



# Wildwood Programs and Wildwood School

Family and District Overview

# Wildwood History

Wildwood provides supports and services to people of all ages with conditions described as developmental disabilities, complex learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. At Wildwood we value understanding each individual as a whole and unique person.

The organization was created in 1967 when a group of parents found that their children did not fit neatly into existing programs. What began as a program for a handful of preschoolers has grown into an organization that provides comprehensive supports and services to well over 1,000 people and their families every year. Children as young as three and adults enjoying their senior years receive supports and services in every life area in an environment where they are accepted, respected and valued.

The creativity and commitment that led to Wildwood being created continues today as our staff strive to meet the individualized needs of the people receiving services and their families. Everyday challenges are seen as the catalyst for growth, learning and the adaptation to the environment that surrounds all of us. The goal for everyone at Wildwood is to live a life that maximizes independence, fulfillment and productivity. For years Wildwood has been seen as a leader and a resource for people with disabilities, their families, and allied professionals in the Capital Region and beyond.

# School Leadership

**Bill LeForestier**

**Director of Education**

Mr. LeForestier is a New York State certified School District Administrator (SDA) who serves as the the Director of Education for the Wildwood School. Prior to coming to Wildwood, he served as the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education in the Kingston City School District from 2014-2018. Prior to Kingston, he was the Superintendent of Schools at Vanderheyden Hall in Wynantskill, the Campus and Career and Technical Principal at the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES, and the Junior-Senior High School Principal in Duanesburg for four years. He also has administrative experience at Shenendehowa and Troy in both Special and Alternative Education. Prior to entering school administration, he was a special education teacher in Troy and at Vanderheyden Hall. He holds a master's degree in Special Education from the Sage Colleges and a bachelor's degree in Business Management from Hartwick College.

# School Leadership

**Cindy Riggi**

**Associate Director of Operations and Clinical Services**

Ms. Riggi is a New York State certified School Administrator and Supervisor (SAS) and School District Administrator (SDA) who serves as the Associate Director for Operations and Clinical Services. For many years, she worked directly with students at all program levels at Wildwood School as a certified and licensed Speech and Language Pathologist and then as the Department Lead for Speech and Language Therapy and Chairperson for the Admissions Committee. As Associate Director, Cindy oversees the hiring, orientation, and appraisal process for all staff. In addition, she works closely with Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Social Work, Nurses and Admissions Committee.

# School Leadership

**Jennifer Guernsey**

**Associate Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

Ms. Guernsey is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) who recently served as the Program Coordinator for the Elementary Program level. Ms. Guernsey received her Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education from SUNY Oswego and her Master of Education in Special Education/Autism/Behavior Analysis. She worked as a special education teacher at a residential school in Massachusetts for three years, and as a behavior specialist at a residential school in New York for four years before coming to Wildwood in September of 2016 to work as a Behavior Specialist at the Intermediate level. Ms. Guernsey's areas of interest include working to build communication skills, social skills, and other areas of skill deficits in young children, as well as working to decrease problem behaviors. She is a professional member of the New York State Association for Behavior Analysis.

# Wildwood Programs Agency Overview

- **Work**
- **Recreation Services**
- **Home and Housing**
- **Adult Education**
- **Parent Network of the Capital Region (PNCR)**

# Wildwood Agency

## Work

- **Day Habilitation Programs**

- **With Walls**

- **Day Services: Site-based Supports**

- Wildwood offers site-based Day Supports at three sites throughout the Capital Region (in Albany, Colonie and Clifton Park). Each site provides broad choices of activities including community service, arts, recreation, culinary, and vocational skill-building. Programs are deeply embedded in the community allowing individuals participating to build relationships and form bonds.

- **Without Walls**

- **Day Services: Without Walls**

- Provides support for individuals who spend their entire day in the community. Staff provide transportation from home at the beginning of the day and back again at day's end. Throughout the day, individuals participate in broad choices of activities including community service, arts, recreation, culinary, and vocational skill-building.

# Wildwood Agency

## Recreation Services

Wildwood's Recreation/ Recreation Respite Program offers activities for individuals of all ages. The goals of the program include not only enjoyment of leisure time, and respite but also socialization and integration within the community. The recreation/ recreation respite staff creatively seek activities that broaden the participants' experience and further their goals in areas like social and life skills. It is a social program assisting people in small group situations with their leisure pursuits within the community. Independent access of the community is the goal, but staff can assist individuals so that they may participate in this service. People can select from the recreation offerings and choose the ones they want to enjoy.

The program is open to all OPWDD eligible individuals. We serve people from age 5 – 85 in a variety of settings. Some of the more formal services include Saturday Recreation and GAP for school aged people. The GAP program meets daytime during school vacations and is a service for families without other options for these school breaks.

Adult Respite and Adult Recreation serve individuals over the age of 18 living in their family home. If the individual lives in an OPWDD sanctioned residential setting they would most likely be in our recreation program. The two adult programs look and feel identical.



