

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MEHER SPIRITUAL CENTER, INC.

Introduction

Meher Spiritual Center, Inc. is seeking an innovative and trustworthy leader to maintain and enhance its primary program, the Meher Spiritual Center retreat, while at the same time helping to envision and design the organization's expansion into the broader purposes outlined in its charter, and shepherding the organization through a period of transition.

About the Organization

Meher Spiritual Center, Inc. was founded after Avatar Meher Baba asked Elizabeth Patterson and Norina Matchabelli to establish a center for His work in the United States. In 1944, Elizabeth gave Meher Baba a tract of land in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Under the direction of Meher Baba, Elizabeth and Norina guided the development of the property as a center for His work and a place to host His lovers during His visits to the United States. After His last visit, in 1958, Meher Baba instructed Elizabeth that the Center should be a place where those who loved Him and those who want to know more about Him could come and stay. Elizabeth dedicated the place to the renewal of the spiritual life, and to Meher Baba's life and message of love and truth.

About the Center, Baba said, "Of all of the homes I have visited, this is the home that I love the best, because it was given to Me and built for Me with such love." He referred to it as His "home in the West," and stated that it would become "a place of pilgrimage for all time." Meher Baba made three visits to the Center during the 1950s, and He remained connected to the retreat through His loving presence and through His direct guidance, while He was physically present in the world, to its original founders and caretakers.

On September 30, 1959, Meher Spiritual Center was incorporated as a nonprofit religious organization in the state of South Carolina. According to the organization's charter, it is:

A non-sectarian and non-profit religious organization, devoted and dedicated to the name and spiritual purposes of Meher Baba, and to the dissemination of His teachings, without supplanting professed religious convictions or beliefs, but for the enhancement and strengthening of the spiritual life.

The organization was founded to:

Establish, operate and maintain a central headquarters near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to be known as Meher Spiritual Center and such additional local centers in South Carolina and in other States of the United States, and to designate and appoint such officers, agents and other employees, as may be considered necessary or advisable to carry on the purposes and activities of this corporation.

(Note: the full charter can be found at www.mehercenter.org/pastandpresent/Charter_MSC.pdf)

Meher Spiritual Center, Inc. has been focused primarily on the maintenance and development of the Meher Spiritual Center retreat, 498 acres of land, for rest, meditation, and renewal of the spiritual life. The retreat offers overnight lodging for those seeking an immersive experience, while also accommodating the local community and day visitors by offering programs, daily visiting hours, and special events open to the public.

An eleven-member board currently governs Meher Spiritual Center, Inc., with headquarters in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Twenty-two full and part-time staff members, and the dedicated work of over two hundred volunteers run the organization. Long-term employees who serve in key roles, including the administrator, either have already retired or will be retiring in the coming few years; therefore, the organization is entering a significant period of staff transition.

Vision, Mission, and Emerging Goals

The board's vision for the Meher Spiritual Center retreat is as follows: "Meher Spiritual Center, Meher Baba's Home in the West, where all who come can experience His love." A key set of goals defines the current mission of the retreat:

- *Maintaining the intimate and unique atmosphere of Meher Baba's Home: a place of retreat, rest, contemplation and renewal of the spiritual life;*
- *Providing a safe and welcoming experience for all;*
- *Offering information about the Avatar's teachings and His life of love and service without supplanting anyone's religious convictions or beliefs;*
- *Developing or supporting programs based on Avatar Meher Baba's example of love and service to those in need;*
- *Creating the shared stewardship opportunities that best serve the purposes of the Center;*
- *Ensuring the preservation and maintenance of the Center: all of its grounds, buildings, archival treasures and its natural environment; and*
- *Developing the physical, human and fiscal resources in ways that best serve the purposes of the Center.*

(To see the Center's vision, values, and mission statements in fuller detail, please visit http://www.mehercenter.org/pastandpresent/Vision_Values_Mission.pdf)

While Meher Spiritual Center, Inc.'s main focus will always be on maintaining and providing the Center's unique retreat experience and atmosphere, more emphasis is now being placed on expanding the organization's scope to fully address all of the elements specified or implied in its founding charter.

As such, the board is committed to significantly expanding the organization's focus in relation to four key roles:

- Providing service to those in need;
- Disseminating information about Meher Baba's life and His message of love and truth;
- Providing leadership in the larger Meher Baba community; and
- Strengthening the Center's relationship with key external groups and expanding the organization's contributions to the broader community

The board, with the help of the incoming executive director, will be defining how these four roles will be fulfilled over the coming years. In addition, a master plan is currently being completed that will help guide the development of the Center over the next several decades.

Given the above, the role of the executive director of the organization is crucial to the maintenance and enhancement of current programs, as well as to the long-term development of Meher Spiritual Center, Inc.

Key Responsibilities

The executive director will serve as the primary leader of the organization and will manage its day-to-day affairs. They will be accountable to, and will work closely with, the board of directors. Tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Retreat operations:
 - o Nourish and protect the unique atmosphere of the Center retreat, Meher Baba's Home in the West, including giving special attention to environmental preservation, fire prevention, and security.
 - o Provide leadership, guidance and direction to staff to ensure the successful operation of the Center retreat, as well as the success of new initiatives aimed at fulfilling the overall charter.
 - o Synthesize and expand the Meher Spiritual Center archival collections; increase access to these collections for visitors, while also ensuring long-term preservation of these vital assets.
 - o Create and maintain annual operational plans and balanced budgets; monitor expenditures; and ensure the overall financial health of the organization.
 - o Be available to address major issues and concerns with guests and staff as needed.
 - o Be a welcoming, loving, and unifying presence, leading Meher Spiritual Center staff and volunteers in their service to Him and in fulfilling the organization's purposes.
- Visioning/future development:
 - o Maintain and strengthen the legacy of the Center's history and cultural values as it moves through the transitions of retiring and newly hired staff members.
 - o In partnership with the board, develop the organization's mission, vision, and strategic plans to fully embrace and implement the broad purposes of the charter, including service, dissemination of Meher Baba's message,

