



# Chief Executive Officer

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# The Opportunity

[Grace Place for Children and Families](#), a pioneer in family literacy, is seeking a new CEO to lead the organization into its next phase. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the new CEO will join Grace Place at an exciting time; recent expansion of both the programs and the campus means more children and families can be served. Grace Place puts faith into action by providing pathways out of poverty with practical, supportive education programs for the whole family. The position is based in Naples, Florida.

## The Organization

Grace Place began as a volunteer-run homework club with a borrowed bus and two rooms in a Golden Gate church. Now, fifteen years since that humble beginning, Grace Place is the educational touchstone for the Golden Gate community, with over 800 students enrolled in unique and [comprehensive education programs](#) on a beautifully re-imagined campus.

Programs include:

- Early Childhood: The flagship and nationally recognized [Grace Place Family Literacy Model](#)® empowers parents to become their children's first and best teachers and prepares children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed by using Parent Education, Adult Education, PACT (Parent and Child Together) time, Early Childhood Education and interactive home activities. Grace Place owns the IP for the program. It has also received the Pearl Literacy Award recognition and funding from the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, allowing Grace Place to enroll more families, to enhance curriculum and assessments, and to access research and information on new innovative strategies for the classroom.
- Youth Education: The Academy of Leaders After-School Program serves nearly 400 K-12 students with a staff of more than 90 employees and volunteers. This program is funded by three 21st Century Community Learning grants.
- LEAD (Leaders Empowered to Achieve Dreams) provides high school students with targeted academic assistance; life and leadership skills; college and career readiness; and volunteer and work-based learning opportunities that provide the tools for success beyond high school.
- Adult Education: Our Adult Education Program offers English Language and Literacy (ELL), digital literacy, financial literacy, and citizenship classes. Our classes are designed to support adult learners in the acquisition of the English language and nurture the assimilation process into the culture of the United States.
- Saturday Food Pantry provides nutritious, fresh food to 250-300 families each week.

Grace Place has a dedicated, passionate, and compassionate staff of 33 full time employees, 74 part time employees and hundreds of volunteers. The 2021 operating budget is approximately \$3.5M and the organization has \$14M in assets, including an endowment.

The Grace Place campus is in [Golden Gate City](#), a diverse community of over 30,000 occupying approximately four-square miles adjacent to affluent Naples. While Naples is one of the wealthiest zip codes in America, its neighbors in Golden Gate have a 42% higher poverty rate than the Florida state average.

In service to the Golden Gate community, the Grace Place team collaborates with hundreds of volunteers as well as [30 program partners](#) who provide supplemental programming to Grace Place students by working directly with Grace Place team members. It also plays a significant role in the broader community as part of Collier County's collective impact initiative, [Future Ready Collier](#), working with fifteen other organizations who all have education at their core.





## The Role

The new CEO has the opportunity to build on the strength of the distinctive and unique family literacy model in action at Grace Place. The CEO will provide experienced management of team and operations, drive resource development and oversee the strategic enhancement of both program offerings and facilities. They will focus largely on setting a mission-first course that will emphasize program excellence, organizational effectiveness, staff empowerment, and strong business fundamentals.

The CEO will contribute new ideas and their own brand of leadership to strike the right balance between external and internal priorities. Collaborating with an experienced Board and knowledgeable staff, the new CEO will develop plans to continue to build the organization's strength while ensuring stability, consistency and exceptional program delivery in service to the mission.



# Priorities and Responsibilities

**Fundraising and Relationship Building:** There is a strong external orientation to this position. The CEO will serve as the public face of the organization and be a clear and persuasive advocate for the Grace Place mission and impact in order to further enhance its work, reputation, and standing. Clear communication of the Grace Place mission, exceptional results, and reputation is critical to representing Grace Place with credibility and enthusiasm. This includes:

- *Donors:* Grace Place relies on the support of generous donors and philanthropists in the Naples community; foundations; corporations; government agencies; and faith-based organizations to achieve its goals. A priority for the new CEO is spearheading fundraising efforts, identifying and engaging new and existing supporters by further developing and nurturing positive donor relationships, inviting new and existing supporters to participate in programs and special events, and asking for the support needed.
- *Grace Place Families:* The CEO will offer a welcoming presence on campus to students and families. They should take an active interest in family and parent engagement, getting to know them, listening to their concerns, and showing enthusiasm for and dedication to their success.
- *Collective Impact Partners:* The CEO will serve as the face and positive representation of Grace Place in Collier County. On a day to day basis, this entails proactive and discerning engagement with partners and the community at large.

