

# GREENWOOD SCHOOL

## Mill Valley, California

Preschool and Grades K-8/Enrollment 145+

[www.greenwoodschoo.org](http://www.greenwoodschoo.org)

INTERIM SCHOOL DIRECTOR  
PERMANENT SCHOOL DIRECTOR (July 2011)

### **School and Position Description**

#### **The School**

Greenwood School was started in 1991 by a group of parents dedicated to creating their vision of the best possible education for their children. Since then it has grown and blossomed and is now located in the heart of Mill Valley, just north of San Francisco. The school's culture and curriculum are Waldorf-inspired, drawing heavily from the breakthroughs in educational theory and practice developed early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian scientist, philosopher, artist and educator. Steiner emphasized the importance of achieving balance in the three different means by which a person relates to the world— through the realm of thinking, through the life of feelings, and through physical activity. This head, heart, and hands synergy nurtures the child's self-reliance, while building personal integrity and a sense of social responsibility.

To mentor individuals capable of clear, creative thought and expression and imbued with the self- confidence to meet the challenges of our rapidly changing world is the responsibility of the truly caring educator. With this goal in mind, Waldorf schools strive to develop the child's full human potential. With more than 800 Waldorf schools worldwide and about 170 Waldorf schools and initiatives in North America, Waldorf education is one of the fastest-growing educational movements in the world.

#### **The Opportunity**

Following a two year term, Greenwood's first School Director has resigned for personal reasons. The school's Trustees wish to identify a new candidate as the permanent Director, to begin no later than July 2011. In the meantime, the Board is seeking an interim Director to lead the school through the transitional period.

The successful candidate will find a thriving community, a warm and caring environment, a dedicated and experienced faculty and deeply committed parents. As the school expands enrollment over the next few years, its growth requirements will present a variety of exciting challenges to the entire community and the School Director will need to lead all the key aspects of this change while protecting and enhancing the unique ethos and climate of the Greenwood School.

## General Information and History

*“Wisdom begins with wonder” : Socrates*

*Fourth graders gather, hesitantly, at a peaceful organic farm, overlooking the Pacific, to learn how to milk a goat. Back at the main campus captivated second graders listen as their teacher relates a story from ‘legends, fables and extraordinary people’. The waft of fresh-baked bread permeates the main corridor from the kindergarten class kitchen. Upstairs, sixth graders watch in fascination as a master of geometric drawing demonstrates the technique for constructing a septahedron. Just a typical day at Greenwood School.*

The parents of Greenwood School have been dedicated to creating the best possible education for their children, working closely with a faculty of very talented and experienced teachers to create a Waldorf- inspired education. Our class teachers journey through the grades with their students. In addition to the class teacher, there are specialty teachers for Spanish, music, handwork, art, games, woodworking and eurythmy (Waldorf training in movement and spatial awareness). A dedicated nature/environmental studies (NEST) program fosters reverence, wonder and stewardship of the natural world, while incorporating an age-appropriate science curriculum. As part of this NEST program our children in grades 1-8 spend a significant part of one day per week outdoors in nature.

Currently, Greenwood offers one kindergarten class, with 22 children, and a single class for each of grades 1-8, with class sizes ranging from 9-24 (the school maximum), in a single campus building in the middle of Mill Valley. As the under-strength classes become completely filled, it is anticipated that student numbers will grow from the present 145 to a projected 200+ within four years.

In addition, a new pre-school program opened in September 2010 at a satellite location a few minutes’ walk from the main campus. This pre-school will accommodate up to 22 children, ages 3-5, as a feeder to the main school.

The school community exudes warmth and kindness, with close relationships between faculty, staff, and students and their parents. Greenwood parents are involved and committed, volunteering extensively in the classrooms, on field trips, through the “Parent Circle” organization, and on the Board of Trustees and its committees. Greenwood teachers are passionate advocates for both their students and the mission of the school, with an average faculty teaching experience of more than fifteen years.

In its early years, the school was a parent-teacher co-op model managed through an ‘operations committee’. From 2003 to 2007 Greenwood’s leadership structure evolved toward a School Director model, with the “head of school” role held by a committee composed of the faculty chair, administrative director, and a parent representative from the Board. As the school grew in complexity and scale, the Board, in consultation with the faculty, decided it required a single full-time School Director. Greenwood School’s first Director assumed his post in July, 2008. During his tenure the school has added the pre-school program, initiated a Learning Support Program to support children’s diverse learning needs, expanded the faculty, conducted successful annual fundraising campaigns and events, developed new marketing materials, strengthened the recruiting and admissions functions, and become more visible in the Southern Marin community. Greenwood is poised for growth and increasing success.