- leadership in the Meher Baba community, and relations with the Myrtle Beach community and beyond.
- o Oversee the development of programming within the Center retreat, and, if appropriate, beyond the immediate geographic area, that is in line with the mission and values of the organization, and best communicates to the diverse array of Center visitors the universal message and teachings of Meher Baba.
 - o Review existing management strategies, procedures, and structures, and redesign as necessary in view of factors including: changes that have occurred in the social, urban, and environmental contexts surrounding the Center; anticipated increased usage by day visitors and overnight guests; changes in staffing; and the availability of new, more effective processes and technologies compatible with the unique atmosphere of the Center.
 - o Work with the board to finalize the Master Plan and to oversee its implementation.
 - o Participate actively with the board in the design and undertaking of fundraising activities.
- External relations:
 - o Create and implement an organization-wide communications strategy to strengthen links with stakeholders, local community members, and sister organizations throughout the world.
 - o Develop a positive public image of the organization in alignment with the example provided by Meher Baba and His close disciples.
 - o Increase contributions to the welfare of the public good in the local community and, potentially, beyond.
 - o With the board's support, continually monitor changes to legal developments, including changes in tax regulations as well as other development that may impact the Center.
 - Overall:
 - o Conduct all activities of the organization, in the retreat center and beyond, within the framework of the love and teachings of Meher Baba.

Education, Skills, and Attributes

Ideal candidates for this position will share our commitment to ensuring that the Meher Spiritual Center retreat, Meher Baba's Home in the West, remains a place where all who come can experience Meher Baba's love. They will share as well our commitment to fulfilling and animating the chartered purposes of Meher Spiritual Center, Inc. The candidate will bring the necessary skills and attributes to attend to the broad range of tasks required for nourishing the life of the Center retreat, while simultaneously implementing a broad vision to expand the organization's focus in the four previously identified areas beyond the 498-acre retreat.

Skills:

The following are essential skills for this position:

- Leadership:
 - Ability to work collaboratively with the board in envisioning and strategizing change and in addressing key organizational challenges
 - Ability to translate visions for change into specific, measurable goals and actions
 - Ability to effectively balance the need for introducing change with the need for continuity
- Communication:
 - Interpersonal communication skills, including team building, building alignment and partnership, creating accountability, and conflict resolution
 - Ability to establish rapport with a wide range of individuals and groups, and across multiple generations
 - Ability to create harmony and unity in a diverse community
- Management:
 - Core management skills: planning, organizing, directing, coaching, assessment
 - Basic financial-management skills, including budgeting and accounting
 - Ability to deliver results in accordance with board direction

It will also be helpful if the candidate has additional nonprofit management skills or experience, including (in order of importance):

- Effective administration of retreat operations (including overnight guest facilities, programming, operational effectiveness, security, and environmentally sensitive practices)
- Volunteer development and management
- Management of external relations
- Fundraising
- Addressing legal and tax issues
- Working with financial investments and endowments

While some of these skills can be learned on the job, it is essential that the candidate be able to demonstrate a propensity for acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills within a reasonable period of time.

Attributes:

The effectiveness of this position will be largely dependent on the character of the person who will be filling it. Therefore, in addition to possessing the above skills, the ideal candidate will possess the following personal attributes:

- Full dedication to the purposes of Meher Spiritual Center, Inc., as stated in its charter, governance documents, and, more importantly, as per the guidance and directives of Meher Baba

- A loving and inclusive approach to interactions with all, with an orientation toward creating harmony
- A service-leadership mindset, including a propensity for collaboration and teamwork
- Independent thinking: objective, fair, and open minded
- A visionary and proactive orientation
- A high level of responsibility, reliability, integrity, discretion, diplomacy, flexibility, and resilience
- A high level of availability and commitment to serving the Center as needed, including working occasional irregular hours, participating in evening/weekend meetings, and dealing with emergencies and crises

Education:

We anticipate hiring an individual with a bachelor's or advanced degree. However, candidates with other backgrounds will be considered if their life experience has given them an all-around level of emotional maturity, problem-solving ability, and breadth of perspective appropriate to the requirements of the position.

In addition, the candidate will need to either currently be, or be willing to become, a full-time resident of the Myrtle Beach area.

Salary Range: 60,000-80,000 (depending on qualifications and experience)

IN ORDER TO APPLY:

If you are interested in being considered for this position please submit a letter of interest that indicates how your background and qualifications match the requirements of the position, a complete resume, and names and contact information (email and phone) of three or four individuals who can attest to your suitability for the position. The references will preferably include those who can attest to the quality of your work while performing a position of similar responsibility and scope.

The deadline for accepting applications is May 15, 2017. Your submission and all inquiries about the application process should be directed to:

Attn.: Marchelle Jordan
Meher Spiritual Center Inc.
 261 Middle Gate Road, Myrtle Beach, SC 29572
Email: info.executivedirector@mehercenter.org
Phone: 843-272-8793

If you have questions about the position, you may contact Daniel Stone, chair of the search committee at: djs@danielstone.com

NOTE: The Meher Spiritual Center, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer and does not unlawfully discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on the basis of an individual's race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law.