

**Recruitment Profile**  
for

Vice President of Philanthropy



**Braille Institute**

**April 2018**

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION | EXECUTIVE SEARCH | BOARD ADVISORY

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Title:** Vice President of Philanthropy

**Organization:** Braille Institute

**Reports to:** President

**Location:** Los Angeles, California

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### **ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW:**

For nearly a century, Braille Institute has been working to eliminate barriers to a fulfilling life caused by blindness and severe sight loss. Founded in 1919, Braille Institute is one of the oldest and most comprehensive providers of services for people who are blind or visually impaired. It provides an environment of hope and encouragement for students and their families through integrated educational, social, and recreational programs.

Braille Institute serves thousands of children and adults every year through a wide array of free programs and services. Services are provided at five regional centers (Los Angeles, Anaheim, Rancho Mirage, San Diego, and Santa Barbara), a neighborhood center in Laguna Hills and over 200 community outreach locations throughout Southern California. Braille Institute also operates an award-winning library, a braille publishing house, and an information-rich website.

Braille Institute is funded almost entirely through private donations. Generous donors and dedicated efforts by approximately 2,500 volunteers enable staff to provide programs and services without charge. The ratio of volunteers to staff – 11 to 1 – creates an environment to serve an ever-growing number of people who are experiencing vision loss.

Braille Institute has an annual operating budget of approximately \$23 million, and is funded almost entirely through private donations. During the previous 10 years, the Institute has averaged \$18.6 million in annual Total Public Support, with approximately 70% of donations coming from bequests, followed by individual and institutional gifts.

Braille Institute provides a number of National Programs that extend its reach across the country. The Braille Challenge, a literacy competition for students ages 6-19, and Special Collection, a program that delivers free braille books to children have a national reach. Programs like Cane Quest, regional white cane travel competitions for students in grades 3-12, are quickly growing. Braille Institute also offers comprehensive adaptive technology training programs to help students develop their skills and realize their goals, whether they are academic, vocational, social, or information related.

*For more information, please visit [www.brailleinstitute.org](http://www.brailleinstitute.org)*

**LOCATION:**

Los Angeles, California

**REPORTING:**

As currently structured, the Vice President of Philanthropy has six direct reports and overall responsibility for a team of 13. The position reports directly to the President.

**POSITION:**

The Vice President of Philanthropy provides philanthropic leadership, vision, strategy and guidance to the President, Board of Directors and Philanthropy team, and serves as the catalyst for achieving Braille's ambitious fundraising goals. The Vice President of Philanthropy serves on the Executive Leadership Team (eight members currently), and leads a staff of 13 employees, inclusive of donor relations and development operations teams.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

This position will be responsible for an annual fundraising budget of \$18.6 million encompassing major and planned giving, corporate and foundation relations, and annual fund/direct mail programs. S/he will partner with other frontline fundraisers in closing gifts and will manage a personal portfolio of high potential donors. S/he will work collaboratively with Executive, Program, Marketing, and Board leadership to meet and exceed financial, strategic, and organizational goals.

The primary responsibilities for the Vice President of Philanthropy are establishing and implementing an evolving philanthropic strategy, working closely with the President and Board of Directors, and acting as the key advisor on philanthropic development for the organization, as well as meeting or exceeding financial goals.

Specific accountabilities include:

- Develops and oversee the implementation of strategic development plans that support Braille Institute's annual and long-range needs including capital, endowment, and other fundraising campaigns;
- Directs the design, implementation, evaluation and administration of the planned giving program – with an emphasis on bequests and charitable gift annuities, including all related administrative, marketing, contractual and regulatory requirements – which accounts for nearly 80% of current fundraising revenue;
- Directs the design, implementation and evaluation of individual outright major, principal, and endowment giving programs, including real estate gift processes;
- Personally manages a portfolio of major gift prospects and donors;
- Directs a robust individual giving prospect research and prioritization program;
- Supervises and evaluates Philanthropy Department staff, including coaching and mentoring direct reports; works to ensure the department is effectively structured and staffed;
- Assists the President in identifying, cultivating and recruiting potential Board members;
- Manages the Philanthropy Committee of the Board and provides ongoing updates to senior management and the Board of Directors;
- Directs efforts to promote and strengthen the organization's culture of philanthropy;
- Develops and manages a comprehensive annual department budget.

## **OPPORTUNITY:**

Under the vision and leadership of President Peter Mindnich since 2014, Braille Institute continues to innovate and evolve to meet the needs of its changing constituency. In 2019 Braille Institute will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; a remarkable achievement by any measure. This position provides an opportunity for the successful candidate to join a national leader providing life enriching services to students. By growing and expanding financial resources, this person will have a direct, tangible impact on the lives of people living with sight loss. The senior leader of Philanthropy will be part of a talented, passionate, and personally vested team of staff and volunteers committed to eliminating barriers to a fulfilling life caused by blindness and severe sight loss.

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

The successful candidate will be a successful and experienced marketing/communications professional who thrives in a mission-driven, community-focused environment. S/He must be comfortable and competent in a leadership role that requires both big-picture, strategic thinking and hands-on, execution skills in equal measure.

## **Mandatory skills/experience:**

- Minimum of 15 years of progressive professional experience in fundraising including a demonstrable track record as the head of a fundraising team or department;
- Demonstrated ability to conceptualize, plan, and implement a strategic approach to securing donations, including setting realistic goals, developing strategies, prioritizing activities, soliciting gifts, and orchestrating the involvement of institutional and volunteer leadership;
- Comprehensive understanding of speculative, campaign/project, and nurturing fundraising methods;
- Extensive knowledge across categories of organizational fundraising, including annual, major, planned, corporate, foundation, and endowment campaigns;
- A record of leading a nonprofit fundraising effort of \$10 million or more annually;
- Thorough understanding of fundraising services such as fundraising databases, prospect research, donor stewardship, and donor relations;
- Expertise in outright major/principal gift fundraising and planned giving, including marketing, prospect identification, cultivation, solicitation and stewardship;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills; must be able to effectively interact with Board members, high-wealth donors, and volunteers as well as “salt of the earth” donors and at all levels within the organization;
- Strong analytic, planning, organization, problem solving, delegation and technology skills.

## **EDUCATION:**

Bachelor’s degree required; Master’s degree is preferred. CFRE, CSPG, or similar certification is desirable.

## **COMPENSATION:**

Braille Institute is offering a comprehensive compensation package inclusive of salary (commensurate with experience) and full benefits. Benefits include: health, dental and vision insurance; three weeks of paid vacation; nine paid holidays; a 403(b) Tax Sheltered Savings (Retirement) Plan and free parking.

**CONTACT:**

Kevin Chase Executive Search Group has been retained to lead this recruitment effort on behalf of Braille Institute. We are pleased to answer any questions or supply further information. Inquiries, nominations, or applications (including a cover letter and resume/curriculum vitae) should be directed electronically and in confidence, to:

**Catie DiFelice, Senior Associate**  
[Catie@kevinchasesearch.com](mailto:Catie@kevinchasesearch.com)

**Kevin Chase, Managing Partner**  
[Kevin@kevinchasesearch.com](mailto:Kevin@kevinchasesearch.com)

**Kevin Chase Executive Search Group**  
1800 Hi Point Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90035  
(323) 930-8948

[www.kevinchasesearch.com](http://www.kevinchasesearch.com)

All inquiries or referrals will be held in strict confidence.

*Please note that all education, dates of employment, compensation and other information provided will be verified prior to an offer of employment.*