



TRUE FRIENDS

Camps. Respite. Programs. Travel.

President & CEO

COMPENSATION

Salary Range: \$200,000 - \$220,000

Applications will be accepted until July 16, 2026.
All applicants must [apply online here](#).

PRESENTED BY

ballinger | leafblad

True Friends

PRESIDENT & CEO

Ballinger | Leafblad is pleased to partner with True Friends in the search for its next President & CEO. Built on 100+ years of combined camp heritage, True Friends provides life-changing camp, respite, retreats, therapy, and travel experiences that enhance independence and self-esteem for children and adults with disabilities—serving 15,000+ individuals annually across Annandale, Maple Lake, and Eden Prairie.

We seek a visionary, mission-driven executive with proven leadership in nonprofit operations, finance, and fundraising—and the relational capacity to steward this beloved Minnesota institution into its next era of impact.



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OVERVIEW

True Friends is a nonprofit organization providing life-changing experiences that enhance independence and self-esteem for children and adults with disabilities.

True Friends was formed in 2012 when two of Minnesota's largest and most respected disability service providers — Courage Center Camps and Friendship Ventures — came together to create a unified camp organization. Courage Center Camps had been serving individuals with physical disabilities since 1955, while Friendship Ventures, established in 1964, had grown to provide camp, respite, and travel services to nearly 3,000 individuals and families each year. After operating briefly under the interim name Camps of Courage & Friendship, the organization officially launched as True Friends in October 2013. Today, True Friends carries forward both organizations' legacies of delivering exceptional, much-needed services to people with disabilities and their families across Minnesota.

Programs include camp, respite, retreats, team building, therapy and adaptive riding, and travel; serving over 15,000 individuals annually. With locations near Maple Lake, Annandale and Eden Prairie, True Friends serves individuals in Minnesota and throughout the United States.



AT-A-GLANCE

About the Team

- 53 full time staff
- 94 part time staff
- 200 seasonal staff
- 2 consultants

\$8.6 million

Operating Budget

15,000+

Served Annually

\$59M+

In Assets

Mission

Provide life-changing experiences that enhance independence and self-esteem for children and adults with disabilities.

10,000+

Volunteer Hours

100+

Years of History

Operating 6 core programs across 3 MN locations: Annandale, Maple Lake, and Eden Prairie.



Empowering 15,000+ individuals each year through camp, respite, retreats, team building, therapy & adaptive riding, and travel.

KEY PROGRAMS

Camp (Summer)

Residential and day camp experiences designed for individuals with disabilities, offering opportunities to build skills, increase confidence, strengthen self-esteem, and foster understanding, acceptance, and inclusion.

Respite (Weekend, Year-Round)

Weekend respite programs provide recreation and leisure opportunities in a safe, supportive environment that promotes independence, confidence, and meaningful social connection.

Retreats (Year-Round)

Lodging and meeting space for groups of all sizes, including corporations, schools, churches, and families, with access to dining services and recreational activities.



Team Building

Direct leadership and team development experiences featuring challenge courses, zip lines, and other group-based activities that build communication, trust, and problem-solving skills.

Therapy & Adaptive Riding

Equine-assisted activities including therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, and horsemanship programs that support physical, emotional, and cognitive development for individuals with disabilities.

Travel

Supported travel experiences offering both structured and customized opportunities for individuals to explore new environments with appropriate support.

INDIVIDUAL CAMPS

Camp Eden Wood

Located in Eden Prairie, Camp Eden Wood has a rich history dating back to 1925, when it was established as a summer haven for children with tuberculosis. Over the decades, the site evolved through several missions before Friendship Ventures expanded into the Twin Cities area by acquiring it in 1995. Today, the camp offers day camp, respite, retreats, and team building programs in a convenient yet secluded metro setting.



Camp Courage

Opened in 1955, Camp Courage was founded to serve campers with physical disabilities — including polio, cerebral palsy, and muscular dystrophy — with a philosophy centered on participation, challenge, and skill-building. In 1966, a second campus was added to support children with speech, hearing, and language impairments, offering a summer experience that included therapy and education. Today, the camp operates as two distinct sites: Lakeside at Camp Courage and Woodland at Camp Courage.



