



**A unique executive leadership position at a life-changing educational institution**

Carney, Sandoe & Associates is pleased to announce that we have been retained to assist in the search for a new **Executive Director** for **Safe Passage** in Guatemala City. Safe Passage, a tuition-free nonprofit school operating in Guatemala City since 1999, is registered as a Pre-K through 9th grade school. Safe Passage’s goal is to bring hope, education, and opportunity to the children of families trying to make a living around the city’s garbage dump—one of the largest landfills in Central America. The organization utilizes a holistic approach that expands the definition of education to mitigate underlying factors that contribute to poor educational outcomes. Safe Passage’s additional programs include educational reinforcement and career services for high school students, integrated health services, food and nutrition. The organization currently enrolls about 600 students. This is a unique opportunity for a bilingual educational leader to shape the lives of children living in the Guatemala City garbage dump community and to lead a model school demonstrating how a transformational education of the whole child—focused on wellness, lifelong learning, vocational skills, and community engagement—can break the cycle of poverty. The new Executive Director will take office in the **summer of 2023**.

Safe Passage/Camino Seguro was founded in 1999 by Hanley Denning, a 1992 Bowdoin College graduate who saw the desperate need of the children and families living in the neighborhood of the Guatemala City Municipal Dump. Safe Passage/Camino Seguro began as a childcare program, but over the years, Hanley opened an Early Childhood Center and Adult Literacy Program, setting the foundation for the organization’s commitment to education in one of Guatemala City’s poorest and most challenging neighborhoods. After Hanley’s untimely death in an automobile accident in 2007, the supporters of Safe Passage committed to ensuring Hanley’s legacy and building on the sturdy foundations she had established. Hanley’s legacy lives on thanks to a dedicated international Board of Trustees that includes members from Guatemala, the US, and Europe; a remarkable team of faculty and staff; and volunteers and donors from all over the world.

Safe Passage has begun implementing an ambitious five-year strategic plan (2022-27) developed collaboratively by the Board, faculty, staff, community members, and supporters. The organization seeks a passionate leader to carry out this plan, which focuses on continuing to strengthen the existing Pre-K through grade 9 program. It also calls for assessing whether or not adding the three final grades of a high school to create a full Pre-K through grade 12 program might be appropriate and feasible. In 2021, the board concluded a successful capital campaign to raise the funds necessary to build a new facility to house our Middle School (Basico), grades 7-9. Groundbreaking is anticipated in 2023. The goal, as always, remains to prepare Safe Passage’s graduates to obtain good jobs in the formal economy and break the cycle of poverty for themselves and their families. The school uses a hands-on,



experiential methodology based on Expeditionary Learning for its full-day school, aiming to provide students with the education and critical life skills they need to move beyond the garbage dump.

Safe Passage is seeking an Executive Director with strong academic, managerial, and financial qualifications, whose energy and empowering leadership style will harness the talents and passion of the largely Guatemalan team and strengthen this truly unique institution as it emerges from the pandemic and executes its ambitious strategic plan. Based in Guatemala City and reporting to the Board of Directors, the successful candidate will possess:

- Strong financial management skills (\$2.75M budget and \$2M+ endowment)
- The ability to manage a complex operation with a development team (and majority of donors) in the US and with operations (5+ buildings and 100+ faculty and staff) in Guatemala City
- Demonstrated success in hiring and management, especially of an educational leadership team; the ability to delegate effectively and hold team members accountable, as well as support their ongoing professional development
- Effective oral and written communication skills in Spanish and English (fluency in both)
- Educational leadership experience working with an underprivileged student population, whether or not in an international setting
- An understanding of fundraising and development strategy and commitment to playing a key role in development efforts (up to 30%); enthusiasm for sharing Safe Passage's story with existing and potential donors—in individual meetings and in public speaking engagements
- Unwavering commitment to the school's mission and to serving students and families living around the Guatemala City garbage dump
- An ability to connect with people of different nationalities and socio-economic backgrounds, including students, families, teachers, administrators, staff, volunteers, visitors, and those around the world who are eager to support the work of Safe Passage.

A full position description is being developed and will be sent to qualified and interested candidates. If you know of someone who may be interested in and qualified for this position, or if you have further questions, please contact Art Charles: [art.charles@carneysandoe.com](mailto:art.charles@carneysandoe.com)

