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Children's Museum of the Lowcountry Appoints Lisa Van Deman as Chief Executive Officer

Charleston, SC – Friday, March 13, 2026 – After a comprehensive national search led by a board-appointed search committee, the Board of Directors of the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry has selected to appoint Lisa Van Deman to serve as the Museum's next Chief Executive Officer.

Van Deman is a nationally respected museum executive with more than 25 years of leadership experience in children's museums and arts organizations across the country. She brings a strong track record in strategic planning, fundraising, organizational growth, and community-centered programming, with a particular focus on access, inclusion, and innovation.

"Lisa brings an exceptional combination of vision, experience, and integrity to the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry," said Jasmine Woodard Rose, Board Chair of CML. "Her deep understanding of children's museums, coupled with her collaborative leadership style and commitment to access and inclusion, makes her the right leader for this moment in CML's evolution. We are thrilled to welcome her and confident she will help advance our mission and strengthen our impact throughout the Lowcountry."

Known for her collaborative, people-centered leadership style, Van Deman has successfully guided mission-driven organizations through periods of growth and change while strengthening financial sustainability and public trust. She is deeply committed to the role of children's museums as vital civic spaces that inspire curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning for children and families.

"I am honored to join the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry and to work alongside such a dedicated board, staff, and community," said Van Deman. "Children's museums play a critical role in nurturing imagination and supporting families, and I look forward to building on CML's strong foundation while expanding access and impact for children throughout the Lowcountry."

Van Deman succeeds Karen Coltrane and will lead the organization into its next chapter of growth, innovation, and community engagement.

Established in 1995 and opened in 2003, the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to create innovative learning experiences in our museum and throughout our community that equip and inspire all children to become creative problem solvers. In addition to its main site, the museum operates a satellite location in St. George.

For more information about the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry, visit www.explorecml.org.



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Lisa Van Deman is a creative and collaborative arts and cultural leader with 30 years of executive experience advancing children's museums, performing arts education, and interdisciplinary cultural institutions. Her career bridges artistic practice, informal learning, and nonprofit leadership, with a consistent focus on expanding access to joyful, high-quality learning experiences for children, families, and communities. Lisa has served in senior executive and artistic leadership roles across the nonprofit cultural sector, often helping organizations navigate moments of growth, transition, and new beginnings. She particularly enjoys the creative process of turning big ideas into reality for the benefit of kids and families. As Executive Director of North Carolina Arts in Action—the North Carolina affiliate of the National Dance Institute—Lisa tripled the organization's reach while leading it to financial sustainability. As Executive Director of Kidzu Children's Museum in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, she guided the emerging museum through a period of rapid growth by expanding revenue streams, strengthening annual and major giving, forging innovative community and academic partnerships, and scaling programs to serve more children and families.

Most recently, Lisa served as Creative Consultant and Chief Experience Officer for La Nube, a \$70 million bilingual children's science museum in El Paso, Texas. In this role, she partnered closely with the CEO on institutional planning, program design, organizational development, and fundraising strategy—helping shape both the creative vision and the collaborative culture of a new landmark museum.

Trained as a theatre artist, Lisa holds an M.F.A. in Acting and worked as a professional actor before transitioning into arts-integrated learning and nonprofit leadership. She is widely recognized for her commitment to equity and access, as well as her ability to mentor emerging leaders while building financially strong, mission-driven organizations.

In her free time, Lisa enjoys spending time with her family—her husband Barry, also a museum executive; her son Connor, an actor in New York City; and her daughter Emeline, a recent graduate of Virginia Tech. She loves theatre, travel, and is especially excited to explore the rich history, vibrant arts scene, and delicious food of the Lowcountry.



Lisa Van Deman, CEO

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