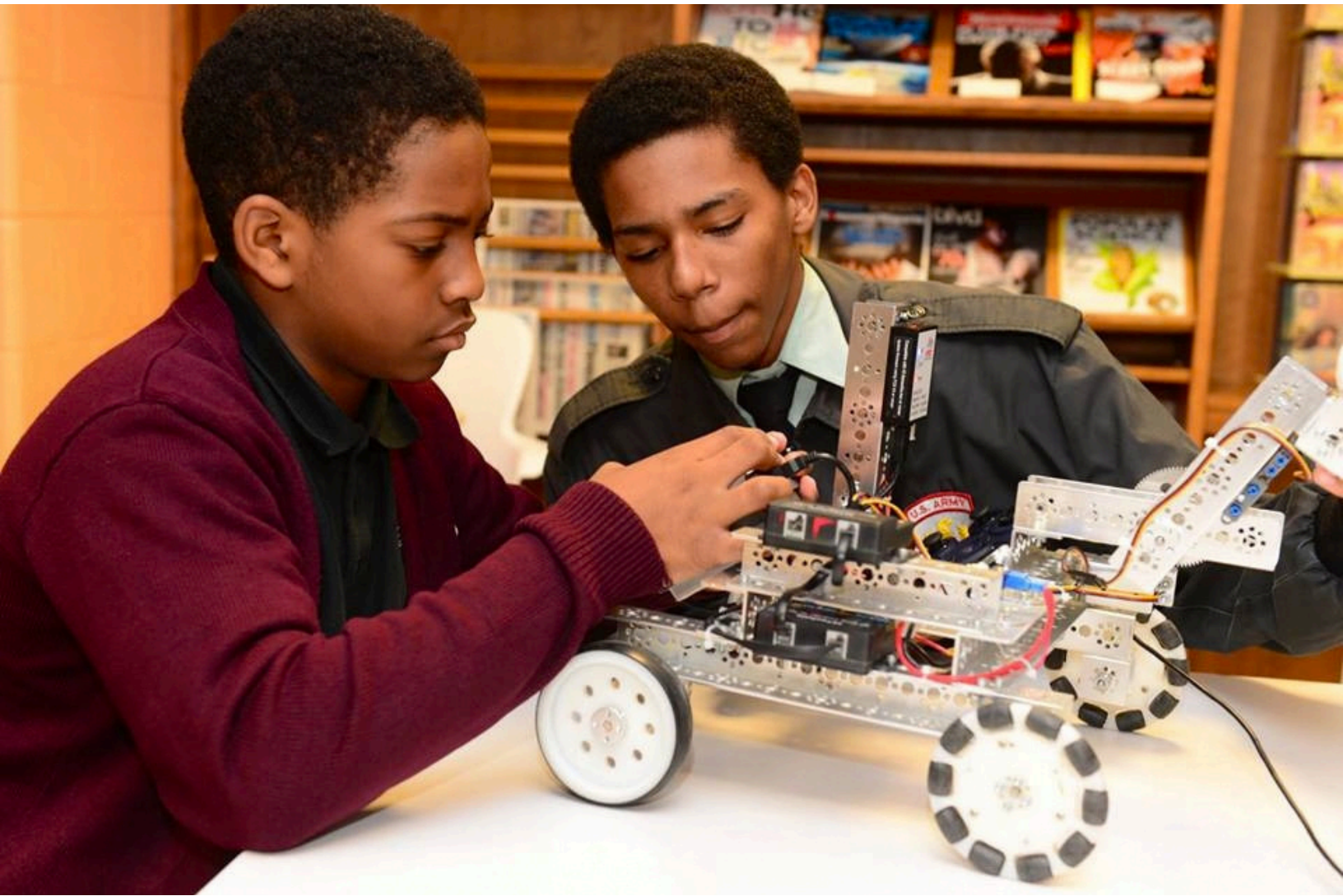


Heart of America®

GIVING COMMUNITIES
SPACE TO GROW



Vice President of Communications and Marketing

COMPENSATION

Salary Range: \$160,000–\$180,000

Applications will be accepted until **November 11, 2026**.
All applicants must [apply online here](#).