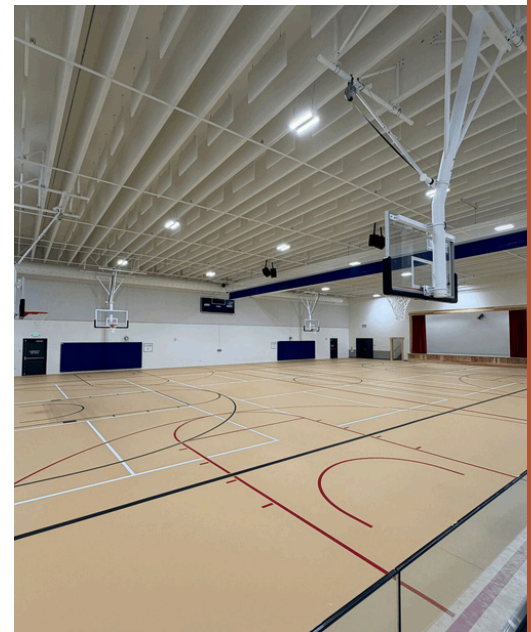
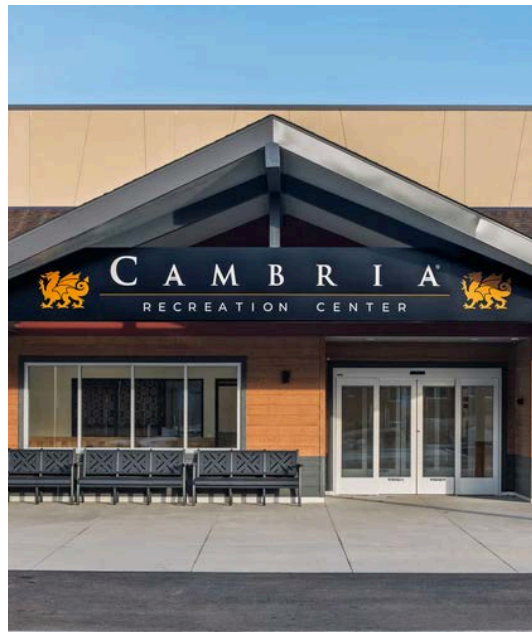
Camp Friendship

Camp Friendship was born in 1964 when a group of Arc Minnesota parents converted a century-old resort on Clearwater Lake near Annandale into a resident camp for their children with developmental disabilities. As the camp grew, so did its programs — eventually evolving into Friendship Ventures, which became an independent nonprofit in 1986. Friendship Ventures went on to merge with Courage Center Camps in 2012, ultimately becoming True Friends in October 2013.



CAMBRIA RECREATION CENTER

In spring 2026, True Friends opened the Cambria Recreation Center at Camp Courage, a transformative 26,600-square-foot facility designed to expand barrier-free experiences for individuals of all abilities.



The \$17.7 million project exceeded its fundraising goal through broad public and private support, including a \$10 million investment from the Minnesota State Legislature and a \$2.5 million donation from the Camp Cambria Foundation, alongside contributions from multiple regional foundations and individual donors.

At the heart of the facility is an ADA-accessible aquatic center with a zero-entry, temperature-controlled pool, complemented by a 12,900-square-foot gymnasium with a stage for performing arts and a climbing wall. These spaces are designed for campers, retreat guests, and community members to build confidence, develop skills, and connect.

The Cambria Recreation Center represents a milestone in True Friends' commitment to inclusive programming and a significant opportunity for incoming leadership to steward this investment into its next chapter.

PRESIDENT & CEO

SUMMARY

True Friends is seeking its next President & CEO to lead a legacy organization providing life-changing experiences that enhance independence and self-esteem for children and adults with disabilities. Under the direction of the True Friends Operating Board of Directors, the President & CEO is responsible for the overall leadership, strategic direction, and management of the organization—including operations, finance, human resources, fundraising, marketing/public relations, and long-range planning. In partnership with the True Friends Foundation Board, the President & CEO serves as an ex-officio member and provides oversight and coordination of fundraising, investment, and distribution activities. Serving 15,000+ individuals annually across three Minnesota locations—Annandale, Maple Lake, and Eden Prairie—with an \$8.6 million annual operating budget and \$59 million in combined net assets, this leader will steward an organization built on 100+ years of combined camp history while charting its next chapter alongside an engaged Board, dedicated staff, and a community of donors, volunteers, and partners.

Annual Operating Budget

\$8.6 MILLION

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Senior Director of Operations
- Senior Director of Program Services
- Senior Director of Sales & Hospitality
- Senior Director of Development
- Executive Assistant
- Marketing & Communications Manager*

**Reporting line may transition to one of the Senior Directors*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

True Friends has two boards: an Operations Board and a Foundation Board.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, & KNOWLEDGE

- Extensive executive-level experience leading and guiding organizational strategy and direction
- Minimum 10+ years of progressive leadership experience
- Strong background in organizational management, including operations, finance, and human resources
- Demonstrated success in fundraising, revenue generation, or donor engagement
- Strong communication, interpersonal, and relationship-building skills across all stakeholder levels
- Proven ability to lead complex organizations and drive measurable results
- Strong financial and business acumen, including budget development and oversight
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office and familiarity with fundraising software such as Raiser's Edge

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the direction of the True Friends Operating Board of Directors, the President & CEO is responsible for the overall leadership, strategic direction, and management of the organization—including operations, finance, human resources, fundraising, marketing/public relations, and long-range planning.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP & STRATEGY

- Provide executive leadership and direction for all aspects of True Friends operations.
- Lead the development and implementation of the organization's long-range strategic plan in collaboration with the Board and key stakeholders.
- Ensure alignment of programs, operations, and resources with the mission, vision, and values of True Friends.
- Serve as a mentor and leader to the Senior Leadership Team and broader organization.
- Support a strong organizational culture focused on mission, accountability, and staff development.

