



ST. THOMAS SCHOOL

Medina, Washington

Director of Marketing and Communications

The School

At St. Thomas School (STS), we believe that every child is exceptional. Our purpose is to create personalized learning experiences that challenge and empower our students to be successful in any environment. Immersed in the values of courage, integrity, and mutual respect, our students discover their best authentic selves, so they may live and lead generously in their communities.

Located on a beautiful 55,000-square-foot, LEED® Gold certified campus in the Eastside Seattle suburb of Medina, STS is a private, non-sectarian institution serving nearly 300 students in pre-school through eighth grade. The school provides a vibrant and challenging environment designed to meet the needs of high performing, motivated learners and, as such, is a preeminent feeder school for top independent and public secondary schools in the area. St. Thomas School's innovative approach to personalized education and leadership development has earned it widespread acclaim, including recognition as a 2014-2015 Microsoft Showcase School. STS has also been certified as a Washington Area Green School and achieved Energy Star Certification from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in both 2010 and 2011, accolades that recognize environmentally conscious organizations that reduce food waste and energy consumption, respectively.



As one of the oldest independent schools on the east side of Lake Washington, St. Thomas School is as grounded in tradition as it is forward thinking. STS was founded in 1951 as a parish school for the St. Thomas Episcopal Church to serve the rapidly growing Eastside community. Its first class consisted of 17 first and second grade students taught in a portable, wooden frame building across the street from the current campus. As the institution grew over the years, it became apparent that larger and more permanent space was needed, and construction began on the school's present site. In 1967, the church decided that the school should be a separate entity. The following year, a Board of Trustees was formed, and STS became incorporated as an independent nonprofit institution. Today, while operating

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autonomously, the school still leases its property from the church, and the two organizations maintain a positive and cooperative relationship. STS recently added seventh and eighth grades, graduating its first eighth grade class in June of 2014.

St. Thomas School is a mission-driven institution that puts a premium on recognizing and sustaining its core values in every aspect of its daily life. The school's vision and mission statements follow:

Our Vision

A recognized leader in early childhood through 8th Grade, St. Thomas School provides an educational journey defined by a cognitively rigorous program with an emphasis on developing character, leadership, and a passion for learning and achievement.

Our Mission

The mission of St. Thomas School is to develop responsible citizens of a global society. In partnership with parents, we inspire and motivate intellectually curious students. Our small, nurturing environment supports the acquisition of a broad academic foundation with an emphasis on critical thinking, leadership skills, and the development of strong character and spiritual awareness.

In addition to the statements above, St. Thomas School has developed a separate objective around the issue of diversity and its importance to the life and culture of the school. People of myriad ethnicities, faiths, socioeconomic backgrounds, and family structures are not only welcome but celebrated. This school year, in fact, 33% of the student population is comprised of people of color. Also supporting St. Thomas School's vision and mission is a core set of guiding beliefs that provides an underlying framework for decisions, policies, and academic programs at the school: curriculum with coherence, commitment to character, community of learners, and climate for learning. The four principles speak to a commonly held philosophy that clearly delineates expectations and helps shape the school as a vital community of learners. More information may be found [here](#).



As an affirmation of the school's commitment to innovation, STS has garnered the support of international corporations, perhaps the most notable of which is Microsoft. The company selected St. Thomas School to take part in its Innovative Schools World Tour, which was launched to celebrate and showcase schools that have successfully implemented mobile and cloud technology in a way that delivers personalized education to students and prepares them for success in the workplace. As one of only five original showcase schools in the

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United States, STS was included as an example of three “Innovation Topics” described below:

The first Innovation Topic is the use of 1:1 learning, whereby students take advantage of a wireless campus, are issued their own tablets and have access to a variety of technology tools and programs, and can utilize technology at any time to complete creative projects such as composing music, producing videos, and posting online book reviews. This collaboration allowed the school to be instrumental in the development of the OneNote Class Notebook Creator, which gives teachers the ability to build individual, online workspaces for students in which they can work at their own pace and receive instant feedback on assignments.

The second topic, physical learning environment, is exemplified by STS’s LEED® Gold certified campus, which offers learning plazas throughout the school, an abundance of natural light, a spring and rooftop garden, and a new science lab, technology center, and media production room. This impressive, award-winning, state-of-the-art campus was completed in 2008 and is often toured by visitors from across the United States and around the world.



Finally, the school employs project-based learning, including a Reggio Emilia approach in the Early Learning Center, multiple opportunities for students to work in small groups, and cross-curricular and experiential learning in elementary and middle school. The spirit of innovation is pervasive at St. Thomas School and promotes a culture that supports students' intellectual curiosity, self-motivation, and genuine desire to learn.

The Opportunity

Although St. Thomas School is a relatively small institution, in the words of the Head of School, “it has big dreams and high expectations.” Over the past two decades, STS has undergone significant growth and change in enrollment, curriculum, facilities, and marketing strategies. The 1990s saw the beginning of a major expansion period that doubled the size of the school’s physical plant; added a variety of courses, classrooms, and programs; and began the endowment fund. Coinciding in part with the 2005 arrival of the current Head of School, Dr. Kirk Wheeler, a transformational strategic vision for STS was developed that continued the institution’s emphasis on excellence in education and established ambitious plans for an exciting future. In the coming years, St. Thomas School will continue reimagining education and developing ground-breaking programs geared at providing students with the skills necessary to adapt and to be successful in a changing and unpredictable world. If recent trends continue, the

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school expects to garner further recognition for its work both within and outside of independent school circles.

