



## LEADERSHIP PROFILE

**Executive Director  
Soccer in the Streets**

**Atlanta, GA**

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*"Soccer in the Streets creates young leaders who live rich lives and cultivate healthy communities."*

*—Mission statement of Soccer in the Streets*

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# The Opportunity

**For more than thirty years, Soccer in the Streets (SITS) has used the beautiful game as a vehicle to impact the lives of children and help develop the communities that support them.** Far more

than facilitating a recreational pastime, Soccer in the Streets offers a unique combination of soccer and life-skills programming to youth in communities, schools and at MARTA Station Soccer locations - creating a lasting relationship of trust and a feeling of community. Given the numerous challenges that children in low-income communities face, SITS presents an effective, readily scalable way to connect, empower and develop young people through the lessons and experiences that soccer organically provides.

As it looks toward the future, SITS seeks to build on strong programmatic, operational and fundraising successes in recent years and drive deeper awareness of both its mission and programs. The Executive Director will bring a collaborative spirit, business acumen, energy, and an authentic persona to help expand SITS's impact, programs and connection to the community. Working in partnership with a committed board and staff, the Executive Director will ensure that Soccer in the Streets continues to grow and develop as an organization and build the infrastructure, culture and resources necessary to thrive long into the future.

To reach its aspirations, SITS seeks an executive who is passionate about youth development and the unique opportunities that a soccer-based platform provides. The ideal candidate is a natural servant-leader who brings relevant professional experience in managing an organization of similar complexity and scope.



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Mandates for the new Executive Director will include:

- Advancing systems and building out the infrastructure, physical office environment and organizational culture necessary for SITS to grow and reach its goals
- Positioning the organization to fully optimize opportunities around Atlanta’s role as a 2026 FIFA World Cup host city
- Leading the stewardship of key partner and funding relationships and creating synergies that expand organizational reach and impact
- Increasing awareness of SITS programs and outcomes
- Continuing to engage the Board of Directors in expanding the reach of SITS locally and throughout the region

**The opportunity for the Executive Director is bold and compelling:** to ensure that SITS’s programs and reach grow in tandem with its aspirations and building an organization that is structurally, financially and culturally equipped to achieve its vision.

## The Organization

The organization was founded by Carolyn McKenzie in 1989 in Jonesboro, GA. Although it now focuses on the Atlanta market, over its history, it has worked in over fifty US cities bringing the sport to hundreds of thousands of kids. The founding board included representation from Turner Broadcasting, Delta Airlines, Georgia Power, Fulton County, City of Atlanta, State of Georgia governor’s office, YMCA, soccer retailers, Atlanta Attack (professional soccer team), Boys & Girls Club and the Lovett School.

The first program kicked off in Atlanta in 1990. The first “Super Soccer Show” rolled out at the Harland Boys & Girls Club in Atlanta’s Westside. The program specialized in introducing the game to young people while involving their parents in the development and implementation. Volunteer coaches ran “Soccer 101” clinics through Boys & Girls Clubs, parks & recreation facilities, and public housing communities.

The program has evolved considerably since its early beginnings. Undergirded by a simple idea and the core objective of leveling the playing field for all and affording access to the sport regardless of race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status, SITS brings young, bright, culturally competent role models to inspire youngsters to follow the right path and educate the youth to opportunities that may be available to them. Using soccer as a medium, trained coaches teach skills and life lessons, such as personal responsibility and job readiness. The coaches engage the youth and create a lasting relationship of trust and a channel of communication.

Through partnering organizations - such as schools, community centers, and parks - multiple sessions are conducted each week to ensure a consistent community presence and ongoing positive influence among the youth. SITS also focuses on the impact of the programs on social justice and the distribution of opportunity and privilege.

Soccer in the Streets’ **programming is geared towards creating young leaders who lead rich lives and cultivate healthy communities.** The core of this leadership growth is building the players’ social and emotional learning capacities which they can then turn into tangible leadership skills. As a child grows stronger as a soccer player, SITS focuses on growing them as peers, students, leaders, and members of their community.



