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An Invitation to Apply for

PRESIDENT

Chewonki Foundation
Wiscasset, Maine

The Chewonki Foundation is dedicated to helping people grow individually and in community with others by providing educational experiences that foster an understanding, appreciation & stewardship of the natural world and that emphasize the power of focused, collective effort.

Mission Statement

THE SEARCH

The Chewonki Foundation, a dynamic, multi-faceted educational and environmental community, seeks a new President, the fourth in its history. Founded as Split Rock Camp for boys in 1915 on Lake Champlain in New York State, the camp moved to Maine in 1918. Today Chewonki is a year round institution that includes camps for boys, girls, and families; wilderness trips for teens and adults; an Environmental Education Center offering residential outdoor classroom programs for school groups, traveling natural history programs, and web-based educational programs for all ages; the Maine Coast Semester, a residential academic program for secondary school students; and a sustainability center widely recognized for its innovative energy projects.

Chewonki's nature-based programs touch nearly 40,000 young people each year and are recognized nationally for creating transformative experiences for people of all ages. Chewonki's goal is to create life-long stewards of the environment by enhancing a participant's understanding of the impact contemporary society has on the fragility of the natural world.

For this position Chewonki seeks an imaginative, accomplished, and entrepreneurial leader with the exceptional management and communication skills needed to continue to build Chewonki's programs in experiential education and environmental leadership. The new president must have a collegial style and be committed to leading by example. She or he must also have a passion for the natural world and for educating young people in a setting that emphasizes collective effort and responsibility while fostering individual growth and development.

The new president will inherit a strong institution with talented colleagues and momentum to grow. Chewonki is completing a successful capital campaign. The Maine Coast Semester and the boy's camps are operating at capacity; its wilderness trips and camp for girls are expanding as are its environmental and sustainability programs. The current economy poses a challenge; however, Chewonki is not highly leveraged and remains a remarkably stable institution that is ambitious, forward-looking, and anticipating the healthy challenge of new leadership.

The Board of Trustees has retained Jerry Pieh and Gail Gregory of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in recruiting the new president. Persons wishing to apply for, nominate, or inquire about this position should contact Isaacson, Miller as directed at the end of this statement.

BACKGROUND AND PROGRAMS

1. History

Clarence Allen, an energetic schoolmaster, launched Split Rock Camp on the shores of Lake Champlain in upstate New York in 1915 and, in 1918, moved it to Chewonki Neck, a spectacular 400-acre peninsula in Midcoast Maine. Chewonki remained a summer camp for boys until Allen retired in 1965. In 1962, a group of former campers and staff members purchased the camp and incorporated it as a non-profit educational organization. Tim Ellis served as assistant director and director of the camp from 1965 to 1970 and then led the Foundation from 1970 to 1991 during the formative years when it created new, diversified programs and became a year-round operation. In the 1970's and 1980's, Chewonki expanded its property, developed camping-based environmental education programs, set up "traveling" natural science units for Maine schools that brought live birds and animals to classrooms, sponsored extensive wilderness tripping adventures for young people and adults, and created several year-round residential programs for high school and post high school students. In 1988, the Maine Coast Semester was initiated and, in 1992, the sustainability office was opened. Key programs are described below.

The name Chewonki may derive from a Penobscot term thought to mean "the place of the turning." It appears on the oldest maps of the Maine coast and may have referred to the area between the Kennebec and Sheepscot Rivers where one might turn to go either way and where the daily turning of the tide creates powerful, alternating flows both north into the land and south into the Atlantic. The Wabanaki name for goose "je-wonk" combined with "ki" for shore was also applied to the Chewonki peninsula long ago as thousands of migrating Canada geese rested in nearby salt marshes on their long journeys up and down the East Coast. In either case, the name symbolizes Chewonki's commitment to nature and the long history of its beautiful location.