# Wildwood Agency

## Family Supports

Family Support Services include those areas that are designed to help support an individual in living at home with family as long as they desire. While the supports certainly benefit the person, they are also designed to support the family or caregiver. This includes areas such as:

- Information and referral on supports and services that may be available
- Workshops designed to provide education and information
- Support groups that may be designed for either individuals receiving supports or their families
- Counseling supports
- Case management and benefit supports for those not enrolled in Medicaid Service Coordination
- In-home behavior supports
- Reimbursement for respite and goods and services
- HCBS Waiver Respite services

# Wildwood Agency

## Home and Housing

### Individualized Residential Alternatives

- We support individuals with all levels of disability and are designed to provide individuals with the highest quality supports while providing the feeling that where they live is truly a home. A partnership is established between Wildwood staff and families to insure quality supports in the residences.

### Supportive Apartments

- Home Supports staff provide support to people in houses, apartment units, and apartment buildings throughout the Capital District. These individuals do not receive 24-hour supervision, but have staff visitation and 24-hour access to staff.

### Community Habilitation

- Provides individual support for both children and adults who are either living at home with their families or living independently in their own residences. Staff work closely with the consumer, family, and Medicaid Service Coordinator to develop an individual plan and to determine the number of hours needed to address the goals outlined in the plan. Services can occur in the home or in the individual's community.

# Wildwood Agency

## Adult Education

Adult Education offers learning opportunities in work-related skills, the arts, financial, interpersonal, literacy and wellness skills. Learning takes place through:

- Small group classes
- Individualized supports
- Video and multimedia materials
- Adapted and hands-on texts
- Adult Education also provides assistance with:
- Accommodations for testing and learning
- Supports for community-based learning and college coursework
- Success Seminars

# Wildwood Agency

## Parent Network of the Capital Region (PNCR)

The PNCR's mission is to provide parents with the knowledge, skills, and resources to facilitate productive relationships with their school districts ensuring an appropriate education for their child.

PNCR provides parents and family members of children with disabilities information, resources and strategies to:

- Promote meaningful involvement in their child's educational programs including information regarding the special education process (referrals for special education, individual evaluations, individualized education programs or IEP development and transition planning);
- Assist parents in understanding their child's disabilities;
- Promote early resolution of disputes between parents and school districts;
- Promote the use of resolution sessions and special education mediations;
- Assist in understanding procedural due process rights;
- Enhance parents' skills and levels of confidence to communicate effectively and work collaboratively with their schools to advocate for and actively participate in their child's education program.

# Wildwood Agency

## Wildwood School

Wildwood School provides a comprehensive educational program for students with autism spectrum disorders, neurological impairments, and complex learning disabilities to prepare them to be as independent as possible. There is a blend of academic, social, employment, and functional skills that are taught to each student driven by their Individual Educational Plan (IEP), needs and interests.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.wildwoodschoolsite.com/](http://www.wildwoodschoolsite.com/)

# New York State Education Department Approved Private School

- We are a NYS approved private [853 schools](#), created by Chapter 853 of the Laws of 1976, are operated by private agencies and provide day and/or residential programs for students with disabilities.
- A Committee on Special Education (CSE) may recommend a placement of a student with a disability in the approved private school when it determines that the student can not be appropriately educated in the home school district, a neighboring district or in the programs of a board of cooperative educational services (BOCES) program.

# Educational Programs

Our program provides a comprehensive educational program for students to prepare them to be as independent as possible. There is a blend of academic, social, employment, and functional skills that are taught to each student driven by their Individual Educational Plan (IEP), needs and interests. Each classroom has one teacher and up to 5 teaching assistants depending on student numbers. We provide many support and related services to students and family members such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, social work, speech and language therapy, behavior supports, nursing services, work based learning, transition coordination, instructional technology, adaptive physical education, music therapy, and art enrichment.

# Curry Road - Ages 5-18

- **Elementary 6 Classrooms (6:1:3, 9:1:4)**
  - **ACE (Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia)**
    - The ACE application is designed to provide behavior analytic procedures. Every lesson plan within the ACE can be customized to the the individual student. This is a web-based curriculum.

At the elementary level, each child's program is designed to meet their individual needs with the main focus being on skill acquisition, functional communication and activities in daily living. Students' programs are designed with a balance among these, as well as in areas of learning readiness, literacy, math, science and social studies. Positive behavior support is embedded within the program to increase pro-social interactions and decrease challenging behaviors as they arise. Leisure and community skills are focused on at a developmental level.



# Curry Road - Ages 5-18

- **Intermediate 5 Classrooms** (6:1:3, 9:1:4, & 12:1:4)
  - ELA and Math (Heterogeneous - Mixed Abilities)
  - Cross Classroom (Homogeneous - Similar Abilities)
    - Social Studies
    - Science

The intermediate level continues to expand on skill acquisition and target communication. Academic, social and cognitive needs are addressed through individual and small group instruction. Pro-social and positive behavior supports are embedded within the daily program. Literacy, math, social studies, science, technology, family and consumer sciences, as well as others, are part of the student's daily schedule. Community based outings continue for school based activities.