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Off the pitch, SITS's work is impactful. Initiatives include:

- A [referee program](#) where youth players can become certified referees and take skills directly to the pitch
- [Homework Helpline](#) emerged during the pandemic to help children with day-to-day homework assignments and keep them on track with schoolwork
- Through a partnership with [Growing Leaders](#), a *Habitudes* program curriculum has been embedded in SITS programs to help teach social and emotional learning skills to SITS youth in ways that are applicable and relevant. More than a good idea, this programming is a good investment; for each dollar spent on SEL programs, \$11 dollars are saved on costs not incurred through other interventions.

[StationSoccer](#) is a hallmark initiative of the program and the first of its kind in the world. StationSoccer is a city-wide community project built around a vision to create a network of mini soccer fields and more, anchored by [MARTA](#) transit stations in Atlanta. Affordability and transportation hurdles mean many kids in the metro Atlanta area do not have access to safe places to play soccer nor the resources required to travel. The goal is to build "A League of Stations" whereby kids and adults can represent their own station community and play other station teams by using the public transit system. There are currently **five StationSoccer locations**; future plans include launching five more locations and bringing programs online by the end of 2022.

The reach of Soccer in the Streets is meaningful and growing. In 2021, programs **served 1,128 children**, engaged 57 coaches, and for every child in the program, 50 hours of coaching, 10 hours of leadership development and 5 hours of community engagement were invested. As the



## by the NUMBERS

### PLAYERS



**1,128**  
SERVED

### COACHES



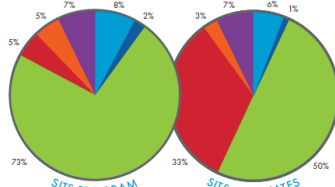
**42**  
PAID



**15**  
VOLUNTEER

### PLAYER DEMOGRAPHICS

- AFRICAN
- ASIAN
- BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- HISPANIC
- WHITE
- OTHER



pandemic continues to recede and the number of StationSoccer locations increases, these numbers – and the attendant impact of the programs on the children who participate – are expected to grow significantly.

SITS has a full-time staff of 12 and a dedicated board of 13 leaders from the community. The current annual operating budget of \$1.7 million supports programs and operations and is expected to grow to \$2-2.5 million over the next two years – made possible in part through three consecutive years of budget surpluses. Contributed revenue for SITS is strong and accounts for approximately two-thirds of annual revenues (see links to information on [special events](#) and [program partners](#)). Additionally, the organization has modest reserves totaling \$2.2 million as of the end of 2021.

For more information about Soccer in the Streets and its history, please visit [www.soccerstreets.org](http://www.soccerstreets.org).

## The Responsibilities

The Executive Director is charged with overseeing all aspects of the organization and previous experience as a nonprofit Executive Director/CEO will be an asset. This person will bring passion for the mission, a love for the opportunities that soccer presents and the multiple talents required to ensure that SITS realizes its aspirations.

More specifically, the Executive Director will:

- 1. Be a humble servant leader that embraces the need for a strong organizational culture as a critical priority.** The Executive Director will be approachable, authentic and a good listener with high emotional intelligence. They will be a person with an approachable style, unimpeachable integrity and someone people from all walks of life will naturally trust and want to work with. The Executive Director will be a proven developer of great talent, teams and



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infrastructure, and a leader and mentor who builds an environment of shared vision, values, high standards and alignment around mission.

