

LEADERSHIP PROFILE



Executive Director
Genesis Shelter
Atlanta, GA

THE ORGANIZATION

In 1991, a group of concerned Atlanta citizens became aware of the critical need for an emergency shelter for homeless newborn babies and their families, and three years later, Genesis *A New Life* Shelter opened its doors. Sixteen ecumenical religious organizations united to offer leadership, with The Temple providing 12,000 square feet for the initial location. Today, Genesis Shelter takes a comprehensive, problem-solving approach to homelessness to assure that the families which have gone through its program have the tools to be self-sufficient, with permanent housing, stable employment and proper arrangements for child care or schooling. Genesis Shelter is often the first home for an infant who would otherwise be born into homelessness, offering the potential for multi-generational impact on the families involved.



Genesis Shelter's mission is:

To provide an environment that allows homeless newborns and young children to grow and develop in nurturing and healthy surroundings. Genesis enables homeless families to remain together and creates a participatory community in which parents have the opportunity to live with their children in privacy and with dignity. By empowering families

building strong foundations for nonprofits®

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to achieve greater self-sufficiency, Genesis Shelter recognizes individual family needs and provides the resources to meet those needs.

Genesis Shelter operates with an annual operating budget of \$1.5 million, in space that can accommodate up to 18 families (and up to 76 adults and children) at a time. Families from large to small can stay together at the shelter for approximately six months, during which time Genesis provides them with their own private room and three nutritious meals a day, as well as a comprehensive array of services, including:

The **Michael C. Carlos Child Development Center**, located onsite, serves up to 81 children at a time. The curriculum develops cognitive



and language skills in a social and emotional climate that promotes at-risk children's understanding of themselves as individuals and in relation to others. An early learning program of this caliber is rare at a homeless shelter, and services are free of charge to residents. As space allows, child care is offered to community families on a sliding fee scale.

Counseling Services are provided to all Genesis families, emphasizing strengths, resiliencies, and the ability to persevere and overcome as foundational to the work of transitioning from homelessness to self sufficiency. Masters of Counseling students provide 700 hours of clinical work to Genesis under the supervision of the staff psychologist, helping the families discover their potential and move out of the cycle of poverty.

Resident Educational Opportunities range from basic literacy services to access to GED preparation to career counseling. Residents are required to attend evening enrichment classes including: Parenting, the 5-Star Job Readiness Program, Money Management Classes, Home Economics and Life Skills Training.

An **AfterCare Program** follows all residents for up to five years after leaving the shelter, assisting families in their transition back into community and towards self-sufficiency by connecting them with needed services. The AfterCare Coordinator makes periodic home visits to keep regular contact and provide crisis intervention as needed.

More details about Genesis Shelter can be found on the website, www.genesisshelter.com.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Genesis Shelter is an organization with a wonderful record of success in helping a very fragile population, homeless newborns and their families, move to stability. Greatly needed when it was founded, its services are even more critical today with the economy in decline and an increasing number of families with young children facing homelessness. The comprehensive nature of the Genesis program, developed over years of service to homeless newborns and their families, has also enabled the creation of a blueprint that others may replicate wherever it may be needed.



With this background in mind, the board recognizes that recruiting an outstanding new Executive Director is the number one current priority for Genesis Shelter as it prepares to develop and implement strategies for the next decade of service. In recent months, the organization has been through a time of transition as the long-serving Executive Director stepped down and funding streams shifted significantly due to the recession. At this critical juncture for Genesis Shelter, three priority areas for the new leader are of particular interest to the board:

- Provide focused leadership to Genesis Shelter, giving strategic direction to the organization and structure to the staff as the agency moves out of this time of transition and into a stable and productive future.
- Be a highly visible spokesperson and fundraiser for Genesis, renewing relationships with the many funders and congregations which have been faithful supporters and broadening the base of support.
- Re-envision the future for Genesis Shelter, preparing the agency to creatively meet the evolving needs for homeless children and their families, including exploring opportunities to expand this successful model.

