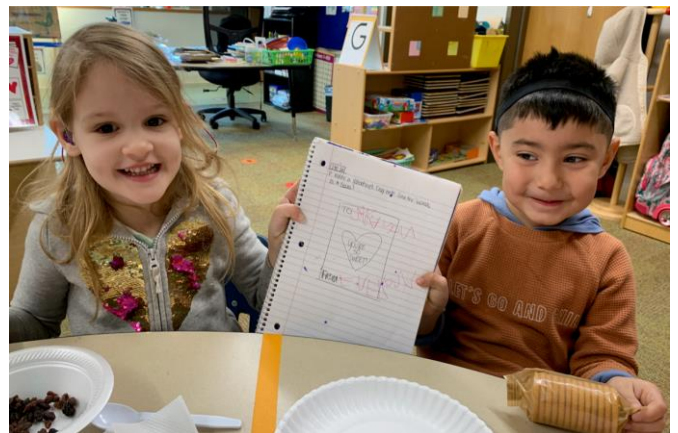
The next Executive Director will be a skillful, experienced leader with a passion for upholding the mission and fostering the traditions, relationships, and practices that are the foundation of Sunshine Cottage culture. The ideal candidate will possess the highest level of integrity, an engaging personality, and be a collaborative servant leader whose example, enthusiasm, and commitment inspires and promotes the growth of others.

Mission

Sunshine Cottage School for Deaf Children promotes early identification and intervention for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and helps them develop their maximum potential through listening, spoken language and literacy.

Core Beliefs

"We believe that children who are deaf or hard of hearing can learn to listen and talk if early identification, appropriate amplifications, and intervention take place. We follow the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention 1-3-6 model: a hearing screening by 1 month of age, a diagnosis of hearing loss by 3 months of age, and early intervention services by 6 months of age. We believe that all children can learn in a stimulating environment led and encouraged by educated, dedicated teaching staff. We believe that the participation of parents and their partnership with the school are critical to the success of the child."



History

The story of a mother's love for her child is the origin of Sunshine Cottage School for Deaf Children. There were few educational options for the deaf when Dela and John White discovered in 1945 that their daughter, Tuleta, was born with profound hearing loss. Mr. and Mrs. White believed that if given the opportunity, children who are deaf or hard of hearing could learn to talk and live a full, self-reliant life. New to education and hearing loss, Mrs. White enlisted the support of a cadre of volunteers and organizations. In 1947, Sunshine Cottage opened its doors to seven students. Mr. and Mrs. White's belief remains at the heart of the mission. Sunshine Cottage is one of the most comprehensive oral and education centers in the country, promoting early identification of hearing loss, intervention services, and listening and spoken language. Sunshine Cottage has grown into a respected auditory/oral school and gained significant national and international recognition as well.



Sunshine Cottage Day School Early Childhood & Elementary Programs

Early Childhood and Elementary school programs offer instruction that is focused on speech and language development, small classes, expert teaching staff, and support services to assist each child in developing optimal listening and speaking skills. All children enrolled in the day school program benefit from a research-based curriculum to develop both language and academic skills in an experience-based environment. Students with typical hearing are welcome in the school. Although there are currently 36 Sunshine Cottage students who have typical hearing, most are children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Sunshine Cottage offers a comprehensive foundation for students to become independent and active participants of the hearing world. The school's goal has remained unchanged for 76 years. At Sunshine Cottage children who are deaf and hard of hearing are taught to listen and talk. Children utilize state-of-the-art hearing technology to develop listening and spoken language to communicate naturally and effectively without the use of sign language. As recognized experts in their field, faculty members have designed and share educational resources such as the CASLLS, the Cottage Acquisition Skills for Listening and Language.

Sunshine Cottage is a Texas Education Agency (TEA) approved non-public, non-profit school for children who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as children with typical hearing. Sunshine Cottage accepts students regardless of sex, race, affiliation, disability, or national origin. Sunshine Cottage is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization and is committed to serving families regardless of their financial circumstances. Sunshine Cottage is affiliated with OPTION Schools International and accredited by Cognia.



Newborn Hearing Evaluation Center

Extensive support services are available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and that includes diagnostic hearing evaluations from birth through 6 months old in the Newborn Hearing Center. Sunshine Cottage's mission is to identify babies and children with hearing loss as soon as possible, committed to early identification and intervention, because early access to sound is critical for the development of the auditory brain centers. Sunshine Cottage offers comprehensive newborn hearing evaluations with their team of seven audiologists who specialize in pediatrics. After testing, the family is assisted with the necessary planning that ensures the child has optimal access to sound to achieve speech and language development.



