



Position Statement

Director of Major Gifts and Strategic Partnerships

Wildwood School

Los Angeles, California

Start Date: As soon as Possible



Wildwood School





Overview

Wildwood School is an urban, co-ed, college-preparatory, K-12 school in West Los Angeles recognized for its innovative practices, progressive pedagogy, and commitment to multicultural programming.

The school was founded with the Coalition of Essential Schools' Common Principles in mind. This is a truly student-centered school, one whose academic and co-and extra-curricular programs are based on "what's good for students". The teaching, the content, and the overall organization of the school are informed by research and a spirit of innovation that are rarely seen in other strong schools.

The school enrolls 726 students in three divisions on two campuses on the west side of Los Angeles. The elementary school, which was the original campus, is in Mar Vista close to LAX, and the middle and upper school is about three miles north between Century City and Santa Monica. A decidedly urban school, the school rents athletics facilities as needed. Students attend from all over the greater Los Angeles area and

are drawn by the school's excellent reputation as one of the city's leading and most exciting independent schools.

While many schools may describe themselves as "progressive", the term often refers largely to forward-thinking and liberally minded attitudes toward social issues. At Wildwood, the progressive qualities extend well beyond the social constructs into the curriculum and pedagogy.

Wildwood School's deep commitment to ongoing professional development feeds a renowned Outreach Center that has provided programming for public and independent school teachers, administrators, and trustees in 16 states and 8 countries. Wildwood is also a founding member of the Mastery Transcript Consortium, working with universities and other private and public schools to transform the college process and move away from "an outdated system that rewards only the acquisition of information segregated into single subject areas."

School Program and Culture

Wildwood is a truly mission-driven school. Wildwood embraces diversity, inclusivity and a curriculum fostering social-emotional learning as essential to intellectual growth.

The school's teachers, administrators, and trustees are not afraid to lean on best practice and research to develop new models of learning, modernize curriculum to include diverse voices, or embrace assessment practices that reflect mastery learning.

This spirit of innovation is evident in the real-world skills students develop, the commitment of the faculty to shift course for the benefit of students, and especially in the leadership of the school's growth mindset. The school has acted with courage and foresight to create programs that are engaging and relevant to the lives of students who will be entering a very different workforce from previous generations. Collaboration among students and faculty are the norm and project-based learning has existed at the school since its founding in the 1970s.

Typical of a culture of innovation, there are now three Institutes at Wildwood:

- WISRD: Wildwood Institute for STEM Research and Development
- WISL: Wildwood Institute for Social Leadership
- WIE: Wildwood Institute for Entrepreneurship

These are programs in which cohorts of upper school students work collaboratively with professionals, researchers, and professors on real world issues and develop solutions to those problems. They are interdisciplinary and reflect "design-thinking" practices such as those begun at Stanford and MIT. Every senior at Wildwood is responsible for a Senior Exhibition, in which they present original thinking and work accomplished during their time at the school. These are inspiring demonstrations of research, accomplishment, and character through which the school's transformative power is evident.

There is a deliberateness and honesty in the school's culture; people at Wildwood are not afraid to be direct and clear, which has created an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. There is humor and warmth among students, faculty, and administration. This is a school where adults trust one another. In this kind of community, innovation is possible and improvement, as well as acceptance of imperfection, becomes the norm.

For more information on Wildwood School's dynamic program of academics, athletics, arts, visit www.wildwood.org





Head of School and Board of Trustees

Landis Green is retiring in July 2026 after a very successful 19-year tenure.

Matt Levinson was recently announced as the next Head of School at Wildwood beginning in July 2026. His distinguished, 30-year career includes serving as Head of School at San Francisco University High School (CA), The Pingry School (NJ), and University Prep (WA), as well as directing school divisions, teaching history, and coaching at schools across the country. Committed to centering the student experience, developing faculty, and fostering cohesive and meaningful learning environments, Matt was called "an educator's educator" by one of his former employers. Wildwood is excited to welcome Matt and his wife, Priyanthi (Pri), next summer.