While St. Thomas School's enrollment is at an all time high, the Eastside school market is becoming increasingly competitive, and entry points into area independent schools, especially in the fourth through sixth grades, present a challenge. The continued growth of STS, particularly the addition of the middle school, has created an opportunity for the institution to attract new constituents from the surrounding community. The school successfully rebranded five years ago and has now begun to craft a comprehensive marketing and public relations plan in conjunction with a local creative agency and marketing firm. An experienced marketing and communications executive is needed to partner with the Head of School and the Board of Trustees in the completion and execution of that plan. This individual will have a unique opportunity to join a fast-paced, dynamic environment at a well-established institution with a track record of innovative programs and a bright, positive, and welcoming community of adults and students.

Responsibilities

Reporting to the Head of School and working closely with the Board's Marketing & Communications Committee and the senior administrative team, the Director of Marketing and Communications will have overall responsibility for developing, coordinating, and implementing the school's communications, public relations, and marketing efforts. This individual will provide support to the entire STS community, including the offices of Development and Admissions in particular, and will lead the creation of printed materials and web content, the management of social media, and community development. Specific duties include the following:

- Preparing, implementing, and monitoring results of a strategic marketing plan in conjunction with the Head of School, Director of Admissions, Director of Development, Director of Information and Communications Technology, and the Board's Marketing & Communications Committee.
- Identifying target audiences and creating a strategic, comprehensive communications plan for print and digital communications that delivers a coherent, relevant, and consistent message.
- Managing school publications and collateral materials, including conceptualization of themes, solicitation of content, writing, editing, proofreading, layout, printing, and distribution.
- Working with the Director of Admissions to determine methods of growing community awareness of the value of a St. Thomas School education in order to increase enrollment and improve retention school-wide, particularly in the middle school.
- Building partnerships with local business and other organizations to improve recognition of the school in the community and to create new educational opportunities for students.

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- Guiding the senior administrative team and faculty in their efforts to develop and sustain relational and personalized interactions with current and prospective parents.
- Serving as the school's media and communications liaison, and strengthening partnerships with local and statewide media outlets.
- Cultivating community relations by maintaining open and candid dialogue with all the school's constituencies.
- Keeping the Head of School and the Board's Marketing & Communications Committee informed with accurate and timely information regarding marketing activities and progress against established goals.

Candidate Qualities

Leadership

A relationship-focused individual with the presence, intellect, and confidence to interact successfully with a wide variety of constituents, including trustees, school administrators, staff, parents, teachers, and students.

A values-oriented executive with exceptional creativity, vision, and the ability to articulate a viewpoint to a diverse audience.

A perceptive person who can quickly ascertain parent and student needs and drivers within the Eastside independent school market and articulate a compelling narrative about the organization.

A leadership style that is marked by communicating clearly, empowering others, and motivating and inspiring both internal and external constituents.

Both sufficiently self-assured to lead and skilled at working collaboratively in a team setting.

Experience

A minimum of three to five years experience in marketing and communications with a nonprofit or for-profit organization.

Demonstrated success in managing marketing campaigns across multiple media formats from initial concept through execution.

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Background in growing brand recognition and loyalty by establishing relationships with internal constituents as well as forming strategic partnerships with external groups.

A working knowledge of nonprofit organizations gained either as a professional or as a volunteer.

Experience in graphic design, layout, and publications as well as social media platforms.

Proven track record and ability to negotiate contracts, work with, and maintain thriving relationships with third party vendors including, but not limited to, creative agencies, web site developers, and commercial printers.

Skills and Knowledge

Broad and deep knowledge of the components of a successful marketing strategy, including brand placement and public relations.

Highly skilled at building relationships and interacting successfully with people from a variety of backgrounds.

A lifelong learner who keeps abreast of new developments in marketing and communications technology and is adept at educating administrators and trustees about them.

A capacity for evaluating existing marketing strategies, creating plans to strengthen areas of need, and building new programs as required to increase enrollment and retention and grow philanthropic giving within an institution.

Excellent strategic planning and organizational skills, the nimbleness to respond to shifting priorities, and the ability to synthesize ideas quickly.

Exceptional written and verbal skills that allow one to communicate compellingly in writing, one-on-one, and in small and large groups.

A technologically savvy individual who can successfully use social media as well as print and online publications in order to increase brand recognition.

The ability to generate excitement about an organization's direction by speaking compellingly about its past, present, and future.

An understanding of the close relationship between marketing, development, and admissions and the ways in which communications, fundraising, and enrollment work hand-in-hand.

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A general awareness of the values and personal styles typically associated with the Pacific Northwest and an ability to assimilate quickly into its unique culture.

Personal Attributes

An authentic and straightforward communicator who deals with others openly and connects easily with people of all ages.

An empathetic individual with high emotional intelligence and self-awareness who understands people and their motivations.

A sophisticated and mature professional who displays courage of conviction, emotional resilience, and calmness under pressure.

A hardworking and energetic person who relishes being part of a fast-paced, active, and innovative community.

A responsive and diligent leader with a sense of urgency and attention to detail who appropriately balances timeliness and high quality results.

One who will embrace and internalize St. Thomas School's mission and be an enthusiastic ambassador for the school.

Other Considerations

Compensation: Commensurate with experience and competitive with comparable organizations in the region.

Travel: Minimal travel required.

Education: Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree a plus.

Website: www.stthomasschool.org

Candidates May Now Be: A senior marketing administrator with an independent school or an "educational campus" such as a museum, botanical garden, or zoo.

A marketing executive with a nonprofit organization whose skills and experiences can be readily transferred to the independent school world.

BRIGHAM HILL
CONSULTANCY

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A leader in marketing in the for-profit sector with nonprofit experience and a temperament that would lead him or her to be successful in an independent school.

For more information, contact:

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