Parent-Infant Program (PIP)

The Parent-Infant Program at Sunshine Cottage provides parent-focused, child-driven intervention for families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing from birth to age three. The program serves as a guide and coach for parents who assume the role as the primary language facilitators in order to fire and wire their child's brain for listening. The program is dedicated to counseling parents about hearing loss, hearing technology and advocacy. Parents learn to implement strategies to develop auditory skills that support spoken language. The Parent-Infant Program provides therapy sessions at Sunshine Cottage, in home visits, and/or tele-intervention. Families are supported by a dedicated team of health professionals, including a pediatric audiologist, a parent infant advisor, and a speech-language pathologist. Together they work to ensure the child achieves the best possible outcomes in listening and spoken language development. Additionally, hearing aids are loaned to families in need. PIP services are available in Spanish and other languages, extending support to families outside of the greater San Antonio area, including locations outside the U.S.



The Audiology Department provides early identification, comprehensive hearing evaluations for all students, hearing aid programming and verification for the student's hearing loss using recommended pediatric setting, programming for Cochlear and advanced bionics Cochlear implant processors, fitting and management of school personal assistive technology equipment, and daily listening checks of equipment to make sure each child has access to sound.

The Speech-Language Program includes collaboration between audiologists, teachers, and families to help students reach their full listening and spoken language potential. The speech program provides individual therapy to support listening, speech, and language growth. This program consists of six licensed and certified speech-language pathologists as Listening and Spoken Language Specialists. The speech-language program offers comprehensive evaluations and therapy for students.

Teaching at Sunshine Cottage

The faculty at Sunshine Cottage believe that transformative learning starts with knowing and loving students. Using an educational approach with Sunshine Cottage students that focuses on Listening and Spoken Language prepares children for a successful future. These professional educators welcome the opportunity and the responsibility that comes with the autonomy they have in their classrooms, the trust offered by the school, the methods used for accountability, and the purpose of their efforts. Sunshine Cottage teachers are a committed and hardworking team, devoted to a collaborative, caring, and active environment where students discover, question, and make meaning of their world. The school requires teachers to have a B.S. in General/Deaf/Bilingual/Special Education and a M.A. in Deaf Education. Certification as a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist (LSLS) is required within the first two years of employment.

Parents

Families share a sincere appreciation for the role that Sunshine Cottage School and its programs have played in preparing their children for their futures. They place a high value on the relationships and communication with faculty and staff. Sunshine Cottage families are active partners with teachers. They support all facets of Sunshine Cottage life, including fundraising projects and organization of designated school functions.

The Administration

Sunshine Cottage has a dedicated administrative team. The Executive Director has oversight of the school and all programs, including the Parent-Infant Program, the Newborn Hearing Evaluation Center, the teams of audiologists and speech therapists, all staff, along with departments for Development, Finance, Human Resources, Accounting, Public Relations & Communication, and Marketing & Technology. The Principal and Assistant Principal have primary responsibility for students and faculty, including 21 teachers, 7 associate teachers, 14 teacher assistants, and four specials teachers. The speech-language Department Chair supervises eight therapists. The Director of the Parent-Infant Program supervises six parent advisors and an administrative assistant. The audiology Department Chair supervises six audiologists and two staff members.

Governance

The Sunshine Cottage Board of Directors' responsibility is to ensure the well-being of the school for the next generations of students. The Board's focus is strategic in that it protects and promotes the mission and core values of the school, safeguards the long-term financial health of the school, and supports and collaborates with the Executive Director to help Sunshine Cottage live its mission. The Board of Directors strives for a close, healthy working relationship with the Executive Director.



Fast Facts



School

Established: 1947

Grades: Early Childhood, Elementary PreK to Grade 4

Day School Enrollment: 143 (47% girls, 52.4% boys)

Student to Teacher Ratio: 7:1



Programs

Newborn Hearing Evaluations: 225 - 300 annually

Parent-Infant Program: 220 children

Audiology & Speech-Language Programs

Children Served Annually: 600

Underprivileged Served: 33%



Finances

Cost per Deaf/Hard of Hearing Child: \$32,000 annually

Tuition: \$7,500 for Deaf students, \$5000 for Typical Hearing students

Financial Aid: 60-70 scholarships awarded annually

Operating Budget: \$10 M

Annual Gala: \$297,000



Employees

Total: 96

Administrators: 7

Teachers, Associates, Assistants: 46

Audiology Department: 9

Speech Therapy Department: 9

Parent Infant Program: 8

Staff: 17

Membership & Affiliations





Sunshine Cottage Campus

Sunshine Cottage is on a serene 21 acres in a beautiful neighborhood. Located slightly north of downtown San Antonio, the campus is characterized by a 57,000 square foot facility designed by Lake/Flato Architects, the award-winning firm based in San Antonio. The school's physical plant is beloved for its warm, welcoming atmosphere. Indoor classrooms are packed with smartboards, sound-absorbing panels to cut down on extraneous reverberations, and FM soundfield systems that help children hear teachers.