2. Location

Chewonki owns or manages over a dozen properties in Maine, totaling close to 1,500 acres. Four are deep in the Maine woods, strategically located near prime wilderness hiking and canoe trails. The new location of the girl's camp is one of these. The rest, which are used by several programs as camping locations, are scattered strategically along the rugged Maine coast and include eight

islands and a light house. Central to all is the 400-acre campus in Wiscasset located on the Chewonki peninsula, bordered by a protected tidal inlet several miles upriver from the mouths of the Kennebec and Sheepscot rivers. In nearly a century's time, the campus has grown to include more than fifty seasonal and year-round buildings, a variety of activity locations (tennis courts, waterfront, etc.), over five miles of maintained trails, three and a half miles of pristine coastline, and thirteen beautiful campsites. It is a place of serene, natural beauty. The core of the campus is used year-round and activities multiply each summer when the boy's and family camps are in operation.

Wiscasset, Maine (population roughly 3,500) is about fifty miles northeast of Portland. The village hosts a small airport and is the site of the decommissioned Maine Yankee nuclear power plant. Chewonki has played and is playing an active role in the decommissioning process. Bowdoin College is in nearby Brunswick, and Bates and Colby Colleges are a bit further away in Lewiston and Waterville. An extraordinary variety of coastal and wilderness adventures are within easy reach. As stewards of the Chewonki campus, the Foundation has committed to becoming as self-sustaining as possible and to reaching an 80 percent carbon neutral impact on the environment by 2050. Photovoltaics, biodiesel, renewable hydrogen, biomass, passive solar, hydro, geo-thermal, wind, and solar heat are all part of the sustainability initiative as is the low impact lifestyle of the Chewonki community.

3. The Camps

For nearly half its life, Chewonki was an extremely successful, family-run summer camp for boys. In the nearly fifty years since the founder's retirement and the conversion from a camp to a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization, much has been done to expand programs to increase their impact and to make Chewonki a year-round operation. Still, at the heart of the enterprise and of its thousands of "graduates," are the summer camps. Today the camp includes a fully enrolled and highly successful program for nearly 400 boys (ages 8 to 18) based in Wiscasset and a now two-year-old, growing, wilderness camp for about 80 girls (ages 8 to 16) based on Fourth Debsconeag Lake in the Maine North Woods. Both camps share a grand tradition of nature study rooted in the role ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson created in the 1930's when he led Chewonki's nature program. Over time, kayaking, sailing, canoeing, and hiking expeditions, ranging across Maine and into Canada, have become high points of the camp experience. In a typical summer, campers attend from roughly 35 states and a dozen countries. A quarter of the camper families receive financial aid totaling some \$200,000.

Each August, when the traditional camps end, Chewonki offers family camps that draws both new participants and alumni of Chewonki. In addition to these core camp programs, Chewonki offers counselor training programs for older campers and six one-week coed camps for youth at different times during the year.

4. Wilderness Trips

Wilderness travel and the challenging adventure of living well in the out-of-doors is a core element of the camps. It is also the core of Chewonki's wilderness expeditions which are available to people of all ages. These adventures range from traveling hundreds of miles down

great rivers running into Hudson Bay in Canada to backpacking on the Appalachian Trail in New Hampshire to retracing some of Henry David Thoreau's canoe and mountain journeys in Maine. Chewonki also offers whitewater kayaking and ocean sailing expeditions. In one expedition, participants build their own kayaks and then paddle among the islands along the coast for three weeks before taking their new boats home. Adult and family trips range even farther afield to Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic, the Everglades in Florida, and the remote coastline of Labrador. Trips can be customized to suit participants and some are jointly operated with Elderhostel or other partner organizations. Wilderness First Responder courses are also offered. Eleven Chewonki staff are Registered Maine Guides and nearly all are certified in wilderness medicine and lifesaving.