PRESENTED BY

ballinger | leafblad

Heart of America

Vice President of Communications and Marketing

Ballinger | Leafblad is honored to partner with Heart of America (HOA) on the search for its first Vice President of Communications and Marketing. The VP of Communications and Marketing is a visionary and hands-on senior leadership role responsible for defining and executing HOA's communications strategies to elevate the mission, impact, brand, and team cohesion. Reporting to the CEO, the role owns the end-to-end approach to how HOA tells its story, from digital and social content to thought leadership, media and public relations, regional and national partnerships, and advocacy and awareness campaigns.

Heart of America has been transforming the places where children learn since 1997. A national education nonprofit headquartered in Washington, D.C., Heart of America renovates and reimagines libraries, STEAM labs, wellness spaces, and college and career centers in schools and communities that have too often gone without. It brings together corporate partners, funders, volunteers and communities so that every student, in every zip code, has room to learn, discover and thrive.

After nearly three decades of doing this work behind the scenes, Heart of America is ready to step forward. The organization is two years into a bold goal to transform 2,030 learning spaces by 2030. It is also taking part in a growing national conversation about the condition of America's school buildings.

The next Vice President of Communications and Marketing will be the leader who turns Heart of America's impact into influence. This is an exciting opportunity to build a structured, proactive communications function for a thriving organization, elevate the voice of Heart of America and its President & CEO, and bring its work the national recognition it has earned.

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Overview

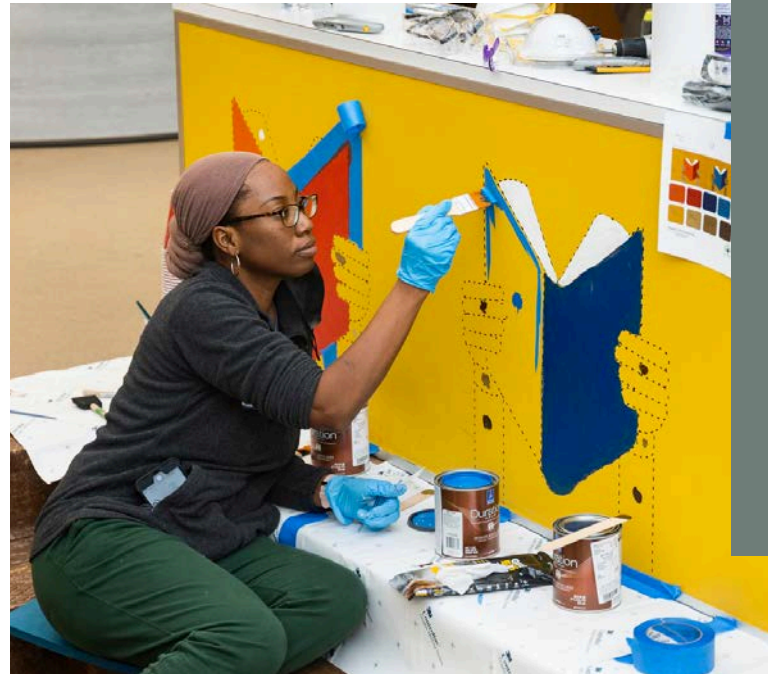
Heart of America's work is grounded in education equity and the belief that all children, regardless of zip code, deserve the resources and inspiring spaces that help them reach their full potential.

Its approach follows a child's day across home, school (K-12), and out-of-school time in a learning continuum. Beyond school libraries and labs, it has also completed whole-campus makeovers of community spaces such as a recent Boys & Girls Club and it extends learning into students' homes through resource packs and solar power.

HOA works as a design-build nonprofit, a one-stop shop with in-house design, procurement, project management and construction management teams that can create whatever a community needs down to the layout, furniture, fixtures and graphics.

It's like a home makeover show, but for schools.

JILL HARDY HEATH, PRESIDENT & CEO



Partnerships are central to every project. HOA collaborates with corporations, funders, donors, school districts, community members and like-minded organizations to bring each space to life, and runs national campaigns such as a library makeover contest with Simon & Schuster that drew 15,000 applicants.

Heart of America's team is based at the Washington, D.C. headquarters, a growing hub in the Twin Cities, and the Salt Lake City / Four Corners region, which supports projects in Indigenous communities, including the Navajo Nation.

