

by Brad Pomerance, WILDWOOD PARENT

# From Wildwood to GW to Stanford, a Humanist Is Born



Matt Levy, '04, entered Wildwood School at a pivotal moment in its history. He joined the Wildwood community in the upper school's first year "as a shy and nervous 8th grader" and immediately took to Wildwood's progressive educational approach. "The small community and supportive

environment allowed me to really grow as a person and later become known as the 'Levy Monster' in my 9th grade Advisory," Matt remembers.

Matt's advisor, Mr. Reese, dubbed Matt the "Levy Monster" for his tenacity and his critical thinking. Matt says that affectionate label provided him with the confidence he really needed to blossom as a student. "Throughout my years at Wildwood, teachers provided me with necessary and specific feedback that allowed me to improve my thought process and my ability to think critically," he says.

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Simultaneously, the Wildwood culture pushed Matt to pursue his individual interest in positive change by preparing him to be "a conscientious and proactive citizen of the world." Matt fondly recalls, "Our community involvement at the St. Joseph Center was particularly instrumental in my development. Here was a non-governmental organization (NGO) focused not only on feeding or clothing the homeless but on addressing the fundamental causes by supporting the homeless in finding jobs with career counselors and providing them with an actual mailing address."

By the time Matt was ready to apply to college, he had a fervent desire to effectuate positive change in the world. This yearning motivated Matt to investigate universities that would support such a laudable goal. Coincidentally,

the very first college to hold a session for Wildwood's first senior class—George Washington University (GW) in D.C., an institution that offered a smaller International Affairs Program at a medium-size school—was a perfect fit for Matt.

Once at GW, Wildwood's educational approach served Matt well—critical skills that allowed him to be an active collaborator given the significant amount of group work Matt faced at GW. "I arrived at Wildwood a bright yet quiet thinker. I was able to emerge as a much more confident leader, team player, and activist for change," Matt says.

Having relished his experience working with St. Joseph's while at Wildwood, Matt decided to work for an NGO after graduation from George Washington University. He selected the Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD), which lobbied governments to implement policies that would strengthen democracy around the world. Admittedly, Matt also signed up to work for an NGO "to prove a university professor wrong that international development aid was ineffective." How Wildwoodian of Matt.

After his time at the CCD, Matt determined that he wanted to further pursue his education in international affairs and was admitted to the highly selective International Policy Studies master's program at Stanford University. And Matt's Wildwood education played a role in his decision to seek out this program. "The humanism inherent in the Habits of Mind and Heart has remained steady contributors in my life. Such training has helped me balance a critical eye to find what is best for me and how I can best contribute to the common good," Matt says.

Matt's master's program has taken him to Austria as part of a new academic exchange through the

Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. While in Austria, Matt has enjoyed some extraordinary opportunities. Matt mentions a few: "I have

been exposed to new perspectives. I have explored the European continent. I have learned some basic German—the native language of three out of four of my grandparents. I was fortunate to witness the Euromaidan protests firsthand in Kiev, Ukraine. I have participated in a study trip to Brussels for diplomats from various African countries."

So where does Matt Levy go from here? "I hope to be a trailblazer in the field," he says. "My ultimate career goal is to effect positive change in the world." Spoken like a true Wildwood alumni. "[And rest assured that] the personal attention and belief instilled in me by my professors and fellow classmates at Wildwood has been instrumental in my development as a human being and citizen of this world," Matt says. 