5. The Center for Environmental Education

Roughly 35,000 students experience Chewonki's environmental education programs each year. Environmental education operates through three distinct initiatives. *The Outdoor Classroom for Schools* brings students from roughly eight states to Chewonki to camp on the Wiscasset property for a week while they are involved in nature study and team building activities. Small groups of students (10-12) camp together at established, shore-side campsites and learn the demands and satisfaction of teamwork while developing a respect toward the natural world. Chewonki believes that the outdoor classroom is the most ambitious effort in the country combining both camping out and learning about natural history and environmental sustainability. The trails, campsites, indoor climbing course, alternative energy initiatives, working farm, and green-design indoor facilities combine to provide an enormous impact in the learning that Chewonki shares with its visiting students.

The Traveling Natural History Program is a traveling classroom for schools throughout the Northeast. Schools choose from among 19 programs and trained Chewonki educators bring non-releasable live animals and a myriad of teaching tools, such as a whale skeleton or a container full of biodiesel, to the classroom to help students learn important lessons about the natural world and the conservation of life and resources on Earth. Embedded in this program is an ongoing rehabilitation program for injured birds. Chewonki staff members care for about 75 injured or abandoned birds and animals each year.

A number of outdoor classroom and traveling classroom staff members lead these highly visible and effective efforts to teach natural history to students while also increasing their sense of respect and responsibility for the natural world. In the process, they experience animals in their classrooms and, in the outdoor classroom, learn team building, solve problems, and build self-esteem.

Chewonki's newest educational outreach program, *Pathways to a Sustainable Future*, is a joint effort between Chewonki's Center for Environmental Education and its sustainability office. Pathways has developed on-line, leading edge conservation and energy programs: Clean Water, Renewable Energy, Renewable Hydrogen, Solar, Biodiesel, and Sustainable Foods. The materials and lesson plans are posted on-line and include a wide range of suggested activities. Schools may also visit Chewonki for tours and to see demonstration projects.

6. The Maine Coast Semester

Forty high school juniors and seniors come to the Maine Coast Semester (MCS) each semester to combine a powerful intellectual opportunity with hands-on work on the farm or in the wood lot and the challenge of building an effective small community. Launched in 1988, MCS built on earlier Chewonki programs for high school, college-level, and “gap-year” students and the Mountain School of Milton Academy. In a typical year, students come to MCS from roughly fifty schools in twenty states. They continue and deepen their traditional academic studies while taking required core courses in the natural history of the Maine coast and an English option emphasizing ethics or literature and the land. Salt Marsh Farm – 25 acres of open land and 150 acres of woodlot – is an integral part of the MCS experience. The farm provides milk, up to 15,000 pounds of vegetables, wood for heat, meat, and fiber for knitting and weaving. Through growing and eating food produced by the farm and becoming keenly aware of energy and other environmental issues, students begin to understand the relationships we all have with the land and the challenges of sustainability over time.

Courses average less than eight students and are typically conducted at an honors or college level. Fourteen faculty members and a host of additional Chewonki staff are available to MCS. Three to four hours of meaningful academic work plus farm chores are necessary each day outside classes. After twenty years of successful operation, MCS now works from a waitlist of applicants, is beginning to raise annual giving from its graduates, and is able to award over \$150,000 in financial aid each year to about 25 percent of matriculated students. MCS was fully accredited, in 2007, by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Students leave with a strengthened ownership for their education, an awareness of their place in nature, and an understanding that they can make a positive difference in their world.

7. The Sustainability Office

The Chewonki campus has become a recognized model for the sustainable use of natural resources. Conservation and living close to the land are practiced through Salt Marsh Farm, green-designed and constructed buildings, handling of water, recycling, and a suite of renewable energy programs. Since 1992, Chewonki has actively implemented pioneering sustainability projects including waste management, clean water, biodiesel, renewable hydrogen, solar heat, solar electricity, geo-thermal, and other initiatives. Wind and tidal energy are under discussion as additional elements in the effort to make the campus fully sustainable and to reduce its carbon footprint.