- 2. Be passionate about the comprehensive opportunities soccer presents for young people and communities.** The Executive Director will embrace and readily share how soccer can be a platform for growth. The leader will see and search for new ways that soccer can be a nexus for fun, growth, learning and pride and invite people from all walks of life to be a part of the journey to help children and their communities thrive.
- 3. Build relationships and grow financial support.** The Executive Director will be a credible, engaging and trustworthy leader capable of developing and deepening relationships with Board members, civic leaders, donors and partners of all kinds. Ideally, this leader will be well-networked and through creativity, collaboration, follow-through, and results, will enhance current relationships, develop new opportunities, and grow the level of financial support for the organization.
- 4. Advance a bold vision for the future of SITS and help ensure that the organization achieves its aspirations.** The Executive Director will be a creative, strategic and visionary thinker who will work with the Board and staff to advance the vision for Soccer in the Streets in ways that are responsive to both programmatic aspirations and the needs of young people in the region. The Executive Director will be uncommonly good at communicating the vision; they will ensure that the future direction of SITS is clear and widely embraced by both internal and external stakeholders.
- 5. Run the business in a way that balances aspirations and sound business practices.** The Executive Director will inherently embrace



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future possibilities for increased impact and lead SITS to realize its full potential. Strong financial management and business leadership are essential skills for the new leader. The Executive Director will have experience in planning, building and managing an annual budget and ensure that SITS meets annual goals. They will fundamentally understand the value of a strong balance sheet, the credibility that is borne of sound financial management and move the organization forward by making sound decisions that smartly balance risk.

## The Candidate

The ideal candidate is a compelling leader with significant knowledge, passion, and experience in contexts relevant to leading Soccer in the Streets. Personal characteristics include high emotional intelligence, outstanding interpersonal skills and a passion for building a healthy organizational culture. Previous experience with soccer will be an asset but is not a requirement. Attributes being sought in the new Executive Director include:

- Passion for the mission of SITS
- Experience growing an organization
- Strong leadership skills and a demonstrated ability to manage through others
- Someone who is grounded, transparent and exhibits a high level of integrity
- An authentic and compassionate persona with a deep foundation in servant leadership
- Skill as a listener and communicator
- The ability to excite, lead, and mobilize people to accomplish important goals
- Skill as a strategic thinker and the ability to both develop and deliver a vision for the future
- A strong commitment to the professional development of staff



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The Executive Director should have the ability to create an environment of innovation, accountability, ongoing improvement, and measurable results.

- The ability to create productive, positive relationships with the Board and staff members, donors, partners, leaders and program participants
- The ability to present and communicate clearly, persuasively, and compassionately to external audiences, including elected officials, civic clubs, corporate leaders, peers, partners and donors
- Strong financial, business and fundraising acumen
- The ability to create an environment of innovation, accountability, ongoing improvement, and measurable results
- Previous experience in a nonprofit leadership role, ideally as an Executive Director/CEO, will be an asset; awareness of the unique opportunities and challenges of a nonprofit is essential

## The Relationships

The Executive Director reports to the SITS Board of Directors and is responsible for a staff of 12.

<p><b>The Executive Director directly manages:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Development</li> <li>• Director of Strategic Projects</li> <li>• Director of Programs</li> <li>• Director of Leadership and Outcomes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other key relationships include:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donors and supporters of SITS</li> <li>• Partner organizations</li> <li>• The broader soccer community in the region</li> <li>• Local community leaders and residents of SITS communities</li> <li>• Governmental agencies and programs</li> <li>• Civic leadership and government officials integral to SITS's mission and operations</li> </ul>

# The Location

The Executive Director is based in Atlanta – among the most dynamic metropolitan areas in the country. Regularly cited for livability and civic engagement, Atlanta is a leading city for sustainability and is home to over five million residents.

Atlanta ranks third nationally in corporate headquarters. It is home to the world's busiest airport and major educational institutions including the country's largest consortium of historically black colleges and universities including one of only a dozen United Nations Regional Center of Expertise for UN Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, Atlanta is home to both corporate headquarters (Delta, Coca-Cola, NCR, etc.) and nationally prominent public-benefit and nonprofit organizations such as the Task Force for Global Health, American Cancer Society, Habitat for Humanity International, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and CARE.

**Soccer in the Streets is an equal opportunity employer,  
and a diverse slate of compelling candidates is being sought.**

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For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email  
[SITSED@BoardWalkConsulting.com](mailto:SITSED@BoardWalkConsulting.com)  
or call **Lysandra Somerville** or **John Sparrow** at 404-262-7392.

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