**Team, Board, and Operational Leadership:** The CEO has the opportunity to dramatically impact the organization by demonstrating experienced, effective management and leadership principles. Critical priorities include:

- **Building a high performing, empowered team by committing to clear goals, communication, and lines of accountability:** The CEO needs to effectively leverage the collective talents of the full and part time staff with effective coaching, best practice management, well-defined roles and expectations, and professional development.
- **Financial and operational management:** Sound business judgement, proactive financial management, efficient practices, and standards of excellence to support the sustained financial and programmatic health of Grace Place is critical.
- **Engaging the 12-member Board:** appropriate, effective, and clear channels of communication and transparent information sharing are essential elements of the CEO/board relationship. The CEO has an incredible resource in the Board's experience and support; by ensuring there is trust, a shared understanding of roles and alignment around the mission, they can collaboratively co-create an exciting forward strategy for Grace Place.

**Vision, Strategy, and Social Enterprise Model:** The CEO is charged with setting the near-term strategy that will allow Grace Place to achieve its mission in a sustainable way. A key priority is assessing the potential of building out an additional revenue stream with the proprietary Grace Place Family Literacy model. Funding to conceptualize and test a license or franchise model has been secured for three years from enthusiastic supporters of the program. The CEO has the rare opportunity to help shape this social enterprise model and determine its scalability.



## Ideal Candidate Profile

Grace Place seeks a compassionate, natural leader with a genuine passion and enthusiasm for their mission of creating pathways out of poverty through education. While previous experience as an educator is not required, we seek a leader who sees the pivotal role family literacy can play in supporting and lifting a community out of poverty and is prepared to bring all their energy and professional skills to lead the effort.

We are looking for candidates who are confident and effective in nuanced leadership positions that require exceptional interpersonal skills as well as strong business and financial acumen. Our next CEO understands that balance and can deliver organizational effectiveness in a high-profile, multi-cultural setting.

An outgoing, professional demeanor that inspires confidence will serve the CEO well. We seek candidates who are friendly, caring and welcoming. They should be comfortable and confident on their feet and in making the fundraising ask, with the warmth and spark to effectively engage with a diverse range of constituents, and the track record to demonstrate this capability.

A high level of maturity, emotional intelligence, and professionalism is required, particularly as it relates to effectively working with a nonprofit Board of Directors, generating new resources, and building collaborative, strategic relationships with partners and the community at large.

As a manager, the ideal candidate brings the confidence and proven ability to build an inclusive culture and also the humility to empower staff and support them with mentorship and structures for accountability that define progress and success.

Resourcefulness that comes with working in a small but growing organization or company is an asset; self-sufficiency and highly developed/versatile technology skills are important. The new CEO needs the ability to analyze complex situations, interpret operational and financial needs, and develop realistic business plans accordingly.

Creativity and innovation grounded in smart business planning will serve the new CEO well in envisioning the future of Grace Place and the potential of new revenue streams. The CEO will be the key driver in actualizing concepts, implementing programmatic work and building the business case for programs to share with partners and donors.



## Desired Leadership Competencies

- Balanced leadership, with strong interpersonal and business skills
- Servant-leader, both inside the organization and out in the community
- Culturally competent and able to relate to people of diverse backgrounds including donors, employees, volunteers, Grace Place families and board members
- Passionate about the mission and compassionate toward the families served
- Effective, honest, clear communicator with the ability to actively listen and learn from those around them
- Visionary thinker who looks at the bigger picture to understand needs of families and programs
- Experienced manager of teams, able to unify, establish accountability, strong morale and trust
- Operational and business know-how, able to oversee all aspects of operations including financial management, strategic planning and program implementation





## Desired Qualifications

- This is place-based work that requires a physical presence in the Naples or Collier County, Florida, vicinity
- Previous experience reporting to or as part of a governing and fundraising board
- Proven experience leading a small to medium size nonprofit
- Financial acumen, strong financial management skills
- Fundraising track record
- Bi-lingual in English and Spanish
- No prior experience in the Naples or Collier County area or in education is required, although a strong interest in both is essential
- As an education-based nonprofit, we seek candidates who have attained a university level degree; an advanced degree is valued

## To Be Considered

Grace Place acknowledges our community's diversity and will employ and serve all persons without regard to religion, age, ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic circumstances, physical or mental abilities, characteristics and philosophy.

The salary range for this position is \$150,000 - \$175,000 and will be commensurate with candidate qualifications and experience.

To be considered, please submit your resume and cover letter expressing your interest and fit for the role to the [Waldron Search Candidate Portal](#).

*Waldron Search is proud to partner with Grace Place for Children and Families. The team conducting this search includes:*

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Waldron Search is honored to work with Grace Place for Children and Families in the search for a Chief Executive Officer. We believe in and support the work of Grace Place, and we are doing our best to recruit a talented leader who will accelerate this mission. As the consulting partner strategic leaders choose to help attract, engage, and inspire effective leaders, our passion is helping people and Grace Place realize their full potential and increase their impact.