In each of these areas, the sustainability office and the Center for Environmental Education have cooperated to produce curriculum materials, tours, courses, and other teaching experiences for a growing number of people. Sensitivity to conservation and awareness of the impact of human activity on the natural world are themes that weave through all Chewonki programs. The sustainability office leads the effort to find better and better ways to use renewable energy sources, to heat buildings, to generate electricity, to grow food, to dispose of waste, and to keep clean water available. It also symbolizes the overarching commitment made at Chewonki to tread lightly on the land and limit the use of resources.

FACILITIES, FINANCES, AND GOVERNANCE

Chewonki owns or manages a set of impressive properties totaling some 1,500 acres that it has developed to suit specific uses and each property's unique natural circumstances. The Wiscasset campus, on the Chewonki Neck peninsula, is the main campus. Together with Salt Marsh Farm and several nearby tracts of land, it represents over half of the total acreage. The other properties are located throughout the state.

Most of year-round facilities for MCS, the Center for Environmental Education, sustainability operations, administrative services, the farm, and staff living quarters are located on the main campus. In addition, the summer boys' camp is located there and most wilderness trips begin there. The scattered properties support the girls' camp, inland canoe and hiking activities, and sailing and kayaking expeditions along the Maine coast. Some facilities are available as family or individual vacation destinations. All property management is coordinated out of the main campus, but the larger, separate properties also have local facilities managers.

Chewonki's operating budget is approximately \$4.5 million. It includes over \$400,000 in scholarship funds that are awarded to participants in all programs. The endowment is roughly \$4 million. It has been bolstered by the current capital campaign, *Campaign for Chewonki's Future*, which, when it closes in 2010, will have exceeded its goal of \$11 million and will have met the generous matching challenge of the Kresge Foundation. Chewonki also raises about \$300,000 in its annual fund. Long-term debt currently totals approximately \$500,000. Debt terms and maturities are carefully reviewed and are built comfortably into the operating budget. The impact of the global economic recession has been absorbed by careful budget cuts and project delays. The board and administration have been able, so far, to avoid layoffs and more severe financial reductions. Enrollments for 2009-2010 are quite promising. All in all, Chewonki remains in a solid financial position.

The Foundation is governed by a 28-member board of trustees. The board is elected by a 48-member advisory board which includes the trustees as advisory board members. There are also smaller advisory boards for each of the primary programs, for example the MCS advisory board. Only the board of trustees has decision making authority and it is the legal entity that owns property, has debt, etc. The board has the usual committee structure, including committees on finance, development, and buildings and grounds. The new president will serve on the board and as an advisor.

The president is the sole report to the board and serves as their chief executive officer. The president's direct reports are the program directors (camps, wilderness trips, outdoor classroom, traveling classroom, MCS) and the directors and managers of supporting departments (business, development, facilities, farm, communications, sustainability, etc.). Staff groups in the larger programs work with their directors or managers to handle operational details and deliver programs.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE FOUNDATION

The new president will be only the fourth head of Chewonki since 1915 and will succeed Don Hudson, who will retire in July 2010, after 19 years of exemplary service as president and over forty years of association with Chewonki. She or he will work closely with the board and the senior staff to lead the strategic design of Chewonki's overall program, to match resources with program needs, and to oversee the management of the administrative infrastructure. The president is also the external face of Chewonki and will be expected to be a skilled advocate on behalf of the Foundation and to participate actively in local, state, and national conversations about environmental education and stewardship of the natural world.

Educational innovation and quality programs are driven by Chewonki's outstanding staff with leadership and insight from the president. Major decisions are coordinated either through the senior staff group which meets weekly and/or the group of managers. Depending on mission compatibility, cost, riskiness, or degree of change represented by a decision, it may be resolved at the director/manager level, the senior staff level, the president level, or the board level.

The president and senior staff share responsibility for the consolidated budget and for achieving agreed upon strategic goals. Space and facilities, finances, fund raising, communications, human resources, information technology, and the smooth functioning of related services are ultimately the responsibility of the president, but are largely delegated to key administrative staff.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Chewonki's programs are exceptional and Maine policy makers as well as other educational and environmental organizations often turn to Chewonki for leadership and objective advice. Its programs are driven by outstanding staff, exceptional creativity, and disciplined effort. A new president will be charged with advancing Chewonki's mission by enhancing current programs, fostering innovative initiatives, and competing successfully for scarce resources and excellent people. The central and most general objective is to build the Chewonki educational community by attracting the exceptional people and the substantial resources needed to support and grow its superb programs.

