Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture Seeks New Board Members

Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture is a Philadelphia-based mission-driven 501(c)3 organization serving the Greater Philadelphia area. We are dedicated to presenting and teaching Arab culture through the arts and language. “Al-Bustan,” Arabic for “The Garden,” promotes cross-cultural understanding among youth and adults of all ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds through artistic and educational programs that offer structured exposure to the language, art, music, dance, literature, and natural environment of the Arab world. Al-Bustan supports the pursuit and affirmation of Arab American cultural identity while playing a constructive civic role within broader American society.

The seeds of Al-Bustan were sown in the summer of 2002 with a two-week summer camp. Since then, Al-Bustan’s garden has flourished into an array of year-round programs that are supported by multi-year grants from city, state, and federal public sources and from esteemed local and national foundations. By forging unique partnerships with leading cultural and educational institutions, Al-Bustan has been able to engage renowned artists and teachers immersed in Arab cultural traditions to present, demonstrate and teach their art form. Today Al-Bustan is recognized as a leading Arab arts organization in the United States. Our current initiatives include an annual Summer Arts Camp, School and Community-based Arts Programs, presenting a Concert Series, commissioning/presenting Visual/Public Art Projects, and Digital Education. With an operating budget around $500,000, the organization currently has a board of directors comprised of 10 members. Five full-time staff members carry out the organization’s work, led by a Founding Executive Director.

Al-Bustan is seeking to add additional members to its board of directors. Board members serve a term of 3 years and are eligible to serve 2 more terms of service (up to 9 years) before they must rotate off the board. The Board of Directors meets 5 times per year and has three standing committees that engage board members in the organization’s work: Governance, Finance, and Development. Committee meetings are held in between board meetings. Board members are expected to serve on a committee and attend at least 4 of 5 yearly board meetings, as well as attending Al-Bustan events and programs throughout the year.

In addition to providing oversight to ensure that the organization carries out its mission and goals efficiently and effectively, board members are expected to make an annual financial leadership contribution to Al-Bustan commensurate with their means, with this gift being one of their “top 3” annual charitable giving commitments. Board members are also asked to cultivate at least three personal relationships that result in a financial contribution to Al-Bustan during the fiscal year to help the organization achieve its fundraising goals.

We are looking for individuals with one or more of the following specific skills and/or areas of expertise:

1. financial management and/or accounting
2. personnel management/human resources
3. fundraising and development
4. social media, communications and public/media relations
5. active involvement with the education, arts, and/or business community

An affinity for the mission and work of the organization is paramount. Diversity in all of its aspects is welcomed by the board and is important to the organization.

To be considered for a position on the Board of Directors, please send a bio or resumé and a short statement of interest to: Board Chair Omar Harb at oharb(at)sas.upenn.edu