



**Wildwood School**

Position Statement for Major Gifts Officer

## Wildwood School

Los Angeles, California

Search will be filled as soon as possible

# Wildwood School – Major Gifts Officer Search

## INTRODUCTION

Wildwood School is an urban, coed, college-preparatory, K-12 school in West Los Angeles recognized for its innovative practices, progressive pedagogy, and commitment to multicultural programming. Approaching its 50th anniversary, the school enrolls 750 students in three divisions on two campuses. 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 eight 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working with universities and other private and public schools to transform the college process and move away from "an outdated system that rewards only the acquisition of information segregated into single subject areas."

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. 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. Wildwood is an innovative, inspiring, and exciting community in which to work and learn.

The school is housed on two urban campuses on the west side of Los Angeles. The Elementary School, which was the original campus, is close to LAX, and the Middle and Upper School is about three miles north between Century City and Santa Monica. Both campuses are highly appropriate for the program and well facilitated. 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.





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.

## SCHOOL PROGRAM AND CULTURE

Wildwood is a truly mission-driven school. Wildwood 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. Based on best practices, 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 it’s 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 ([www.wisrd.org](http://www.wisrd.org))
- WISL – Wildwood Institute for Social Leadership
- Institute for Incubation and Entrepreneurship

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.

## THE POSITION

Wildwood School is seeking a Major Gifts Officer who will be a member of the fundraising leadership team, securing support for the school’s programs. Reporting to the Director of Institutional Advancement, the Major Gifts Officer will execute the successful completion of Wildwood’s current capital campaign and grow a post-campaign philanthropic program to secure major and planned gifts from current parents, alumni, and other friends of Wildwood. The Major Gifts Officer works collaboratively with key volunteers, members of the advancement team, faculty and staff.

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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 position focuses 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. The Major Gifts Officer can definitely impact the affinity a prospect and donor has for the institution (what activities will bring a prospect/donor closer; what factors will have an impact on increasing affinity) and can lead to increasing donor interest.



### **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.



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- 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 Annual Giving 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.

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- 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.

### **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 PROCESS

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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Los Angeles, CA 90064  
310.478.7189  
www.wildwood.org

The successful candidate will receive a compensation package that includes a market appropriate salary plus comprehensive health and retirement benefits.

### **Background Check**

Prior to submitting your resume for this position, please read it for accuracy. RG175 verifies academic credentials for its candidates and conducts a thorough review of candidates' social media presence. Wildwood School will conduct thorough background checks prior to finalizing an offer.

Prospective Candidates may apply online at:  
<https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

The application includes: a letter detailing his/her interest in the position and his/her suitability for it, an updated *curriculum vitae* or *resume*, and a copy of original writing on any subject of interest to the candidate that can be written for this exercise or provided from something written previously.

For more information contact James E. Pattison, RG175 Consultant: [jpattison@rg175.com](mailto:jpattison@rg175.com)