Living in San Antonio

Sunshine Cottage is located in the Olmos Park neighborhood, a small enclave four miles north of downtown San Antonio. It is known for its park-like settings and oak-tree lined streets. Across the street from Sunshine Cottage is Trinity University's red brick campus which sits on 125 hilltop acres. San Antonio is the seventh largest metropolitan area in the U.S. The city has a relatively warm climate year-round, with mild winters and hot summers. Preserving its historic atmosphere and embracing cultural diversity, San Antonio is a colorful blend of Mexican and Texas culture where much of the population is of Hispanic descent, and many are Spanish-speaking or bilingual. San Antonio's biggest attractions include the annual Fiesta celebration and the Paseo de Rio, an outdoor showcase that winds through the downtown area, its banks lined with shops and restaurants. Museums are scattered over the city, with dozens of music, dance, and theater organizations. The city's professional basketball team, the Spurs, has been one of the most successful franchises in NBA history.



The Position

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Proficiency with or the ability to quickly learn the organization's collaborative systems is required. Experience as a teacher, pathologist, audiologist, and/or Executive Director is preferred. Familiarity with a listening and spoken language environment is an asset. Bilingual/Spanish is preferred.

Responsibilities may begin as early as January 2025 but no later than July 2025.

Professional Qualities

Leader - envisions Sunshine Cottage as the premier listening and spoken language educational provider for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, living in Texas, throughout the U.S. or internationally;

Relationship builder - demonstrates strength in building and nurturing relationships with students, families, faculty, staff, donors, and the greater San Antonio community;

Strategic thinker - experience in strategic and long-range vision and planning with the ability to envision, obtain financial support for, and implement new strategic approaches;

Academic leader - experience in recruiting, inspiring, mentoring, and supporting all staff members; collaborates with faculty to ensure excellence of the educational program;

Business planner - demonstrate financial acumen with proven experience in overseeing and managing a large budget;

Fundraiser - collaborates with the development office to identify, cultivate, and solicit donors;

Manager - has significant senior-level experience in deaf education, non-profit, medical, and/or a school environment.

Personal Qualities

Compassionate - expresses a deep desire to make a difference in the lives of children who are deaf or hard of hearing from newborns to school-age children; to grasp the challenges that parents experience, and to fully understand and appreciate the complexity of effective programs;

Personable and engaging - a gifted communicator and advocate who embraces and shares the history, traditions, and values of Sunshine Cottage, enthusiastically discusses listening and spoken language, demonstrates an ability to listen, build trust, gather input, and engage in appropriate consensus building;

Trustworthy - able to inspire the confidence and support of the entire Sunshine Cottage community;

Decisive - is at ease in taking challenges head-on and making decisions firmly, fairly, and efficiently;

Integrity - possesses high moral and ethical standards, demonstrates integrity through commitment and accountability, and builds trust through communication;

Accountable - places a high priority on timely and clear communication and expectations, with consistent follow through with faculty, staff, and parents;

Approachable - accessible, warm, responsive, and highly visible;

Adaptable - carefully considers and plans well when changes need to be made;

Self-aware - demonstrates a strong sense of his/her strengths and opportunities for growth, exhibits a willingness to seek help;

Culturally attuned - understands and supports the demographic that Sunshine Cottage serves, and appreciates the unique culture of San Antonio. Bilingual (Spanish) is preferred.

Expectations of the New Executive Director

Serve as a leader who enthusiastically embraces and demonstrates an unwavering commitment to listening and spoken language; recognized as the chief cheerleader for Sunshine Cottage's listening and spoken language environment.

Honor the school's mission, traditions, and core values, maintain alignment between all programs and the overall vision, successfully transition to being a visible and active participant in the school and greater San Antonio community.

Partner with the administrative team to develop, maintain, and enhance all aspects of the programs offered by Sunshine Cottage to ensure positive outcomes for students and a strong, collaborative professional culture.

Listen carefully to a variety of viewpoints yet make clear decisions while taking time to understand and appreciate the culture of the school community.

Recruit, hire, develop and retain the highest quality faculty and staff, promote professional growth and opportunity, foster a collaborative spirit, encourage diversity and take responsibility for high levels of accountability.

Build a strong relationship with the Board of Directors and assist in its development of goals for the school, propose relevant priorities and implement key annual action plans that align with the school's multi-year strategic plan, and inform the Board of all financial and legal matters.

Ensure the financial health and longevity of the school by cultivating relationships with foundations, corporations, and individuals who provide financial support to the school. Ensure that the school meets its short- and long-term fundraising goals.

Ensure that the school complies with all federal, state, and local laws and policies as well as adhering to best practices in matters of risk management.

Serve as the face of the school to the external community; be aware of, connected to, and nurture relationships with all organizations; advocate for listening and spoken language, and represent the school or coordinate its involvement in public policy conversations and advocacy efforts at the local and state policy level.



How to Apply

The new Executive Director may begin service as early as January 2025 but no later than July 2025.

Prospective candidates should submit the following materials in a single PDF document to the consultant listed below.

The deadline for application is August 9, 2024.

- Letter expressing interest in Sunshine Cottage, specifically addressing the position, school, and programs
- Resume (education and work experience with dates)
- Statement of leadership philosophy
- List of six professional references with contact information



Search Consultant



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Sunshine Cottage is a 501 ©(3) nonprofit educational organization.
Sunshine Cottage accepts students regardless of sex, race, affiliation, disability, or national origin.