BOARD & GOVERNANCE

- Serve as the primary liaison to the Operations and Foundation Boards of Directors, ensuring effective communication and governance support across both.
- Serve as ex-officio member of all True Friends and True Friends Foundation committees.
- Support Board effectiveness through timely reporting, strategic updates, and partnership in decision-making.

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT & SUSTAINABILITY

- In partnership with the Finance Committee and finance leadership, develop and oversee the annual operating budget.
- Ensure sound financial management, including oversight of financial policies, internal controls, risk management practices, and the annual audit.
- Monitor the organization's financial performance and long-term sustainability, making informed decisions that balance mission impact with fiscal responsibility.
- Provide strategic leadership for financial planning, forecasting, and stewardship of organizational assets and resources.
- Partner with both Boards to ensure strong financial transparency, accountability, and governance.



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

FUNDRAISING & REVENUE GENERATION

- Lead the organization's fundraising and revenue generation strategy, ensuring a diversified and sustainable mix of philanthropic, earned, and public funding.
- Cultivate, solicit, and steward major donors and key funding partners, including personally leading six- and seven-figure gift conversations and supporting endowment and campaign efforts.
- Oversee strategies to strengthen and grow fee-for-service and earned revenue streams, ensuring programs remain both mission-aligned and financially sustainable.
- Foster a culture of philanthropy and shared accountability for revenue generation across the organization and board.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS, BRAND & VISIBILITY

- Serve as the primary ambassador and spokesperson for the organization.
- Raise the visibility, reputation, and influence of True Friends across the region and beyond.
- Build and maintain strategic relationships with community leaders, partners, policymakers, funders, and stakeholders.
- Represent the organization through public speaking engagements, media interviews, conferences, and community events.
- Serve as the chief storyteller, articulating the impact, mission, and vision of the organization to diverse audiences.



Leadership Competencies

Vision & Strategy

Creates and communicates a compelling long-term vision; mobilizes others to take action, seize opportunities, and manage risk to drive strategic progress.

Strategic Thinking

Develops clear goals aligned with mission and inspires others to pursue them through thoughtful, forward-looking strategy.

Creativity and Innovation

Champions fresh thinking and encourages new approaches; designs innovative solutions that align with values and respond to emerging trends.

Business Acumen

Understands the internal dynamics and external forces shaping the organization; applies sound judgment in resource and stakeholder management.

Results Driven

Focuses on outcomes with urgency and discipline; fosters a culture of accountability, service, and continuous improvement.

Leading Others

Builds trust, communicates clearly, and empowers others to achieve their best; aligns talent with strategic priorities and models effective leadership.

Leading Evolution

Anticipates and adapts to change; communicates a clear path forward; holds self and others accountable to transformation goals.

Interpersonal Effectiveness

Communicates with clarity, empathy, and self-awareness; builds authentic relationships and navigates differences with cultural competency.

Resilience

Stays composed and constructive through adversity; adapts quickly and maintains optimism while guiding others through change.





Compensation

The salary range for this position is:
\$200,000 to \$220,000.

Benefits include:

- Retirement plan with 3% employer match
- Employer-subsidized medical and dental coverage, HSA with employer contributions
- Fully-paid group life (AD&D) and long-term disability insurance
- 8 paid holidays + 2 floating holidays, PTO, bereavement, and paid volunteer time off
- Employee Assistance Program and continued professional development
- Employee discounts on True Friends merchandise and select retailers

Hours & Travel

- Hybrid work environment with required on-site (on-location) presence at True Friends locations (Annandale, Maple Lake, and Eden Prairie) as needed to support operational, programmatic, and organizational priorities.
- Frequent travel required for meetings, events, and stakeholder engagement.
- Ability to work a flexible schedule, including evenings and weekends as needed.

All applicants must [apply online here](#).

To apply, a resume and cover letter are required for consideration.

We strive for a transparent and supportive process, starting with an initial review of applications, followed by exploratory conversations with qualified candidates, in-depth interviews, and open communication throughout. There will be an immediate and ongoing review of candidates, so we encourage and appreciate early applications.

All inquiries will be handled with strict confidentiality, subject to standard recruiting practices and any applicable legal disclosure obligations.

For more details or questions, inquiries may also be directed to Jamie Millard, jamie@ballingerleafblad.com.

Applications will be accepted through **July 16, 2026**. Review of materials begins immediately. **We encourage early application.**

Your Search Team

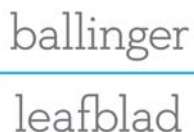
Your search is supported by a dedicated team that remains engaged throughout the process, providing strategic guidance, candidate outreach, project management, and client support from launch through placement. Together, we are committed to delivering a thoughtful, organized, and responsive search experience for candidates and clients alike.



Jamie Millard
Managing Partner



Jen Hanlon Ash
Principal



ABOUT BALLINGER | LEAFBLAD

Founded in 2014, Ballinger | Leafblad is a civic-focused executive search firm driven by a passion for strengthening leadership in mission-driven organizations. Rooted in partnership and a deep connection to the communities we serve, we specialize in matching organizations with exceptional leaders who align with their values and vision. Our approach is relationship-centered and designed to foster meaningful, long-term impact.

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