

Wildwood Alumni News

The Essential Question

"Change" is the buzzword for 2009. President Obama is tasked with changing America's course, and he has asked each of us to take part in helping to create the change our country needs. For this issue, we asked our young alumni about their role in shaping our country's future:

Joey Kanengiser, '04: There are so many challenges our country faces, it's easy to feel pessimistic about our prospects. However, I believe it is our undying urge to work for a better life for those who follow us that will bring us together and help break down the obstacles that prevent real progress. Nearly every young person I meet is passionate about some national or global issue, and many of them have spent immense amounts of time and energy to serve the greater good. As a musician, I always thought that my own contribution would be to create art and help influence a new generation of thoughtful scholars and musicians. However, I have decided to broaden my goals. Although I try to make a conscious effort to live my life with respect both to my fellow human beings and the

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Kendra Elstad '95

From Pod Student to Grades Teacher: A Wildwood Alum Finds Herself Back in the Classroom

This is my first year as a Wildwood 3rd grade associate teacher. Over the past few months, people have asked me, "Does it feel weird to be back at Wildwood?" I respond by saying, "Is it weird that it doesn't feel weird? Wildwood is my home."

I grew up the biracial only child of two parents with demanding careers, and the Wildwood community of teachers, classmates, and parents created a nurturing environment of familiar faces and support that has continued beyond the seven years I was a student here.

I attended Wildwood at the original Olympic campus with the pond and makeshift temporary buildings. I was in Pod 1 with Sherry Varon! She visited my house before school started. I remember as if it were yesterday: We played with my favorite stuffed animal, "Bunny," in my very pink room. It was her warmth that day that made me less afraid and ready to start my first day of school. I loved the Pods! We had fun while we learned and developed the social skills to make friends. I still have fond memories of playing dress-up.

Although Pod 1 was a blast, I was excited to get homework and have a "big kid" desk in 3rd grade. I still remember the energy and big smile of my 3rd grade teacher Lisa Glassman, which filled our colorful classroom every day. She taught me multiplication facts with "Math Mountain," which I use to teach my students today.

Jan Stallings and Doug Meyer were the best 5th grade teachers ever! After learning about the 13 original colonies of America, our class dressed up as colonists. With our bonnets,

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Class Notes, continued

earth, I know I can do more. Most importantly, I want to try to instill in others the same passion for learning, progressive thought, and community that I have developed.

Marie Eddison, '05: I am thrilled with our new president! I am excited for a new chapter of personal responsibility and positive change.

Gabby Hadlock-Piltz, '05: In the next four years, I hope to see change in our environment. For my part, I will help all I can by recycling, conserving water, and making sure that I work hard at whatever the future holds for me. I believe that change is happening, although I think the effects of change are not going to be visible immediately. However, the country is well on its way to a better future, and I am

glad that I will graduate from college and be a part of it.

Caroline Barry, '06: Change can sometimes seem difficult to implement, but things can get to a state where change is no longer an option but inevitable. We as a nation and as a planet are at this point. My role in these upcoming changes will be with environmental sustainability. My interest in the environment has taken precedence over many other matters close to my heart. What are human rights and animal rights if there is no planet to live on or enjoy? I hope to be involved in promoting ways for industries to transition into more natural or sustainable modes of production. We must stand together to make important sustainable choices that will ensure the future of this country and the rest of the world. These necessary

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Alumni Winter Party

Wildwood rolled out the red carpet in January for a Hollywood-themed Alumni Winter Party. Upper school alumni joined faculty and staff for an evening of catching up with former classmates, chatting about college life, and snacking on appetizers and mini cupcakes. Hosted by the Alumni Relations Department and STAR (Student Alumni Relations), the event drew about 40 partygoers. **Kristen Dorsey, '04**, came decked out in jewelry from her own line. She was on break from Tufts, where she's finishing the last semester of her five-year program. **Wilson Schlamme, '06**, took time out from making short films at USC to visit with buddies **Ben Thaler, '06**, and **Sam Nozik, '06**. **Allison Martin, '05**, and **Marston Hefner, '08**, came for the party and then came back to campus the same week to participate on the Alumni College Panel.



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1: Blair Crozier ('07), Miranda De Meo ('07), Elana Jolton ('07)

2: Andre Stojka ('06), Morgan Rosenberg ('06), Jeremy Munter ('06), Wilson Schlamme ('06), Sam Nozik ('06)

3: Jade Johnson ('08) and Bria Murphy ('08)

4: Caroline Barry ('06), Will Pasquin ('06), Ben Thaler ('06)

5: Zachary Cohn ('04), Whitney Androlia ('05)

6: Jake Hagelberg ('07), Martino Simcik ('07), Madison Rootenberg ('07)

7: Melinda Tsapatsaris, director of upper school, and Peter Cron-Barshov ('08)

8: Allison Martin ('05), Corey Humphrey ('05) and Melinda Tsapatsaris

9: Zoe Braverman ('07), Melinda Tsapatsaris, and Charlotte Friedman ('07)

10: Billy DuMone, upper school athletic director and Laura Taubman ('07)

Class Notes, continued

changes are within our grasp. If we each do as much as we possibly can, change will be achieved.

