

*This search ended in June, 2006, with the appointment of Nathan Monell,
executive director of the Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry.*

Job Announcement

**Foster Care Alumni of America
Executive Director**

(Posted: April, 2006)

Foster Care Alumni of America in Alexandria, Virginia, has retained Slesinger Management Services to recruit a seasoned leader and manager to serve as executive director. This is an exceptional opportunity for an individual with advocacy, membership development, and fundraising skills who is committed to building a new organization that seeks to improve the foster care system. Applications will be accepted until this position is filled.

The Organization

Foster Care Alumni of America (FCAA) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to connect the alumni community and to transform foster care policy and practice, ensuring greater opportunities for people in and from foster care. FCAA seeks to transform the lives of children, youth, and adults who share the foster care experience by connecting these people into a well-supported and organized community and ensuring that it becomes a powerful, collective voice of change for both individuals and the whole foster care system.

There are approximately twelve million Americans who have spent time living in foster care. Alumni of the foster care system recognize that they have a unique expertise and knowledge from having lived in the system, and that working collectively they can improve the foster care system for the children who are currently in foster care or will enter the foster care system in the future. Alumni also seek to be part of a vibrant and active community that connects them through chapters at the local level and via the FCAA website at the national level.

FCAA is a new organization. With seed funding from Casey Family Programs, an operating foundation whose mission is to provide, improve – and ultimately prevent the need for – foster care, FCAA began operations in 2005 in Richmond, Virginia. It recently moved its headquarters to Alexandria, Virginia, right outside Washington, DC. Still very much a start-up organization, FCAA has a staff of three (the other two positions are membership director and office manager) and a 2006 operating budget of \$768,000.

FCAA is governed by an eight-person board of directors, composed of individuals with deep interest and experience in foster care. The board chair is William Stanton, currently a consultant with ICF Consulting working with the National Review Team at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, and formerly the division director for dependent children's services within the Supreme Court of Arizona. The board includes two staff members of Casey Family Programs, which has committed financial support for at least the next three years.

To learn more about FCAA, please see www.FosterCareAlumni.org.

Principal Responsibilities of the Executive Director

The overriding responsibility of the executive director is to lead and manage this new organization so that it can carry out its mission successfully over the coming years.

Specific responsibilities include:

1. Working with the board and staff to implement the recently approved strategic plan and business plan that will guide the organization's work over the next several years.
2. Recruiting members among the estimated 12 million Americans who are alumni of foster care. The business plan anticipates relatively inexpensive dues (\$20 per year) and the creation of chapters at the state or metropolitan level.
3. Raising money from foundations, corporations, members, and other individuals to enable the organization to grow and to broaden its financial base beyond its seed funder.
4. Building and maintaining organizational relationships with key national, state, and local groups active in foster care.
5. Creating internal management systems to insure that areas such as finance, administration, fundraising, membership, communications, and program development are managed effectively and efficiently.
6. Serving as a media spokesperson for FCAA.
7. Leading and mentoring the staff.
8. Supporting the efforts of the board of directors as it strengthens and expands its governance and leadership capabilities. The board members, whose bios are on the FCAA website, have extensive experience with foster care, including being alumni.

Desired Skills and Personal Characteristics

To be successful, the executive director should be:

1. Knowledgeable about foster care and child welfare. Personal experience in the foster care system is preferred, but not required.
2. Committed to FCAA's mission, and its commitment to serve its constituents who until now have never been connected in a network that brings together people who are alumni of foster care.
3. Knowledgeable about how to attract dues-paying members to a national organization that intends to do much of its work through local chapters. Experience with alumni organizations or other membership associations is especially valuable.
4. A successful fundraiser, with a track record that includes having raised grants and contributions from foundations, corporations, and individuals, including members who can provide support beyond the required dues.
5. Familiar with advocacy and public policy change at both the national and state levels of government.
6. Familiar with start-up organizations, including the challenges and opportunities they face in their first years of operation. Given the small size of the organization, a hands-on orientation is essential.
7. Capable of working effectively in a small but complex organization that includes many stakeholders, including dues-paying members, funders, board members, staff, volunteers, and child welfare organizations.

8. An excellent communicator who can establish credibility with foster care alumni by engaging with them respectfully and effectively, including motivating them to join FCAA and become active members.
9. Sensitive to and appreciative of the extensive diversity within the foster care alumni population.
10. Knowledgeable about the effective management of nonprofit organizations, especially organizations that focus on both providing benefits to members as well as carrying out advocacy work for the broader foster care community.
11. A skilled manager, capable of building and leading a dedicated staff.
12. Able to develop a strong working relationship with a board of directors made up of diverse individuals dedicated to the success of FCAA.
13. Able to travel throughout the country, primarily to meet with chapters and funders, and to attend key conferences related to foster care.

Desired Experience

The ideal executive director will have:

1. At least five years experience in membership development, with results that demonstrate solid understanding of the process to attract and retain members.
2. At least five years of broad-based, senior-level management experience at a nonprofit organization that is involved in advocacy at the national level.

Compensation

Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications. Compensation also includes a comprehensive benefits package.

To Apply

Please **e-mail** (or mail):

- 1) cover letter that explains why you're interested and qualified,
- 2) resume, and
- 3) three-year salary history (which will be held in strict confidence) to:

Larry Slesinger
 Slesinger Management Services
 5016 Westpath Terrace
 Bethesda, MD 20816
 Tel.: 301-320-0680

E-mail: Larry@SlesingerManagement.com

(please include "FCAA" in subject line;
 attached files in Microsoft Word or PDF only)

All applications will be acknowledged promptly as long as an e-mail address is provided. (This job announcement can also be found at www.SlesingerManagement.com.)

FCAA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.