At-A-Glance

Organization

FOUNDED IN

1997

HEADQUARTERS

Washington, D.C.

with team hubs in the Twin Cities and Salt Lake City area

2025 REVENUE

\$19.9M

46

FULL-TIME
EMPLOYEES

1

PART-TIME
CONTRACTOR

30

PROJECT-BASED
TEMP EMPLOYEES

BOLD GOAL
TO TRANSFORM

2,030

learning spaces by
2030

2025 Impact

188

SPACE
TRANSFORMATIONS

112,589

STUDENTS SERVED

70,527

BOOKS DISTRIBUTED

28,104

EDUCATION RESOURCE
PACKS ASSEMBLED

\$2.67M

IN TECHNOLOGY ADDED
TO SCHOOLS

2,734

VOLUNTEERS
ENGAGED

117

STUDENT HOMES
POWERED BY SOLAR

Lifetime Impact

1,582

SPACE
TRANSFORMATIONS

2.6M

STUDENTS
SERVED

4.5M

BOOKS
DISTRIBUTED

\$16.9M

IN TECHNOLOGY
ADDED TO SCHOOLS



MISSION

Heart of America transforms learning spaces, bridges the resource gap, and strengthens communities to give all students room to learn, discover, and thrive.

PROCESS

A commitment to collaboration to co-create innovative solutions that reflect the communities served.

BELIEF

Every student deserves an inspiring learning space equipped with the right resources to thrive.

Key Programs & Services

Space Transformations

Heart of America's signature work is the complete transformation of learning spaces in schools, community centers, libraries and out-of-school-time settings. Transformations fall into four focus areas:



STEAM Labs

Hands-on technology such as robotics, 3D printers and interactive displays

Libraries & Literacy

Diverse book collections and reimagined library spaces

Health & Wellness

Gyms, wellness studios and spaces for emotional regulation

College & Career

Career readiness suites and career and technical education labs

Resource Distribution

Education Resource Packs

Heart of America gives students the tools they need to keep learning outside the classroom, extending its impact into the home.

Student Solar

Student Solar brings reliable solar power to students whose homes aren't connected to the electrical grid, so learning can continue after the sun goes down.

Volunteer Engagement

Thousands of volunteers each year help bring Heart of America's projects to life. They take part in transformations and assemble resources for students.



This Moment for Heart of America

The need Heart of America addresses is large, and it is growing.

Public school buildings are the second-largest category of infrastructure in the United States.

Because school facilities are funded largely through local taxes and bonds, the communities with the fewest resources often have the least to invest. HOA is one of very few nonprofits working directly inside the four walls of these learning environments. Its public-private partnership model is a proven way to close the gap now.



Heart of America has grown significantly over the past decade. It has expanded beyond libraries into four focus areas, beyond the K–12 classroom into the full learning continuum, and toward an ambitious goal of 2,030 transformed spaces by 2030. Jill Hardy Heath serves on the board of the BASIC Coalition (Building America’s School Infrastructure Coalition) and is on Capitol Hill regularly to talk about the state of America’s school buildings. HOA has a growing opportunity to shape that national conversation.

Until now, much of that story has been told project by project, through the CEO’s own network and relationships. As communications and fundraising become more and more intertwined, HOA is creating a permanent leadership-level role to lead this work.

The Vice President of Communications and Marketing will bring structure, strategy and ambition to how Heart of America shows up in the world. This leader will unify its digital presence, build a proactive media and thought leadership agenda, and position HOA as the national voice for the places where children learn.

THE SCHOOLHOUSE REVOLUTION

2030 TRANSFORMED SPACES BY 2030

OUR PURPOSE

Transform learning spaces, bridge the resource gap, and strengthen communities to give all students room to learn, discover, & thrive

WHY??

Every student everywhere should have boundless space to learn

OUR GOAL

HOA will reimagine 2,030 learning spaces by 2030, empowering 3.5 million students with the education they deserve

FOCUS AREAS

LIBRARIES &
LITERACY

STEAM

HEALTH
& WELLNESS

COLLEGE
&
CAREER
READINESS

HOW WE'LL GET THERE

Build a high-performing, trust-based culture

Balance compassion with accountability, where team members feel a sense of belonging, take ownership of outcomes, communicate transparently, and operate with shared standards of excellence in advancing our mission.