## Facts at a Glance

**Current enrollment:** 145 students (projected to 200+ by 2014)

**Number of Faculty:** 12 full-time, 14 part-time

**Student/teacher ratio:** 8: 1 based on 18.3 FTE faculty

**Total budget 2009-10:** Revenue \$2,400,000.....

**Tuition 2010-11:** Kindergarten \$14,995, Grades 1-5 \$16,795, Grades 6 – 8 \$17,395

**Development revenue:** \$385,000

**Ancillary programs:** Aftercare, Summer programs: net revenue \$35,000

## Mission Statement

**Greenwood School is a Waldorf inspired community of families and teachers who share a passionate commitment to the education of the whole person. We emphasize a universal spirituality, reverence for the earth, and the interconnectedness of all life forms**

## Location and Setting

The school site is a former church school building, which is leased from the adjacent Catholic Church. Parking for up to 40 vehicles is available on the site. The two-story building, plus basement, provides 9000 sq.ft. of space for classrooms and administrative offices plus a 5000 sq.ft. gym that provides space for large gatherings and community events. Limited shared use of the building and parking lot is required under terms of the lease, with Church use mostly on weekends.

Outdoors, the school has a small playground incorporating a community garden. Students have additional access to a private garden, set among tall redwood trees, within a 10 minute walk, that provides space for the Gardening curriculum. It has also been used for annual school-wide festivals to mark the Spring and Fall seasons.

The new pre-school program is located approximately 1 mile away on the edge of a quiet, residential neighborhood. It, too, is in space leased in a historic church building annex. It includes a large classroom, one private office, a kitchen, bathroom facilities, and an enclosed outdoor play yard and garden. The program is fully licensed by the state of California.

The town of Mill Valley provides a charming setting nestled on the lower slopes of majestic Mt. Tamalpais in southern Marin County. With a population of almost 14,000, Mill Valley was named by a national magazine, Money, as the 10<sup>th</sup> best city in the nation to live. Just 15 minutes drive north of San Francisco, this historic Northern Californian mill town sits among redwood-lined canyons just a few miles from Pacific Ocean beaches and 45 minutes from Sonoma and Napa wine country and Point Reyes National Seashore.

## Programs

### *Curriculum Highlights*

Kindergarten: Cooking, singing, painting and coloring. Through songs and poems children learn to enjoy language; they learn to play together, hear stories, see puppet shows, bake bread, make soup, model beeswax and build houses out of boxes, sheets and boards. To become fully engaged in such work is the child's best preparation for life. It builds powers of concentration, interest and a lifelong love of learning.

All Grades: Vocal and instrumental music, foreign languages, handwork, arts and reading, mathematics, painting, modeling, eurythmy, drama, form drawing, calligraphy, gardening, and ecology

Environmental Studies/Nature Day (NEST): Through our NEST program Greenwood School integrates inquiry-based science, ecological values and environmental awareness, beginning in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In the early years, the children spend much of their time in nature, on age-appropriate local outings or on field trips around the Bay area. Naturalists for each class engage the students deeply in studying the interconnections within nature, plant and animal life, geology, and ecology. In the middle school years the program shifts focus to observation, question/hypothesis and inductive/deductive thought.

The curriculum content incorporates National Science Standards, Waldorf Science Curriculum and the California Science State Framework.

A wide range of Special Programs is offered ranging from Gardening, Games and Physical Education to Woodworking and Drama. Annually, each class performs an ambitious theatrical production that embodies themes from their current curriculum. The Arts, including painting, watercolor, ceramics, illustration and art appreciation are emphasized year-round. Group, ensemble and private instrumental music lessons (recorder, violin and/or cello) are integrated into the Music curriculum for all students.

The school year is marked by a series of seasonal festivals and celebrations ranging from May Day to the winter solstice, when children, staff, parents and faculty meet together to acknowledge the mystery and beauty of the universe and the inter-connectedness of all life within it.

Community Service: Students and teachers collaborate in community service projects locally and beyond, including coastal clean-up and watershed restoration.

Class Trips: Starting in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, each class ventures beyond the familiarity of home with an annual class trip tied to the year's curriculum. Students have traveled to Yosemite, Death Valley, Mt. Shasta, the Gold Country, and other destinations within and outside California.

Every 8<sup>th</sup> grade student presents a speech at graduation. There is no finer testament to the quality of a Greenwood education than to see these young men and women speaking with clarity and confidence in front of their friends and families.

## **Governance**

The Greenwood School Board of Trustees consists of twelve voting members and two ex-officio members, (the School Director and the Faculty Chair). The Board follows a self-perpetuating model, identifying and nominating new members as required. Members serve terms of three years, and multiple terms are encouraged. The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer serve as an Executive Committee available to work with the School Director as needed between monthly Board meetings.

The Board has an active and expert Finance Committee working on budget and resource issues, a strong Development Committee in charge of the annual campaign and fundraising events, and an engaged Site Committee involved in lease negotiations and facility requirements to support growth. Other committees may be formed as needed.

## **Finances**

The school runs a \$2.4 million annual budget. Approximately 16% of the cost of education for the children is paid for through development revenue. During its formative years the school ran at a loss, given its handicap of small-scale, and the annual operating deficit was underwritten by some of the founding parents. For the 2009-2010 year the school made a small loss and a break-even budget is planned for the next fiscal. The school has positive cash flows for the majority of the year.

For the 2009-10 school year development revenues were \$385,000, driven primarily by the annual spring auction gala and the annual 'Giving Tree' campaign.