The following, more specific, opportunities and challenges suggest initial areas of focus and accountability for the new president. While she or he will bring their own ideas and strengths to the position, these areas are currently on the agenda.

1. Translate Chewonki's analysis of its programs and support services into an active strategic business plan.

Chewonki programs have a well deserved reputation for quality and effectiveness; however, like most non-profit organizations, Chewonki struggles with a structural deficit generated by the cost of its administrative overhead, the start up expenses generated by new initiatives, and maintaining its facilities. It is difficult, for example, to pass its full costs to hard pressed school systems or MCS families. Chewonki's senior leadership team has begun a careful analysis of

each program's costs, revenue capacity, and potential for external funding or endowment. The new president must lead the completion of this work, develop an actionable business plan, and help Chewonki reach an equilibrium that adequately supports its programs, people, and facilities while maintaining its effectiveness in creating new educational and environmental programs.

2. Review and, if needed, strengthen or clarify Chewonki's administrative and decision-making procedures.

Chewonki's administrative structure is deliberately flat. Staff members wear many hats and leadership groups are large, inclusive, and somewhat informal. Once the leadership style of a new president is clear and the new person has had sufficient time to understand Chewonki's interconnected programs and its culture, the new president may want to review the leadership and management structures to take advantage of the new management style, to achieve cost savings, and to clarify decision making and accountability.

3. Maintain Chewonki's position as a leading practitioner of environmental, energy, and resource sustainability.

Chewonki is committed to continuing to build its role as a convener and leader in Maine's environmental and sustainability work. Over time and as this leadership continues to be successful, Chewonki can become a model organization in regional and national efforts to find constructive solutions to climate change, energy, wilderness conservation, and educational issues. It is expected that the new president will bring vision, energy, and leadership to the work Chewonki is already doing in these areas.

4. Increase resources for financial aid and staff support in order to increase diversity among participants and improve staff compensation, benefits, and professional development.

Chewonki's people – participants and staff – are its greatest asset. Enhanced financial aid and building greater access to its programs are clear goals of the board and staff. Staff work at Chewonki because it is a wonderful place that makes an important difference in the lives of many people. Providing strong compensation, benefits, and professional development opportunities for the staff will be a high priority for the new president.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

The experiences and qualities we seek in a president grow directly out of the challenges and opportunities she or he will face. We seek a talented leader deeply experienced in environmental and experiential education, well grounded in implementing complex initiatives, comfortable in a small and intense environment, and committed to Chewonki's education and sustainability missions. An advanced degree in an appropriate field and a successful career as an educational leader is anticipated, although the search committee will consider exceptional candidates with alternative career paths and other academic credentials. At least eight to ten years of extensive and increasingly responsible leadership experience in successfully managing a complex organization or a major division within a large organization is required.

Recognizing that candidates are unlikely to have every preferred credential, experience, and skill, we seek candidates who bring all or most of the following professional experiences and personal qualities to the position.

Professional Experiences

The career of a finalist for this position is likely to offer *highly successful experience* in most of the following areas:

