The Northwest Connecticut Association for the Arts, Inc. is seeking a dynamic, multi-talented Executive Director to build upon its robust history with the 82 year-old Warner Theatre, and serve as the steward of cultural development throughout Northwest Connecticut.

Built by Warner Brothers Studios and opened in 1931 as a movie house, the Warner Theatre was described at the time as “Connecticut’s Most Beautiful Theatre,” a veritable “palace” which remained in continuous operation as a movie house until the late 1970’s despite a devastating regional flood in 1955 and a declining business environment throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s, which deeply affected most northwest Connecticut towns. The Warner, at great loss to the northwest Connecticut region, was closed in 1981.

Slated for demolition in 1982, a group of concerned and like-minded citizens formed the not-for-profit Northwest Connecticut Association for the Arts, Inc. (NWCAA) to preserve this regional, cultural gem. The shared vision of these individuals forged a new future for the theatre and ultimately built a foundation upon which A Star is Reborn Capital Campaign was launched.

This successful campaign involved local businesses, institutions, municipal, state and federal governments, organizations and citizens throughout northwest Connecticut. The result was a main theatre restored to its original magnificence and a new building which accommodates the multiple artistic strands that comprise today’s Warner.

On November 23, 2002, the dream was realized when Phase I of the restoration was complete. Thousands of Litchfield County citizens celebrated that historic re-opening day with a gala, black-tie spectacular headlined by Broadway legend Linda Eder. Twenty years of fundraising, planning and construction had borne fruit.

Today, the Warner Theatre is northwest Connecticut’s most vibrant cultural arts center due to the continued generosity and commitment of many individuals and institutions. The Warner Theatre complex houses the following:

- The original 1772-seat art-deco theatre dedicated to the performing arts
- The Carole and Ray Neag Performing Arts Center, a facility which houses the 300-seat, state of the art, convertible black-box Nancy Marine Studio, and the Warner Theatre Center for Arts Education, which houses classrooms, rehearsal studios, private practice rooms, locker rooms, a media center, and a dance rehearsal room.
- The Warner Theatre complex also includes corporate offices, a 21,000 square foot storage facility and costume shop, a set and props shop, as well as several retail properties.
The Warner Theatre maintains a dedicated staff of over 10 Full-time individuals and over 20 part-time. This professional staff is augmented by over 1200 volunteers.

The Warner Theater is home to, and operates, the Warner Stage Company (WSC), which is the most active and comprehensive community theater program in Connecticut. Stage Company members work to ensure the highest possible production values, giving audiences great theater at reasonable prices and ultimately making live theatre accessible to all. Each season, more than 35,000 patrons come out to the Warner Theatre to see Warner Stage Company productions and that number continues to grow.

The Warner Theatre is also a destination for national touring performances with world-class performers such as Mandy Patinkin, Bill Cosby, Bonnie Raitt, Willie Nelson, Steve Martin and Boz Scaggs, providing the region with first-rate entertainment.

The Warner Theatre Center for Arts Education (WTCAE) was created in 1992 with the mission to provide high-quality and affordable training in theatre arts for all members of the community. The Center is committed to making the arts an integral part of every student’s life and accomplishes this by offering a wide variety of courses, all taught by a professional faculty. In 1993, the WTCAE's Summer Arts Program (SAP) was formed. Students of the WTCAE come from all over Connecticut for classes in dramatic arts, including improvisation, character development, movement and scene study. The WTCAE also has full-fledged Music Department and Technical Theatre courses where students learn the practical and artistic elements of stage lighting, sound, set design and stage management.

Position Description

The Executive Director is the Chief Executive Officer of the Northwest Connecticut Association for the Arts, Inc. (dba Warner Theatre), reporting to the Board of Directors. The Executive Director provides executive leadership and management, is the principal relationship manager for stakeholders, and oversees artistic and educational programming, as well as administration, maintenance and preservation of the historic facility.

The Executive Director is responsible for the oversight of day-to-day management, inspiring staff and board members to move the organization to an optimum level of operations. A key component in the duties of the Executive Director is to be change agent to maximize the untapped potential of the organization and find the balance between achieving the mission while maintaining fiscal accountability and success.

Specific responsibilities include providing strategic leadership, increasing visibility in the community, fundraising, being the key community relationship builder, managing business operations, being fiscally responsible for a $1.5M annual budget, and participating in board governance and policy development. Fundraising is a key duty, and it also promotes the increased visibility of the Warner. Along with the Chair of the Board, the Executive Director is the chief ambassador and spokesperson for the organization.

The Executive Director is a champion for the mission to serve the community’s diverse cultural needs and preserve the Warner Theatre as an historic landmark. The Executive Director will bring to the community performance-oriented education programs, local programs and touring shows that are of the highest artistic quality possible. The Executive Director will secure the Warner Theatre’s position as the focal point for performance excellence in the region.
The Executive Director will lead the organization in future endeavors of building an endowment, redesigning of the theatre’s Stage House and other capital improvements of the facility.

Requirements

We seek an industry professional with a deep-rooted passion for the arts, a desire to enrich lives and invigorate the community and the region through the arts with relevant, entertaining and educational programs. The ideal candidate will be an empowering leader with sound business acumen, experienced in arts programming and facility management. Excellent oral and written communication skills, political savvy and diplomacy, as well as the ability to inspire and lead a team are fundamental in the successful candidate.

Qualified applicants will have a Bachelor’s Degree or equivalent experience, a minimum of five years of not-for-profit executive level experience and measurable success in arts administration, including multi-disciplinary programming and facilities management. Experience in budget development and management, leadership and professional development of staff, Board relations, along with a track record in community relations and partnering, and knowledge of city economic development are required.

This position offers a competitive salary and benefits package. All inquiries will be held in the strictest of confidence. Northwest Connecticut Association for the Arts, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

To respond, send cover letter and resume to ED Search, WH Management, Attn: James Howland, whmgmt@comcast.net. For further information please call James Howland direct at 513.378.4873.