Leila Shauk, '06: I think about others, my impact on the planet and on those around me, and I always think in terms of love and peace.

Lauren Mueller, '07: What I find most interesting about the word "change" is that it is neither conservative nor reformist. It speaks to all people, no matter what their personal hopes for the future are. In a way, this word is a unifier. It speaks to the inherent human desire for change, which is universal. The word's ambiguity therefore allows for a common link to be drawn among different minds: It is all-inclusive. It is not nothing but rather everything at the same time. Such paradoxical words of the English language are the ones that

seem to speak most to us as humans: They are both high and low, good and bad. They are words that condense a universe of meaning and sentiment into simple means of communication.

Brian Porter, '07: I believe we as a country have the power to shape the world in a positive way. However, we might need to give up some luxuries. It is a hard thing to tell people to sacrifice now for the good of the future, especially when that future may not include this generation. I believe we will make sufficient progress but the desired progress can not be reached unless our individual egos are restrained and replaced with a little more concern for the common good.

Matt Emonson, '08: I believe my role in shaping the country's future involves using my status as a

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From Pod Student to Grades Teacher, continued from page 7

big square hats, and funny buckled shoes, we giggled and played while drinking non-alcoholic ale (of course we all found it to taste gross)!

Although I was sad to leave the Wildwood community that had been home to me for so many years, I left 6th grade strong, excited, and prepared to move onto junior high school (Wildwood's middle and upper school did not exist).

Wildwood not only inspired my love for learning but it also gave me a sense of confidence that has guided me to where I am today. I've tackled the Midwest winters at the University of Michigan, where I pursued psychology and art and experienced big school life as an anonymous student. I've traveled to Florence, Italy, to study language and art and embrace the cultural diversity and opportunities of Europe. I returned to my native city, Los Angeles, where I received my bachelor's degree in painting and art education at Otis College of Art and Design.

My love for teaching crystallized after taking several part-time teaching

positions in Santa Monica and Culver City public schools. At Otis, I completed the ACT Program (Artist, Community, Teaching), which exposed me to various pedagogical and child development theories, in addition to the different art educator roles in the Los Angeles area. Although I loved combining my passion for art with my passion for teaching, I wanted a more diverse teaching experience.

Last spring, I had the opportunity to substitute in the afterschool program at Wildwood. I immediately knew in my heart that I wanted to come back to "my" Wildwood full-time.

I have never felt more excited than the day I was offered the 3rd grade associate teacher position. Every now and then during the All School Meeting, I am delighted when songs like "What A Lee A Cha" and "California Grey" come flooding back so easily to my mind. It is an amazing privilege to be back at Wildwood as a teacher.

Kendra Elstad
Class of 1995

Class Notes, continued

privileged citizen to help break down inequalities that trouble our country. It is that selfless effort that supports America's common good.

Griffin Mekelburg, '08: The future of our country depends on not just individuals stepping up but individuals getting groups of people to stand up together and fight for what is needed to make this country a better place. What is important about our current president is that he is able to unite communities to stand tall together, and he is helping us look to the future of the "change" he represents. My role as an American is to stand with the rest of our country, support our movement, and represent the changes we want to see in our future.

Class Notes – Spring '09

Cara (Shapiro) Shiflett, '82, and her husband Chris now have three boys. Eamon was born on Jan. 30, 2008. He has two older brothers, Liam (age 5) and Dashiell (age 2).

Anna Forward, '95, lives in San Francisco and teaches preschool at Children's Day School in the Mission District. She hopes to continue to inspire in and be

inspired by the field of early childhood education.

Victoria Densham, '06, is in Dublin, Ireland, studying at Trinity College.

Chris Suzuki, '06, taught a class called Modern Paganism in America this past fall at his college, University of Redlands. He was also busy directing the musical *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* and was the assistant director for the school's fall production of *Angels in America*.

Julien Edwards, '07, is taking advantage of a study-abroad program in Japan until July.

Griffin Mekelburg, '08, is studying at Santa Monica College. He recently decided to work toward a master's degree in psychology.

Elliott Wainman, '08, attends UC Santa Barbara where he's considering a history major. He recently earned a place on UCSB's Mock Trial Traveling Team, and has been competing as lead attorney in regional competitions in Tuscon, Irvine, Fresno, and at UCLA. UCSB finished the qualifying competition round in Fresno ranked 6th out of 28 schools, earning the team a place at the National Mock Trial Competition.