JOB POSTING

Job Title: Director of Conservation Learning & Engagement
Status: Full-time
Number of Positions: 1

Classification: Salary
Reports to: President and CEO

Description

Reporting to the President and CEO, the Director of Conservation Learning & Engagement is a member of the senior leadership team and leads the Conservation Learning & Engagement Department. The Director sets the vision for how the Aquarium inspires guests, students, and the Western New York Community to understand, value, and act on behalf of wildlife and aquatic ecosystems, leading education programs, guest interpretation, and community engagement, and sharing leadership of the Aquarium's conservation program with the Director of Zoological Operations. Like every leader at the Aquarium, the Director is both mission focused and margin focused: strong programs build conservation impact, and the earned revenue, grants, and sponsorships they generate fund the mission. The Director is a working leader who teaches directly and models and builds the AZA Core Competencies for Conservation Education across the team.

Essential Responsibilities

- Provide strategic leadership for the department, aligning goals and programming with the Aquarium's mission, strategic plan, conservation priorities, and financial sustainability;
- Serve on the senior leadership team, contributing to institutional planning, budgeting, and collaboration across departments;
- Lead the development, delivery, and evaluation of engaging conservation learning programs for schools, families, adults, and community audiences, onsite, offsite, and virtually;
- Ensure programming is accessible, inclusive, scientifically accurate, and responsive to audience needs, with school programs aligned to New York State learning standards;
- Serve as a lead educator and oversee exhibit interpretation, educational signage, and standards for guest talks, presentations, and animal encounters;
- Share leadership of the Conservation Committee and translate the Aquarium's conservation work into meaningful learning experiences, community engagement, and opportunities for action;
- Build partnerships with schools, universities, community organizations, and conservation partners to expand participation and strengthen the Aquarium's conservation impact;
- Recruit, supervise, and develop department staff, and oversee education volunteers, interns, and docents, using the AZA Core Competencies for Conservation Education to guide training and professional growth;
- Oversee the ambassador animal program's educational use, handler training, and scheduling in collaboration with animal care leadership to support animal wellbeing;
- Develop and manage the departmental budget, grow earned program revenue, and collaborate with Marketing and Development to promote programs and support grants and sponsorships;
- Maintain the Aquarium's conservation education plan and ensure departmental practices meet AZA accreditation standards, applicable requirements, and Aquarium safety protocols;
- Manage daily departmental operations, staffing, and program schedules, ensuring high-quality experiences and appropriate supervision and safety for participants;
- Evaluate learning outcomes, conservation impact, and financial performance, using findings and current research to continuously improve programs.

Requested Requirements

- Bachelor's degree in education, biology, environmental science, conservation, museum studies, or a related field required; master's degree preferred;
- Minimum seven years of progressive experience in informal science, environmental, or conservation education, including three years supervising staff; experience at an AZA accredited zoo or aquarium preferred;
- Demonstrated success designing, delivering, and evaluating programs for diverse audiences, and mentoring staff, interns, and volunteers;
- Working knowledge of the AZA Core Competencies for Conservation Education, interpretive best practices, behavior change approaches, and program evaluation;
- Demonstrated skill in interpretive planning, writing, and delivery, including training staff and volunteers to deliver engaging guest interpretation;
- Track record of growing earned revenue programs and managing budgets, with experience contributing to grant proposals and reports;
- Proven ability to build partnerships with schools, community organizations, and conservation partners;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, with the confidence to represent the Aquarium to donors, media, and the public;
- Proficient in Microsoft Office and able to learn registration, ticketing, and database systems;
- Exquisite attention to detail, and attitude of personal accountability;
- Valid driver's license and ability to travel to offsite programs and events.

Working Conditions

- This is a fully onsite position. Work is divided between office and program settings, including classrooms, exhibit areas, outdoor spaces, and offsite locations;
- Must be able to lift and carry equipment (up to 50 pounds), work on uneven and slippery surfaces, withstand hot and cold temperatures, and stand, walk, or sit for long periods of time during programs and events;
- Must be able to work a flexible schedule and adjust as required. Early morning/evening, weekends, special events, and some holiday work may be required.

Salary Range

$62,400 - $67,000

To Apply

Please send resume and cover letter to kdaloise@aquariumofniagara.org. Be sure to include Director of Conservation Learning & Engagement in the subject line of any correspondence.

The Aquarium of Niagara is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will be afforded equal employment opportunities without discrimination because of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, marital status, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law.