The Board of Trustees is led by Chair Susan Olsen. There are no fewer than 15 and no more than 25 individuals (currently there are 24), serving a term of three years with most trustees serving for two terms. This group is exceptionally strong and high functioning. Great care has been taken in building the trustee team. Their unwavering willingness to dive into challenging initiatives, a deep understanding of the importance of focusing on strategic rather than operational initiatives is emblematic of their thoughtful stewardship.

Finances and Fundraising

Wildwood School has made prudent decisions since its inception that have provided a significant financial impact. These include long-term site leases with term options, site improvements, purchases of local real estate (which has translated into meaningful rental income over the last decade) and healthy surpluses over the years which has produced an investment/endowment/ cash account balance above \$65 million. There is the potential for acquiring a permanent home for Wildwood School.

The school has had a solid record of successful fundraising, led by the Director of Institutional Advancement Kristin Hampton who has been at the school since 2018. Kristin spent nearly a decade at the Polytechnic School in Pasadena, progressing from advancement services to major gifts work to chief operating officer for the advancement office.

The Wildwood Fund is robust every year, generating over \$2 million in 2023-2024. Periodic campaigns have raised funding for the three institutes, significant building refurbishments, enhancing Flexible Tuition funding, bolstering faculty salaries, tuition support and the school's endowment.

At A Glance

Grades: K-12
 Enrollment: 726
 Students in flexible tuition program: 21%
 Students of color (self-identified): 44%
 Faculty/Staff: 93 faculty, 67 staff
 Faculty/Staff of color: 42%
 Operating budget: \$34.4 million
 Endowment: \$13.2 million
 Annual Fund (2023-2024): \$2.175 million (6% of budget)
 Parent participation: 68%
 Number of alumni (reachable): 1,256



The Position

Wildwood School is seeking a Director of Major Gifts and Strategic Partnerships who will be a member of the fundraising leadership team. Reporting to the Director of Institutional Advancement, the Director of Major Gifts and Strategic Partnerships will be a key member of the upcoming capital campaign to secure major and planned gifts from current parents, alumni, and other friends of Wildwood. The Director of Major Gifts and Strategic Partnerships works collaboratively with key volunteers, members of the advancement team, faculty and staff.

A primary responsibility of this position is to maximize the total philanthropic relationship of major gift donors and prospects (both Annual Giving and other) to the School. This involves the development of strategies to generate higher levels of support and implementation of individual multi-year fundraising plans that focuses on renewals and increased gifts. This means establishing long-term relationships with major gift donors, converting prospects into donors, while working collaboratively with colleagues and school leaders to meet the School's advancement objectives and mission.

This individual will focus on the identification, cultivation, solicitation and stewardship of leadership

gift prospects and donors utilizing written solicitations, phone follow-up, outreach events, face to face meetings, special events and other methods (including gift planning vehicles) to maintain regular contact with these donors and prospects.

Responsibilities

- Qualifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding major and planned gift prospects to support the objectives of Wildwood School, collaborating with trustees, volunteers and staff.
 - A. Managing a portfolio of 125+ prospects capable of giving gifts of \$25,000+ to continue to build the school's culture of philanthropy; complete 16 documented personal, intentional contacts a month, or the equivalent of 4 contacts a week on average. These contacts would include discovery visits, solicitations, and stewardship.
 - B. Metrics would include the number of non-donors converted to donors, the "close rate" of solicitations, and the percentage of those renewing or increasing their giving.
 - C. Maintaining regular contact with donors.
 - D. Scheduling joint visits with the Head of School, Trustees or other appropriate school personnel when appropriate.