Increase visibility, recognition and engagement with HOA mission and impact

Strengthening brand identity, expanding outreach efforts, and engaging key audiences through consistent and compelling communication.

Expand reach and deepen impact with the most vulnerable students and communities

Align with our Communities of Impact strategies and beyond.

Support sustainable growth

Enhance HOA's capacity to scale and implement programs that meet community needs by strengthening infrastructure, optimizing workflow, and investing in talent.

Strengthen financial stability

Acquire, cultivate, & retain relationships with funders, ensuring diversified and reliable revenue streams to support organizational growth and resilience.

Vice President of Communications and Marketing

SUMMARY

The Vice President of Communications and Marketing is a newly created role on Heart of America's leadership team. This leader will set and carry out the organization's communications and marketing strategy, covering public relations and media, thought leadership, brand strategy, content creation, digital presence, and internal communications. The goal is to raise HOA's visibility, deepen its influence, and strengthen the connection between its story and its growth.

This is a public relations and communications-first role that also carries full responsibility for marketing. Heart of America is looking for a strategist who can see the big picture and roll up their sleeves to get it done. This person will serve as a trusted advisor to the President & CEO, who will remain the organization's primary public voice. They will build the plans, platforms and relationships that amplify that voice and extend it across the organization. This leader will move HOA from announcing projects to telling a sustained, strategic story that informs the public, engages policymakers and inspires partners and donors.

The Vice President will join HOA as its ambitions and leadership team grow, with the chance to help shape the organization's next chapter.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

The Vice President of Communications and Marketing reports to Jill Hardy Heath, President & CEO, and serves on Heart of America's leadership team.

Direct Reports

- Senior Director of Marketing
- Marketing Content Specialist

Oversees and Partners with

PR & Communications Consultant and other agency partners; works closely with leaders across Development, Program Delivery, Government Affairs, Finance, Operations, and HR & Administration, as well as the Chief of Staff.

Key Responsibilities

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Set and own a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy that fits Heart of America's organizational goals, its bold 2030 goal, and the needs of its many audiences. Turn that strategy into plans, budgets, KPIs and roadmaps.
- Translate HOA's theory of change into a clear, compelling narrative and messaging framework that builds awareness, moves stakeholders to act and advances mission outcomes.
- Make communications a strategic part of mission delivery, built into planning, decision-making and evaluation alongside programs and fundraising.
- Serve as a strategic advisor to the President & CEO and the leadership team on internal and external messaging, reputation management and public engagement. Lead crisis communications planning and response.
- Contribute executive-level thinking and model strong leadership, participating in organization-wide short- and long-term planning.
- Design and implement internal communication strategies that build transparency, engagement and alignment across a dispersed, national team.

PUBLIC RELATIONS, MEDIA & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- Build and lead a proactive media relations strategy that raises Heart of America's national and regional visibility. Cultivate relationships with journalists and outlets, pitch compelling stories, and manage releases and media outreach.
- Lead a thought leadership strategy that shapes the public narrative on school infrastructure and education equity. Position the President & CEO and other HOA leaders as credible, influential voices in media, policy and sector conversations.
- Prepare the President & CEO and other spokespeople for interviews, speaking engagements and public appearances, including ongoing media training.
- Go beyond project announcements with structured, year-round storytelling campaigns that show the cumulative impact of HOA's work.

Key Responsibilities (Cont'd)

BRAND, MARKETING & DIGITAL

- Steward Heart of America's brand identity and keep it consistent across every platform, partner and touchpoint.
- Unify and strengthen HOA's digital presence, including its website, social media, newsletters, blogs and video storytelling.
- Oversee analytics and performance metrics, and use data to improve engagement, reach and results.
- Modernize content operations with reusable content structures, AI-assisted workflows and automated processes that speed up production while keeping human oversight.
- Build a central key-message library so the whole organization can reuse approved messages consistently.

PARTNERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT ALIGNMENT

- Partner closely with the Vice President of Development to align communications with fundraising, supporting donor and corporate partner communications, campaigns and stewardship.
- Work with Program Delivery and other teams to find, shape and share stories from the schools, students and communities HOA serves.
- Equip leaders across the organization to engage a wide range of stakeholders with confidence. These include foundations, corporate sponsors, school districts, community partners and advisory groups.

