



Taft

Director of Annual Giving

Taft School

Watertown, CT | Spring 2024

Tracy Marshall

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PRINCIPAL

tmarshall@developmentguild.com

Melanie O'Keefe

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONSULTANT

mokeefe@developmentguild.com

developmentguild.com

BOSTON | NEW YORK



Taft School seeks a dynamic and driven Director of Annual Giving to play a critical role in advancing the Taft School’s mission through meaningful relationships with the school’s vibrant community of alumni, parents, and volunteers.

About Taft School

Founded in 1890, The Taft School (“Taft”) is a coeducational boarding school for students in grades nine through postgraduate. Living where they learn, academically talented students from all over the world are guided by an extraordinary faculty on a 226-acre campus in Western Connecticut. Taft’s beautiful campus features facilities that rival those of many small colleges, including a library with 55,000 print volumes; a 45,000 square foot science and mathematics building; two theaters; two ice hockey rinks; and an 18-hole golf course.

Taft welcomed a new Head of School on July 1, 2023, [Peter Becker](#), a 1995 alumnus of the school. Peter is joined by new Board leadership, Board Chair Sarkis Izmirlan '90, P '20, '22, '24. The school and community share a sense of excitement and spirit with these transitions, as they plan for the years to come under their leadership.

While the world and the school have changed dramatically since Taft’s founding, the school’s fundamental values endure: work hard, without regard for public acclaim; develop all your talents: academic, artistic, and athletic; and most importantly, give of yourself to others. The school’s culture is inseparable from both its mission and motto: *non ut sibi ministretur sed ut ministret*—not to be served, but to serve. The Taft community is fundamentally shaped by this dedication to helping young people become lifelong learners, thoughtful world citizens, and caring people.



About Philanthropy at Taft School

Taft, with its robust history and excellent track record, benefits from an exceptional and highly engaged community of parents, past parents, and alumni who have been generous in giving back to the school. Past parents in particular continue to support the school for decades beyond their children’s enrollment, achieving 90% participation over 30 years. With enthusiasm for the Taft experience so strong, there is a solid foundation on which to increase giving from all of Taft’s constituents.



The development department at Taft is crafting a strong philanthropic culture that is systematic and strategic, and built upon forging authentic relationships with the community. The last campaign set new records and successfully wrapped up in 2016, raising \$180M. The school's leadership has begun the strategic planning process for the next campaign. Annual giving is strong, with Taft's annual fund finishing fiscal year 2023 at \$5.4M. The department has set a \$6M target for the year to come. The school also launched the Founder's Society for leadership giving this year, with pledges beginning at \$1890, to honor the year of Taft's founding.

About the Position

Reporting to the Senior Director of Advancement, the Director of Annual Giving (the "Director") is responsible for the design, strategy, and implementation of The Taft School annual fund program. The Director will join a highly collaborative team, working with key staff, campus-wide partners, and volunteers to implement a strategic annual fund program to maximize Taft community philanthropy.

This position will supervise the Assistant Director of the Annual Fund, the Leadership Annual Gift Officer, the Annual Giving Coordinator, and will have the ability to hire one additional member of the team. The Director will have the opportunity to assess and set forth a plan of action for a group of 500+ Class Agents and will also work with a robust and exceptional Parents Committee.

Taft is seeking a Director who will think strategically and bring an analytic approach to the annual fund, with an ability to better integrate the fund into the overarching development program. The ideal candidate will have a respect and appreciation for independent school values, bring strength in leadership to guide the annual fund team and program, and have strong experience and interest in working with volunteers. This position will require 4 days per week in the office at Taft, with 1 day of remote flexibility possible.



Key Responsibilities

- Strategically develop, manage and implement the Taft School annual fund program
- Collaborate with the development team to plan and execute annual fundraising campaigns, including direct mail, email, and social media efforts
- Lead and manage the annual fund team, including 3 current direct reports, with the opportunity to hire 1 additional staff member
- Cultivate relationships with current and prospective donors, including alumni, parents, and community members
- Create and manage metrics to measure the effectiveness of annual strategies, working with the team to build and analyze donor lists and reports
- Determine annual giving goals and donor targets, informed by data and strategic planning
- Develop annual giving communications strategy in partnership with the communications team
- Partner with Director of Donor Engagement and Stewardship regarding annual recognition efforts

- Contribute to the planning of relevant events, including donor receptions, alumni reunions, and volunteer appreciation events
- Develop and execute an effective and sustainable volunteer plan within annual giving, to engage Class Agents, the Parents Committee, and other volunteers.

Key Qualifications

- Strong managerial, leadership and supervisory skills
- Demonstrated ability to work both independently and collaboratively in a fast-paced, team-oriented environment
- Experience engaging and managing volunteer groups
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to build rapport and effectively engage diverse stakeholders
- Exceptional organizational skills, with a detail-oriented approach
- Understanding of database management, gift processing and donor relations
- Demonstrated analytical skills with the ability to identify new opportunities for the program
- Interest and respect for Independent School values and community
- Alignment with School's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
- Project management skills, including planning, budgeting, and prioritizing tasks while maintaining a high quality of work
- Willingness and ability to travel and to work nights and weekends, as needed



Compensation

The salary range for this role begins at \$100,000 annually, and is commensurate with experience, competencies, and skillset.

All qualified candidates will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

To express interest, please submit your cover letter and resume in confidence [here](#).

For more information, please visit www.developmentguild.com.

Tracy Marshall

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PRINCIPAL

marshall@developmentguild.com

Melanie O'Keefe

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONSULTANT

mokeefe@developmentguild.com

For more information about Taft School, please visit <https://www.taftschool.org/>

About Development Guild DDI

For 45 years, Development Guild DDI has consulted to leaders across the nonprofit spectrum. We have successfully collaborated with more than 650 clients nationwide in the sectors of health & science, education, environment, the arts, and social justice. We are experts in executive search and fundraising and are at the forefront of delivering best practice in these services.

With each engagement, we work in teams tailored to a client's particular needs, providing sector-specific intelligence, cross-sector insight, and hands-on functional expertise. We combine our perspective on nonprofit leadership with our knowledge and experience in both fundraising and executive search. This distinct perspective enables us to deliver the most strategic and measurable impact.

