



THE Reading Team

LITERACY FOR LIFE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE READING TEAM

Position Specification

The Opportunity

The Reading Team, a New York City not-for-profit organization dedicated to early literacy education, seeks an Executive Director to pursue opportunities for new partnerships and resources to expand its work and increase the number of children it serves in Manhattan's Harlem community.

The next Executive Director will be a passionate ambassador and champion for the demonstrated success of The Reading Team's programs. S/he will lead all aspects of the organization's work, and, with an engaged Board of Directors, develop and implement an achievable fundraising strategy so that The Reading Team can enlarge its outreach and continue to be the standard of excellence in literacy education in New York City.

The Reading Team Mission

"The Reading Team is dedicated to enabling children and youth who are at high risk of reading failure to become strong and enthusiastic readers, writers, listeners and speakers and to develop the skills, habits, and behaviors that will support their success in school and in life."

The Organization

The Reading Team opened its doors in 2001 with 72 children in its Preschool and After-School Programs. By 2010, it had expanded to serve more than 350 children and in 2012, to address the ever-growing demand for its services, replicated its programs at P.S. 36 in West Harlem. The Reading Team now serves more than 700 children from preschool through 8th grade at its two program sites:

- **The Preschool Program** serves four- and five-year-old children from neighborhood day care centers and Head Start programs at the main program site at 2090 Adam Clayton Jr. Boulevard, New York, NY 10027.

- ***The School-Day Program at P.S. 36*** (123 Morningside Drive, New York, NY 10027) serves the school's full population of pre-kindergartners through first graders, enabling them to develop key foundational skills and concepts.
- ***The After-School Program*** serves children in grades K-5 from 18 elementary schools at The Reading Team's main program site and children in grades K-4 at P.S. 36.
- ***The Bridge to Success Program*** serves middle-school graduates of the After-School Program to enable them to continue to thrive academically until they can enter a college prep program in high school.

Instructional Model

The Reading Team's instructional program utilizes the following framework:

- *A multi-faceted focus on literacy*, engaging children in a wide range of literacy-nurturing lessons and activities, including computer-assisted instruction, in a calm and cheerful setting.
- *Early intervention*, before a lack of success in school dampens the children's inherent enthusiasm for learning.
- *High expectations*, coupled with high support, to address children's intellectual, social and emotional development and place them on a path to academic and life success.

Challenges in the Local Community

The Reading Team neighborhood is among the most distressed in New York City, measured by childhood poverty, education and health:

- 29% of residents of Harlem live below the Federal Poverty Level; it is among the poorest neighborhoods in the Greater New York area.
- 28% of elementary school students in Harlem miss 20 or more school days each year.
- Only 21% of children in grades 3-8 in Harlem passed the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam in 2016, compared to 38% citywide. ***By contrast, in 2016, 80% of Reading Team children passed the NYS ELA exam.***

The Executive Director Role

The Executive Director will oversee The Reading Team's program, fundraising, communications, finance, operations and staff development. S/he will be expected to identify and attract opportunities for new partnerships and resources to fuel growth and enhance The Reading Team's impact and outreach by providing leadership in:

- ***Program Development.*** The Executive Director will ensure and sustain the outstanding quality of The Reading Team programs.
- ***Strategic Vision.*** The Executive Director will provide strategic vision and collaborative leadership.
- ***Fundraising.*** The Executive Director will strengthen The Reading Team brand and, in close collaboration with the Board, establish and reach attainable fundraising goals.

- **Financial Management.** The Executive Director will manage the organization’s finances, promote disciplined growth with clear organizational priorities, ensure the timely production of financial reports and maintain best-practice financial record-keeping procedures and controls.
- **Public and External Relations.** The Executive Director will be an articulate advocate and ambassador for The Reading Team, speaking publicly with the community, foundation program officers, prospective partners, potential donors and government funders.
- **Staff Management and Staff Development.** The Executive Director will be responsible for hiring, professional development and staff evaluation. S/he will select, manage and support full-time and part-time staff and work with outside consultants as appropriate.

Qualifications and Experience

Ideally, candidates for the Executive Director position will demonstrate:

- Commitment to early childhood education and literacy development.
- Work experience in education, child development, and/or community-based services.
- Financial and operational management experience.
- Strong interpersonal and communications skills.
- Experience in fundraising.
- Experience in staff development and staff evaluation.
- A Bachelor’s degree (or the equivalent) is required. Additional post-graduate study is preferred.

The Reading Team is an equal opportunity employer and seeks a diverse slate of candidates.

How to Apply

This search is being conducted by Steven Schall of Schall & Russo Planning Works, LLC. Interested candidates should email a thoughtful cover letter and resume (noting “Reading Team ED” in the subject line), in confidence, to:

Steven Schall, *Schall & Russo Planning Works LLC*

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