- **Significant experience and responsibility developing and leading the educational activities of a complex organization.** We are ideally looking for experience in the direct, hands-on leadership of educational or environmental initiatives in a sizeable, complex organization. We also seek a proven and accomplished manager and fund raiser, ideally with innovative and entrepreneurial experience.
- **Accomplishments demonstrating or suggesting the likelihood of comfort and success in a small, activist, environmental, and educational community.** Chewonki needs a leader who understands education and the out-of-doors, is prepared to pitch in on any task, and can communicate effectively in an educationally and environmentally oriented community. The ability to establish effective working relationships with environmentalists, educators, leadership colleagues from other organizations, and staff is absolutely essential.
- **Previous experience serving the interests of an intellectual community with several strong, successful programs during a period of strategic review.** A key area of responsibility is to support Chewonki as major planning and organizational growth decisions are made. Knowing how to balance innovation and growth with strengthening existing programs, to exceed business plan objectives, and to develop a vision for Chewonki's future will be easier for a person with prior similar experiences.
- **Demonstrated success in providing administrative support and in handling, complex issues.** There is an art to leading administrative services in a mission-driven environmental and educational organization. Deftness, clarity, dependability, eloquence, and transparency will best serve the new president. While his or her experience is likely to include working at an educational institution or in an environmental or wilderness-oriented organization, a successful candidate must be able to demonstrate an understanding of complex issues, work as a member of successful teams, and achieve strategic goals.
- **Successful leadership experience in a collegial institution.** We are looking for a person whose experience includes working closely, effectively, and supportively with a wide range of colleagues. The new president will manage a series of established and emerging initiatives, lead the Chewonki management team, interact with key external constituencies, and play a leading role supporting the board of trustees.

Personal Qualities and Skills

A finalist for this position is also likely to demonstrate *high levels* of skill and personal strength in the following areas:

- **Proven skill as an educator.** The new president must be an accomplished educator and teacher, ideally in environmental or experiential education. Those skills are necessary to be an effective leader of Chewonki's work and to relate well with other staff and directors within and outside Chewonki.
- **Intelligence and skill in communication.** The new president must be an effective communicator and will play a key role in defining Chewonki's external identity. Diplomacy and clarity in writing and speaking and the ability to listen well will be critical in establishing her or his leadership in planning for and managing Chewonki's future.
- **Capacity to attract support and diversify Chewonki's funding base.** As is true of all non-profit organization leaders, the Chewonki president will need to be an effective fund raiser and financial manager. Whether funding is to support core operations or new initiatives, the president must be prepared to represent Chewonki and successfully partner with staff or board members in securing needed resources, building productive partnerships, and explaining Chewonki finances.
- **Interpersonal effectiveness and service orientation.** Establishing strong, trusting, mutually supportive relationships will be important. Energy, drive, enthusiasm, high intelligence, mentoring ability, and previous successful experience serving a complex organization will enhance a candidacy.
- **Familiarity with or a capacity to learn the Chewonki culture.** It is important to understand and respect Chewonki's culture, its past, and its values. Anticipating how Chewonki groups and individuals will react and working well across constituencies requires more than a little familiarity with its traditions, politics, funding structure, and culture.
- **Management and administrative effectiveness.** It is assumed that the new president will be a proven, highly effective leader, open in management style, effective in delegating responsibility, respectful of alternative points of view, skilled in building consensus, and capable of decisive action and leading by persuasion. A seasoned, alert, skillful manager must also bring patience, humor, and an ability to handle multiple tasks under pressure.
- **Integrity and standard of excellence.** It should go without saying that the new president will be expected to achieve at a high standard and with complete integrity in all areas of activity. There cannot be even the impression of conflicts of interest, favoritism, or self-serving or unethical behavior.

CONTACT, SALARY, AND SEARCH SCHEDULE

The search is currently scheduled to conclude in the early winter of 2010 with a starting date of July 1, 2010. After significant recruiting, there will be initial evaluations of written materials followed by interviews and extensive background checks. Salary will be competitive and will depend upon qualifications and experience.

Inquiries, referrals, and resumes should be sent (electronic submission encouraged), in confidence, with a cover letter to: 3810@imsearch.com or Gail Gregory; Internal Box 3810; Isaacson Miller; 334 Boylston Street, Suite 500; Boston, MA 02116.

Jerry Pieh
Phone: (207) 443-2256
E-mail: jpieh@imsearch.com

Gail Gregory
Phone: (202) 216-2280
Email: ggregory@imsearch.com

For additional information, please see www.chewonki.org.

*The Chewonki Foundation is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.
Candidates from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.*