



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HORIZONS AT NEW CANAAN COUNTRY SCHOOL

OPPORTUNITY:

This is an exciting opportunity for a dynamic and visionary individual to lead the flagship Horizons program at New Canaan Country School (NCCS) in New Canaan, Connecticut. The Executive Director will set the strategic vision for Horizons at NCCS's work, build and lead a high-performing team of six and a summer staff of over 100, and engage with a wide array of stakeholders (students, families, teachers, board members, alumni, donors, and national and local partners). Horizons at NCCS is a part of New Canaan Country School and, as such, the program benefits from the resources (physical, human, financial, community) that exist at NCCS. This critical role reports to the NCCS Head of School, in partnership with the Horizons at NCCS Board Chair. The Executive Director is uniquely positioned to advance the organization's mission of *transforming the lives of underserved children and youth through year-round academic and enrichment programs to inspire learning, encourage success, and close the opportunity gap.*

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION:

Horizons at NCCS was founded on the campus of New Canaan Country School in 1964 by then Head of the School, George Stevens, who wanted to use the campus to serve a public purpose in the summertime for students less fortunate. Over the last 60 years, the program has grown to serve more than 400 under-resourced kindergarten through post-secondary students from Norwalk and Stamford each year.

Horizons intentionally targets students with the most need – 100% of admitted students come from households experiencing financial need, with incomes that are at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines. At least 67% of admitted students are experiencing academic and/or social-emotional needs. The programming Horizons provides has always been critically important for the students it serves to overcome barriers.

Horizons is a year-round program that is anchored by a six-week summer academic and enrichment program during which all students learn to swim. Horizons provides students with tutoring and academic coaching, college advising, caregiver and family programming (including evening swim

lessons for caregivers), and a Super Saturday program. This long-term support enables a life-changing impact. Many of the students are the first in their families to attend college and this opens many doors for them and stops the negative cycle of poverty and lack of career opportunities. 100% of Horizons students graduate from high school in four years in a state where only 80% of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals graduate in four years. Horizons students are beating the odds with a three-year average college enrollment rate of 94%, compared to a 51% college enrollment rate for Connecticut students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Because of the successful results of the Horizons at NCCS model, the program has become a nationwide movement, with 71 affiliate sites across 20 states, serving over 7,000+ children annually. For more information visit: <http://horizonskids.org/>.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY INCLUDE:

Relationship Building & Stakeholder Engagement:

- Cultivate and support all stakeholder groups (children, parents, staff, faculty, alumni, donors, board & board of governor members, NCCS, and community partners) in living the Horizons at NCCS's mission.
- Serve as a community spokesperson, delivering a clear and compelling message of the mission and work, enabling Horizons at NCCS to effectively and efficiently serve its students and families.
- Raise the visibility of the organization by articulating an inspiring vision, sharing best practices and serving as a thought leader, engaging critical stakeholders, including schools, enrichment programs, affiliates, community partners, and others.
- As a member of the NCCS Leadership Team, collaborate with the Head of School, the Parents Association, and the school community to ensure the success of NCCS and Horizons.
- Work closely with the Board Chair of Horizons at NCCS to ensure that board and committee goals are carried out in an effective and timely manner.

Resource Development:

- Grow a sustainable, diversified funding base (e.g., individuals, corporations, foundations), allowing Horizons at NCCS to fund its \$2 million annual budget.
- Provide oversight and support of the staff's activities with annual giving that include grant writing, cultivation and stewardship of donors, direct mail, and the biennial benefit.
- Maintain consistent and ongoing processes for donor and community relations to promote awareness of Horizons at NCCS and uphold highest standards for donor intent.

Organizational Leadership:

- Support and engage the more than 400 under-resourced students and families from Norwalk and Stamford who come to Horizons at NCCS's intensive six-week summer program and school-year program to build on academic, social, and emotional learning, make friends, and learn to swim.
- Provide executive oversight across all aspects of the multi-faceted program (e.g., academic excellence and standards, planning, implementation, evaluation).
- Work collaboratively with the NCCS Head of School and Horizons at NCCS Board Chair to set and achieve the organization's strategic direction.
- Establish organization-wide annual goals that are both ambitious and realistic, and aligned with the strategic plan.
- Serve as a liaison between Horizons at NCCS, NCCS, and Horizons National, the overarching organization for the entire Horizons network.

People & Operations Management:

- Coach, develop, manage, and lead a full-time team of six and a summer staff of over 100.
- Maintain an organizational culture that attracts, develops, and retains excellent staff.
- Leverage and design systems, processes, and protocols to ensure program excellence and accountability.
- Develop, manage, and oversee the organization's budget with the help of the Horizons at NCCS Treasurer and the NCCS CFO/COO.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Our ideal candidate will embody the values of Horizons at NCCS and bring a strong commitment to the mission through leadership and strategic insights with the following skills and characteristics:

- Relevant experience, including demonstrated success in leadership roles, ideally in a nonprofit setting, preferably in an organization with a focus on education, out-of-school time programming, or youth.
- Strong project management and organizational skills, attention to detail, and ability to set and meet deadlines with competing priorities.
- Proven track record in successful fundraising and donor relations, including grant writing experience.
- Experience setting strategic vision and bringing vision to fruition through clear and actionable planning and execution.
- Strong people management skills, with the ability to build high-performing teams, create strong and positive team culture, and coach and develop skills in others.
- Cultural competency and experience working with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Experience designing operational processes and systems.
- Financial acumen and the ability to develop and manage budgets.
- Familiarity with Fairfield County preferred.
- Compelling communicator, speaker, and writer.

- Commitment to fostering inclusivity and equity.
- Grace under pressure.
- Fluency in Spanish and/or Haitian Creole is a plus.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

The Executive Director position is a full-time salaried position with medical and vision benefits; life and disability insurance; 403(b); generous vacation and PTO time, professional development support, and access to tuition remission for children of NCCS faculty and staff. The potential for housing exists. The salary range is \$140,000-\$170,000 dependent on relevant qualifications and experience.

The Executive Director is expected to work regular on-site business hours with some evening and weekend hours required for board meetings and to support program and donor events. Attendance at the Horizons National Annual Conference is expected.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER:

Horizons at NCCS is an equal opportunity employer. All applicants will be considered for employment without attention to race, color, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran or disability status.

TO APPLY:

The search is being conducted by The Strategy Group. Interested candidates should send a resume or profile summary that showcases their skills and experiences, as well as a compelling cover letter describing their interest and how their qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of Horizons at NCCS.

All cover letters and resumes should be sent as **ONE PDF DOCUMENT** titled “**Last Name Cover Letter and Resume**” to nonprofitjobs@thestrategygroupllc.org. **Please title emails as HORIZONS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH in the Subject Line.** Resumes will be accepted until the position is filled.