- Prepare reports, briefing materials, proposals and related documents for solicitations and stewardship.
- Complete correspondence and record of contact with prospects in a prompt and accurate fashion.
- Ensure that all major donors receive appropriate, consistent recognition and an accounting of the impact that his/her gift has on the School.
- Work with the fundraising leadership team to develop cultivation and proposal strategies.
- Coordinate with the Director of Development to help secure leadership annual gifts.
- Coordinate with the marketing and communication team to ensure consistency with narrative messaging and brand strategy.
- Assist with planning and/or directing cultivation and stewardship events or efforts with colleagues in advancement, admissions, communications and other offices.
- Develop and manage a planned giving program.
- Ensure appropriate gift processing and tracking, donor acknowledgement, recognition, and reporting and analysis of gifts and donor records.
- Participate in discussions reviewing fundraising activities, costs, operations and other data to determine the efficacy of the advancement efforts.
- Maintain a vigilant eye to recording contacts, record-keeping and comprehensive and accurate list generation for Annual Report, as well as improvement of advancement/prospect management module.
- Participate in the review and generation of the school Annual Report and other communications materials.
- Assist with the coordination of the Advancement Office and Business Office processes.

- Participate in appropriate levels of solicitation and recognition activities.
- Attend and assist with the planning and implementation of Advancement Office, school and special events.
- Be a visible ambassador of Wildwood School.

Essential Skills

- A big-picture strategic thinker who is flexible, highly detail-oriented, and has impeccable follow-through.
- Ability to deal diplomatically and comfortably with a diverse community of parents, students, alumni, and faculty – leading and motivating groups and individuals.
- Intellectual curiosity, behavioral and linguistic flexibility, skills for synthesizing information, and exceptional communication skills, fluency and ability to articulate Wildwood School's mission, unique vision, and case for support.
- Outstanding analytical skills used in identifying school needs, donors' interests, and connecting the two.
- High-touch relationship builder who thrives on community and connection; excellent interpersonal skills.
- High level of professionalism and the ability to appropriately handle confidential and sensitive information.
- Eagerness to work hard as both leader and team member with proven fund-raising, leadership and consensus building skills and a positive, passionate, can-do spirit.
- A disciplined, results-oriented self-starter with high ethical standards.
- Ability to meet deadlines within context of a complex office/school calendar.
- Sense of humor; relentless optimism.
- Flexibility, energy and ability to work evenings and weekends; a strong work ethic.



Qualifications

- Bachelor's or advanced degree
- Proven personal solicitation track record in major gifts fundraising of five- six- and seven-figure gifts
- At least five year's progressive fundraising responsibility, preferably in major gifts
- Experience in, or understanding of, independent schools and/or non-profit organizations
- Proficient in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Familiarity with Raiser's Edge (RE)
- A commitment to, and enthusiasm for, philanthropy, institutional development, and Wildwood's mission, vision, and progressive educational model.

Work Environment & Complexity

Duties and tasks in this position are varied and complex. The position works on whole problems or projects. This position directs projects and the challenges are resolved with complex and precedent setting solutions. This position requires a high degree of collaboration. This position operates in a professional school environment. The functions of this position are performed in a typical office environment with no known hazards.

Compensation and Benefits

Wildwood School uses a salary scale that is based on education and years of experience and is anticipated to be in the \$115,000 range, a robust benefits package, and professional development opportunities. The school is committed to supporting team members in their personal and professional growth.

Physical Demands

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this position, such as the ability to see, hear, speak and understand English and use a computer. This position is active and requires standing and walking, including stairs.

Travel

Regular and overnight travel is expected in this position. A valid driver's license and ability to travel, if needed.

This job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee. Other duties, responsibilities and activities may change or be assigned at any time with or without notice.

Application submission screening and interviews will be completed on a rolling basis until filled.



Wildwood School is committed to building a diverse and inclusive culture and welcomes employees who bring skills, qualities, and/or experience that demonstrate an understanding of and ability to support our work surrounding multicultural education, global citizenship, and sustaining a diverse and inclusive school community. Wildwood School is an equal opportunity employer, dedicated to a policy of non-discrimination in employment on any basis including race, color, age, sex, religion, national origin, the presence of mental, physical, or sensory disability, sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by federal or state law.

Wildwood School

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To Apply

If the possibilities in this opportunity excite you, please apply online at the RG175 website: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

The application includes:

- Letter of interest
- Resume or CV
- Writing sample of your choice

For any questions or additional information about the position, please contact the consultant on the search Jams E. Pattison jpattison@rg175.com