



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – DEVELOPMENT**  
**SANCA AT NATHAN BENDERSON PARK**  
**Sarasota, Florida**  
**[Nathan Benderson Park](#)**



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with SANCA at Nathan Benderson Park in the search for an Executive Director – Development.

SANCA at Nathan Benderson Park seeks an entrepreneurial self-starter for the newly created position of Executive Director – Development. The successful candidate will be an experienced strategist and an inspiring oral and written communicator with a passion for the vision and mission of Nathan Benderson Park. The Executive Director – Development will take a proactive and creative approach to the cultivation of funding opportunities and the stewardship of existing donor relationships. The Executive Director – Development will play a pivotal role in the growth and success of Nathan Benderson Park as it enters the next phase of development.

Located in Sarasota, Florida, Nathan Benderson Park is a unique 600-acre community park which has become North America's premier 2,000-meter sprint rowing course and Regatta Center. One of a handful of sites in the United States identified as having all of the natural attributes that make up a world class rowing and recreational facility, Nathan Benderson Park began hosting organized regatta competitions in 2009. A significant investment has already been made to the facility's development, including 2,000-meter racing lanes, 1,500-meter racing lanes, straight shorelines, a finish line island and recovery channel, coaches path, wave attenuation system, starter's hut, finish tower, running paths and children's playground.

The rowing facility is the only FISA Class A facility of its kind in North America, and has been the host of many major events including the 2017 World Rowing Championships, 2018 World Rowing Masters Regatta, and will host the 2019 World Rowing Under 23 Championships. The park includes an iconic six-story finishing tower, which among other things, hosts events. The internal park road and running paths also make it an ideal location for road races and Triathlons.

SANCA (Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit contracted by Sarasota County to manage the operations of Nathan Benderson Park. SANCA provides outreach programs through recreation, safety training, education, and volunteering as a service to the community, in addition to the over 100 events, meetings, and receptions held annually. SANCA's mission is to improve the quality of life for the community and act as an economic generator for the Sarasota community, providing environmental education programs and building a preserve for local wildlife.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director – Development will report to President and Chief Executive Officer, Stephen V. Rodriguez.

## PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

*Nathan Benderson Park has generated enormous success, exposure, and opportunities for the Sarasota-Bradenton community. The initial development of this park, particularly for its national and international rowing events, has gained global recognition and has become a significant economic generator for Sarasota and Manatee Counties. In the past five years, the park has generated an economic benefit of \$142 million. Hosting major national and international competitions such as the 2017 World Rowing Championships, 2018 World Rowing Masters Regatta, 2019 World Rowing U23 Championships, USRowing Youth Nationals, ITU World Cup Triathlon, NCAA Women's Rowing Championships Div. I, II and III, IBCPC Dragon Boat Festival, Modern Pentathlon World Cup, and more, has been a major accomplishment. However, what makes this accomplishment more significant is the short amount of time it has taken to achieve this level of success. SANCA has only operated the park since 2014, and all of this has taken place in just five short years, for many of those years the park was still under construction.*

*In order to execute SANCA's vision, mission, and value proposition, one of the key elements of success is raising funds to provide the physical structures and amenities needed to realize the park's value to the community. Many other activities are currently being developed to emphasize the park's usage as a multi-sport venue. With our community and facility now in the international sport scene, the park is poised to jump into the next level. The Executive Director – Development is a strategic and key position needed to prepare for the next stage of the park's growth and success.*

*The master plan of the park has yet to be completed and relies heavily upon private funding to fulfill its initial vision including the Finish Tower, Boathouse/Event Center, Amphitheatre, children's playground, food services, and other amenities. The Finish Tower and children's playground have been funded and constructed, but the rest of the items listed need capital to finalize. A major donor has offered a matching grant of up to \$4 million for an estimated cost of \$8 million for the Boathouse/Event Center.*

*SANCA's focus these past five years have been operational in nature, therefore the organizational structure needs to change to support this new component of fundraising. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to create and execute a fundraising strategy, which will have an impact on tourism as well as our community programming. Though there is no donor database or fundraising plan in place, there are many individuals and organizations prepared to support our efforts. Many equate the future of Nathan Benderson Park to New York's Central Park. In 20 years, the Executive Director – Development will be able to point at the Central Park of Sarasota and say, "I helped to build that for the community." This opportunity will allow the successful candidate to create a highly successful development program to fulfill the mission, vision, and value proposition in a manner befitting this world class park.*

– Stephen V. Rodriguez

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director – Development will

- raise \$4 million in capital contributions to match an existing up to \$4 million match for a multi-purpose boathouse and community center by end of second year;
- meet interim financial milestones agreed upon with the President/CEO, Board of Directors, and the successful candidate;
- create a strategic and tactical fundraising plan for approval by the President/CEO and Board of Directors within six months;
- leverage contributions from various organizations associated with new and existing parks events and activities;
- develop and implement a strategic and tactical fundraising program and support an organization which includes the identification, cultivation, and solicitation of major donor prospects in support of capital programs and annual and periodic contributions from national and international corporate sponsors and individual donors;
- establish a structure for giving which will be sustainable and be a source of funding for numerous future capital needs and programing activities;
- build constituencies from local businesses, nonprofits, and individuals;
- utilize existing and new park events, facilities, and activities to promote interest and inspire donations; and
- create a data base of information of potential and current donors.