At present the school does not have any endowment funds.

Approximately 20% of the students at the school receive financial aid ; tuition assistance, sibling discounts, in varying amounts, representing 10% of the total budget.

## Strengths

Central to the founding vision of the initial Greenwood School talks were the educational principles and goals: academic excellence, artistic and moral development through a Waldorf-inspired curriculum, awareness of the natural world and experience of its many wonders and challenges, and universal spirituality enfolding the many varied ways spirit is expressed around the world.

Greenwood School is "Waldorf-inspired" in the sense that we offer our students the many strengths associated with a Waldorf-style curriculum, yet our curriculum and pedagogy also embody many important contemporary advances in educational theory and practice. We are continually enhancing our school as it moves through the years, and to ensure we stay current with the changing world. Year-round, parents and teachers work together to provide an educational environment that is uncompromising, balanced and inspiring.

When parents and students are asked what makes Greenwood so successful at engaging and inspiring students, the most frequent response is the faculty. The teachers are deeply committed to their students and to the goals of the school. They work in a collaborative way, encouraging and supporting each other as colleagues. They enjoy and take great pride in the rich curriculum and the Waldorf educational philosophy. A number of Greenwood's much-loved teachers have been part of the school for many years and truly embody its ideals.

Greenwood's developmental approach to education, with its emphasis on active, experiential learning, is another key strength. As one teacher put it, "Greenwood School graduates have the reputation of being well-prepared for high school. They confidently engage with their teachers and other adults and demonstrate a deep sense of their own unique gifts and self-worth, the capacity for thinking that is both flexible and clear, and a sense of responsibility not only to their immediate community, but to the health and future of the planet." Greenwood students are not driven to achieve at an artificially accelerated pace. The School's philosophy is that high academic achievement will follow from encouraging the love of learning and helping students cultivate a sense of personal responsibility for their education.

Greenwood offers a warm and caring environment, a deep sense of community and a commitment to keep the children "at the heart of everyone". Some of its programs have won external recognition, for example the "River of Words" poetry awards won by its students on an almost annual basis.

## Challenges

Numerous factors, associated with the anticipated growth of Greenwood School, represent the key challenge. With enrollment anticipated to increase by nearly 40% over the next four years this expansion will require sophisticated leadership

The continuing influx of new parents and students, and the addition of some new faculty, will require constant focus on the mission and core values of the school and it will be vital for the School Director to be able to embody and constantly reinforce the school's ethos during this period of growth. In particular, the school's distinctive intimacy and caring atmosphere will need to be preserved.

The School's Middle School program requires clearer definition and enhancement so that attrition in grades 6-8 is minimized and new enrollment can be attracted during the middle school years. Opportunity also exists for the expansion of the pre-school program.

The Board of Trustees is keen to continue strengthening Greenwood's relationships with the community-at-large, and the School Director will play an important role as ambassador with the local community and as a motivational and charismatic educational leader for current and prospective parents.

While everyone at Greenwood School is proud of the achievement of reaching close to financial break-even, the school's finances will require close oversight in the coming years, given the significant changes to the key metrics that are anticipated. In particular, the Board of Trustees and School Director may decide, at some stage, to embark on a capital-raising campaign in order to develop an endowment and finance expansion of teaching facilities. Involvement in such a campaign and attracting prospective donors will require the active engagement of the School Director, as will the cultivation of prospects willing to consider, in due course, an endowment commitment.

## Candidate Desired Profile

We seek an exceptional individual of integrity and passion who is collaborative in style and very comfortable with the Greenwood School's Waldorf-inspired philosophy. The successful candidate will have solid managerial and leadership experience and will have the ability to inspire students and faculty to achieve the school's mission. Additionally, the successful candidate will have excellent people skills; financial expertise; be a highly skilled communicator; and have the vision, strength and sensitivity to guide the school's future growth and development while maintaining its identity.

### Qualifications

- A university degree, preferably at the Masters level
- Ideally, Waldorf training and experience of the Waldorf educational environment and practice, but certainly a high level of familiarity and comfort with Rudolf Steiner's teachings and their modern-day application
- Teaching experience in elementary and/or middle school
- Good experience of managerial/leadership situations in an educational environment and awareness of progressive educational developments
- Solid knowledge of the key functions in an independent school, including admissions, finance, marketing, development, and faculty supervision.

### Key Competencies

- Communication skills of a high order: articulate, a good listener, sensitive, astute, patient and discerning
- Able to work in a collaborative way with faculty, administrative staff, board trustees and parents
- Creative problem-solving skills
- Fund-raising skills
- Ability to identify and preserve those qualities that make Greenwood School unique

### Personal Attributes

- Passionate commitment to the Waldorf-inspired ethos
- Warmth, integrity, unlimited energy
- Visible, accessible, inspired and inspiring
- Natural connection with children and adolescents
- Desire to teach occasionally and be involved with the faculty

**Application deadline:**  
**Interim Director: November 1, 2010**  
**Permanent Director: January 1, 2011**

Interested candidates should submit, via e-mail, a letter of interest, current resume, statement of educational philosophy and three current references to:-

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