TEAM LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

- Lead, coach and develop a multidisciplinary team, and manage agency and consultant partners.
- Build a culture of accountability, continuous development and high performance on the team, and help shape a healthy, inclusive and engaged culture across HOA.
- Responsibly manage resources, priorities and budget.

Desired Qualifications

REQUIRED

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of education and work experience in communications, public relations, marketing and/or related fields.
- Minimum of 10 years of progressive experience in communications, public relations, marketing, public affairs or a related field. This includes at least five years of people leadership and experience developing organization-wide communications strategies.
- A strong background in public relations and media relations including established relationships with national and regional media, and a track record of earning visibility for an organization or its leaders.
- Proven experience developing and executing strategic communications, digital and social, thought leadership and event plans, and aligning cross-functional leaders around a unified communications strategy.
- Experience advising and preparing senior executives for their roles in communications, PR and media relations strategies.
- Demonstrated ability to balance strategic vision with operational excellence, including resource planning, prioritization, budget management and performance reporting.

PREFERRED

- Experience in nonprofit, mission-driven or philanthropic settings is helpful. A blend of corporate and nonprofit experience is valued.
- Experience with policy, public affairs or coalition communications. Familiarity with education, education equity or infrastructure is a plus.
- Experience managing marketing teams alongside PR and communications functions, including agency and consultant partners.
- Experience leading teams in a growing organization, building or scaling a function.
- Fluency with digital analytics tools and modern, AI-assisted content workflows.

Desired Characteristics

A storyteller with a PR instinct.

Sees the story in the work and knows how to get it in front of the right audiences. Tells it with clarity, warmth and a strong sense of the Heart of America brand voice.

Strategic and hands-on.

Can set a multi-year vision in the morning and edit a press release in the afternoon. Comfortable building a function while delivering results.

A trusted thought partner to the CEO.

Brings ideas, perspective and candor to the President & CEO and the leadership team. Knows how to amplify another leader's voice while building the organization's own.

A coach and team builder.

Develops people, sets clear expectations and builds a culture of accountability and growth.

Nimble and roll-up-your-sleeves.

Thrives in a fast-moving, humble, mission-driven team where everyone pitches in and priorities can shift quickly.

Collaborative and relational.

Builds trust quickly across a national, dispersed team and with a wide range of external partners. Works with tact, flexibility and discretion with people at every level.

Mission-driven.

Believes deeply that every child deserves inspiring, healthy spaces to learn, and brings genuine passion for Heart of America's work.

Analytical and results-oriented.

Uses data to measure impact, sharpen strategy and show the value of communications to the organization.



Where the Work Happens

This is a hybrid position based in either the Twin Cities, Minnesota, or the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Team members in the D.C. area work from Heart of America's headquarters two to three days per week. Twin Cities team members work remotely, with occasional co-working days. Heart of America will also consider exceptional candidates based elsewhere.

The role requires occasional travel for projects, board meetings and the all-staff retreat, averaging about one trip per quarter. Some work outside standard business hours should be expected.



Compensation & Benefits

The salary range for this position is **\$160,000–\$180,000**, commensurate with experience.

Heart of America's generous benefits package includes:

- Medical, dental and vision insurance, with Heart of America paying 75% of premiums
- 403(b) retirement plan with a 4% employer match
- Paid holidays, vacation and sick time
- Health & wellness reimbursement
- Professional development

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

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. **Early application is encouraged.** Review of materials begins immediately.

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 Jen Hanlon Ash, jen@ballingerleafblad.com.

Applications due by November 11, 2026.

Ballinger | Leafblad Search Team

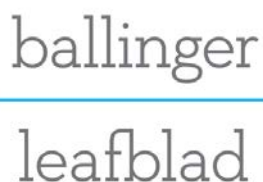
Our collaborative search model is led by principals who bring deep expertise in executive recruitment, stakeholder engagement, strategic communications, and search execution. With a disciplined, relationship-centered approach and strong operational rigor, we ensure a seamless process and a successful outcome for every search.



Jen Hanlon Ash
Principal



Jamie Millard
Managing Partner



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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