## KEY COLLEAGUES



**Stephen V. Rodriguez**

**President / Chief Executive Officer**

A Florida Gator, Rodriguez comes to Sarasota from an eighteen-year tenure at the Florida Sports Foundation where he served as Senior Vice President since 2010. Over his duration at the foundation, he was responsible for administration, event planning, finance, fundraising, government relations, program management, tourism, and economic development. He is also the longest standing Director of the Sunshine State Games and the Florida Senior Games.

Prior to the foundation, he was employed by the Palm Beach County Sports Commission and Sports Institute. While there, he was responsible for the administration of the Commission's Unified Youth Sports Program for the county and the Lou Groza Collegiate Place Kicker Award, in addition to hosting events, such as the NAIA Spring Championship Games, and NPAL Baseball World Series among many others. Before Palm Beach, he was the Office Manager and Membership Chair at the USA Track & Field/Florida Association.



**Ronald Shapo**

**Chair, Board of Directors**

**President of Professional Business Consultants Inc.**

A founding member of the SANCA board, Ronald Shapo is now its chair. He began his career as an accountant, and his legal career has spanned more than 40 years. His experience is a blend of achievements in litigation, real estate, corporate/finance, construction, and governmental contracts and approvals.

Shapo holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and government, *cum laude*, and a Doctor of Law degree, *cum laude*, both from the University of Miami. He was the Assistant Editor and Executive Editor of the Law Review and instructor in legal research and writing at the Miami Law School. He is admitted to the Florida Bar and the District of Columbia Bar, and is admitted before the U.S. District Court South and Middle Districts of Florida, the U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, U.S. Tax Court, and the U.S. Supreme Court.



**Michael Taaffe**  
**Member, Board of Directors**  
**Partner, Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick LLP**

Michael Taaffe is the lead Director for the Fundraising Initiative. Department Administrator of the Broker-Dealer Litigation and Arbitration practice group of the Shumaker firm. Taaffe is Board Certified in Business Litigation and is also the Data Breach Practice Group Team Leader. Taaffe's practice focuses on the representation of public and private corporations and their officers, directors, and key employees in a variety of matters, including restraints of trade, garden leave provisions, unfair competition, employment contracts, partnership separation, and torts, as well as securities-related litigation involving arbitration, securities customer disputes, broker-dealer recruitment, "raiding" litigation, change in control issues, deferred compensation issues, compensation and separation agreements, wrongful termination, and Form U-5 issues. Taaffe regularly practices before state and federal courts, as well as state and federal securities regulators and self-regulatory agencies.



**Randy Mallitz**  
**Member, Board of Directors**

Randy Mallitz has held extensive CEO/President and successful leadership positions in both Industrial strategic and venture businesses for over 45 years including mid-sized \$100 million to \$600 million growth oriented, profitable businesses with strong cash flow generation located domestically and internationally. After retirement, Mallitz moved to Florida from Indiana, and joined several local nonprofit Sarasota boards with the intent of helping them to grow profitability in their services to the community.

### **PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS**

SANCA at Nathan Benderson Park seeks an Executive Director – Development with

- highly developed leadership and management skills and the experience to inspire, motivate, and close;
- experience planning and evaluating fundraising campaigns and activities;
- superb written, verbal, and interpersonal skills;
- highly developed strategic thinking and planning skills;
- excellent time management and organizational skills;
- fluency with fundraising tools and software and the use of prospect research tools to develop a donor database;
- a creative, self-starter attitude;
- a donor, stewardship, and volunteer service temperament;
- experience with local, state, and federal grant processes and general knowledge of grant and subsidy opportunities and procedures;

- experience developing and managing departmental budgets;
- an interest in global and domestic sports and knowledge of rowing (preferred); and
- familiarity with Sarasota–Manatee Community (a strong plus).

A bachelor's degree is required for this position. At least seven years of successful fund development experience is preferred.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

It is the policy of the Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates, Inc. to ensure equal opportunity in employment for all persons: to provide employment, placement, training, promotion and salary opportunities without regard to race, color, gender, genetic information, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, marital status, age or disability. SANCA is committed to the creation and nurturing of a diverse community of individuals through inclusive excellence. Diversity involves recognizing the value of differences and the inclusion of all members of the community including those that experience discrimination or under-representation.

### **SALARY & BENEFITS**

SANCA at Nathan Benderson Park offers a competitive and comprehensive salary and package of employee benefits.

### **LOCATION**

Nathan Benderson Park is located in Sarasota, Florida. Sarasota, the sixth largest philanthropic community in the United States, is noted for its concentration of donors that have made a difference in the community. From the indulgence of a powder white sand beach and the escape of a kayak cutting through tropical mangroves, to the power of awe-inspiring works of art, Sarasota County offers an experience for every taste, every age, and every desire. Many visitors come to Sarasota County to enjoy the casual elegance of its thriving beach community. Others are drawn to Sarasota's reputation as Florida's Cultural Coast and revel in the abundant cultural amenities that rival the offerings of much larger metropolitan areas.

### **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. Before submitting your materials, please read them over for accuracy. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

*To apply for this position, visit:*

[Executive Director – Development, SANCA at Nathan Benderson Park.](#)

*To nominate a candidate, please contact Floyd Akins:*

[floydakins@aspenleadershipgroup.com](mailto:floydakins@aspenleadershipgroup.com).

*All inquiries will be held in confidence.*