THE RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director:

Reports to:

- Board of Directors

Manages direct reports who oversee critical areas:

- Deputy Director (oversees all clinical areas)
- Director of Development
- Controller

Has key relationships with:

- Board of Directors and Board Committees
- Current and potential donors
- Current and potential community partners
- Community leaders and elected officials

THE LOCATION

Genesis Shelter is located in the Old Fourth Ward neighborhood of downtown Atlanta, Georgia.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the new Executive Director will fall into five principal categories:

- **Strategic Leadership.** The Executive Director will lead Genesis Shelter in the process of stabilization after this year of transition, and then work in close partnership with the board to envision the future. A key early goal will



be to help the dedicated staff find a good balance between the family atmosphere which is a hallmark of the organization and the need for a deepening sense of accountability and professionalism. The new leader will empower the staff to take more responsibility for decision making and build a spirit of collaboration and teamwork, working together towards

common goals. As immediate challenges are faced and addressed, focus will be put on developing an updated strategic plan to allow Genesis to expand the model in a thoughtful and cost effective manner. Over time, the agency will continue its commitment to recognizing trends and developing excellent new programs as the challenges its residents face evolve.

- **Fundraising.** Working in close partnership with the Director of Development and the board, the new leader will design and implement a long term strategic fundraising plan, defining specific steps to broaden the agency's base of support and increase donations from corporations, foundations, individuals and government agencies. An early goal will be reconnecting with current and past supporters to keep them engaged with Genesis Shelter's mission and goals. As the "face" of the agency, the new leader will be actively involved in going on fundraising calls and asking for

major gifts in support of the important work being done. Skill at expanding relationships and a true enjoyment of all kinds of people will be important to success.

- **Public Awareness and Advocacy.** Serving as the leading ambassador for Genesis in the community, the new Executive Director will be a highly visible representative for the agency and its mission. The Executive Director will be an active spokesperson for Genesis Shelter, bringing new energy and enthusiasm for its mission and increasing the agency's presence in the community. The new leader will enjoy public speaking and be effective in making the case to public officials, the media, supporters and friends. Helping key constituents understand the necessity for the long term approach Genesis takes in working with its clients, and why this is more cost efficient in the long run, will be critical to the ongoing success of its efforts.
- **Finance and Administration.** The new Executive Director will be expected to create a more structured management environment, promoting excellent client service, a spirit of collaboration and teamwork among the staff, and sound financial operations. To attract and retain excellent staff, the new leader will encourage each member of the staff to strengthen their own skills and abilities through continuing education and mentoring, leading to the ability for greater delegation of responsibility over time. With a sound grasp of the importance of prudent financial management and realistic budgeting in a lean operating environment, the new leader will help the organization achieve long term financial stability, with transparent processes and collective accountability.
- **Board Governance.** Forming a strong working partnership with the board will be critical to the new leader's success. The Executive Director will be expected to keep the board well informed about current issues, opportunities and challenges, with a spirit of openness and candor. An active involvement in recruiting the next generation of outstanding board members and finding the best ways to maximize their involvement and effectiveness will also be important.



THE CANDIDATE

Genesis Shelter is an equal opportunity employer, and is seeking a diverse set of compelling candidates for formal consideration. Among the assets and attributes being sought are the following:

Requirements

- A deep commitment to the mission of Genesis Shelter and a passion for serving families in need.
- A proven leader in the nonprofit arena, with experience in managing an organization with a budget of \$1 million or more.
- Demonstrated success at creating and implementing a successful fundraising plan, and at raising significant funds personally.
- Financial acumen and a record of sound business judgment, understands budgeting in a lean environment and can interpret financial reports.
- Strong organizational skills with the ability to delegate, knowing when to step in and when to let go.
- Experience with strategic planning, has participated in creation of a vision and taken it through to execution.
- Knows how to work with a visionary and engaged board, helping them be effective partners in the work of the organization.
- A knowledgeable leader who will be a seasoned mentor for the staff, with a track record of developing a strong senior team that shares leadership.
- An understanding of the client base and experience with social work and homeless families would be a plus.
- An excellent public speaker who enjoys working with the media.
- A people person: meets people easily and enjoys building relationships.
- Good at communicating to a broad audience, including the poor and the wealthy, community leaders and Genesis residents, administrative staff and counselors, ministers and social workers.
- A Master's degree in a related field is preferred.

Personal Qualities

- An impeccable track record of complete integrity and strong personal character.
- Brings focused energy and business acumen, knows how to harness passion into action.
- Respects all people and understands that we can learn from the homeless and believe in their skills.
- Mature with a calm demeanor, keeps a level head in times of crisis and thinks before acting.

- Is open to new ideas, will question current assumptions and keep up with emerging trends in the field.
- Approachable and supportive, balanced with directness and the ability to make decisions.
- An inspirational leader who will clearly articulate strategies and directions, while encouraging a collaborative team approach to finding solutions.
- Committed to being a trusted and respected member of a diverse and creative leadership group that fosters a fun, energetic, success-oriented environment.



**For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect,
please email**

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or call

**Margaret Reiser or Joan Schlachter
at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392).**

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