# Curry Road - Ages 5-18

- **High School 6 Classrooms** (12:1:4)
  - ELA and Math (Heterogeneous - Mixed Abilities)
  - Cross Classroom (Homogeneous - Similar Abilities)
    - Social Studies
    - Science

The High School Program Level is designed to provide our students with the skills they need to achieve the most independent life possible as adults. The High School Program uses real world experiences as well as best practice curriculum to give our students the tools they need to succeed. All of the High School students are exposed to instruction based on the Common Core Learning and the Career Development Occupational Skills (CDOS) Standards. Student skill acquisition is based on Essential Outcomes (EOs). Staff work with the students on a daily basis to address skills related to daily living skills, academics, Health, wellness, and safety developed the EOs. Students participate in career development through work based learning, as well as art and music education. Adapted physical education instruction includes formal skill building in lifelong sports, such as bowling, swimming, and fitness. The High School students also participate in classroom businesses to develop functional math and social skills. The money acquired through classroom businesses and fundraising are used toward an end of the year spring trip and school Prom.

# Latham - Ages 18-21

- **Young Adult 4 Classrooms** (12:1:4 & 15:1:5)
  - Academic
  - Community/Work

The young adult level recognizes the importance of transitioning students and their families into the world of adult services. Students and families work collaboratively with classroom, transition, and work based learning staff to explore and develop post graduation outcomes. Program design reflects a dynamic set of opportunities that allow students to synthesize their skills and apply them to everyday life in both the classroom and community settings. The program is highly individualized and designed to tap into students' interests, aptitude, ability and choice.

- Work-based learning
- Jobs
- Volunteering
- Pre-Readiness Skills
- Preference Assessments
- Tabletop Activities
- Transition to Adult Services (Planning)
- Electives

# Summer Extension Program

## Three Program Sites

The Wildwood Summer Extension Program is a comprehensive program, which addresses extended school year goals and related services. The summer extension program serves students who attend Wildwood School, as well as students who attend other special education programs during the school year and operates across three locations.

- Curry Road Extension, **Schenectady** – Serves students 5-17 years old in an indoor, climate controlled environment. Through their educational program, students receive related services and have access to outdoor learning environments.
- Leesome Lane, **Altamont** – Serves students 5-17 years old in an outdoor educational environment that includes classrooms in open pavilions, all related services and physical activity on hiking trails, ball fields, a pond and a swimming pool.
- Troy-Schenectady Road, **Latham** – Serves students 18-21 years old who learn in classrooms and community environments designed to prepare them for graduation and beyond.

# Educational Approach Elementary - Young Adult

- **Elementary and Some Intermediate Classes**
  - **ACE (Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia)**
    - The ACE application is designed to provide behavior analytic procedures. Every lesson plan within the ACE can be customized to the the individual student. This is a web-based curriculum.
- **Some Intermediate, all High School, and all Young Adult Classes**
  - **Essential Outcomes**
    - a comprehensive set of learning **goals** that are fostered and developed across a student's entire educational experience. They reflect the **knowledge**, skills, and **competencies** needed to meet the challenges of an ever-changing and complex world.
    - Skills students need to master to move to next level successfully

# Testing and Exiting Credentials

- **New York State Alternate Assessment**
  - Assesses the students in the acquisition, application, and transfer of skills across natural environments (home, school, community, and/or workplace)
- **Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential**
  - SACC certificates are accompanied by an “exit summary” that documents achievement in areas identified as important for post-secondary living, including:
    - Career development and the ability to apply skills at home, school and the workplace;
    - Reading, writing, literacy, speaking, problem-solving, technology and interpersonal skills

# WILDWOOD SCHOOL STUDENT AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTINUUM

## ELEMENTARY LEVEL:

**OUTCOME:** Gathers Information about Disability and Services Available to Child and Family

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Consult Department of Social Services to determine possible eligibility for Social Security Insurance, Medica, etc.
- Attend “Front Door” Orientation.
- Establish working relationship with an agency to complete paperwork needed to establish OPWDD eligibility.
- Begin work with assigned Medicaid Service Coordinator to explore service options and advocate to avail child of all possible resources.

# WILDWOOD SCHOOL STUDENT AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTINUUM

## INTERMEDIATE AND HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS:

**OUTCOME:** Begin the Examination of the Transition Process and Work on Preliminary Plans for Child's Future.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

### **Intermediate** (Age 12):

- Work with educational team to begin to think about educational goals, employment goals, and living arrangements.
- Begin to examine with team what child needs to learn and work on to achieve future goals.
- Complete parent interview form for inclusion in transition section of IEP and every year after this.



# WILDWOOD SCHOOL STUDENT AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTINUUM

## High School (Ages 14 – 18):

- Gather information on educational/training opportunities, i.e., Community Learning, TASC, occupational education/tech school, adult education, College life skills program, community college.
- Consider employment and volunteer opportunities, i.e., supported employment, pre-vocational program, day habilitation, CSS, competitive employment.
- Explore possible living arrangements, i.e., home with family, home with family with support services, community residence, supported apartment independent living in community.

# WILDWOOD SCHOOL STUDENT AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTINUUM

## High School (Ages 14 – 18) Continued:

- Attempt to stay knowledgeable about political and economic trends that may affect options and therefore planning.
- Expand planning to include financial planning, i.e., trusts, wills, etc.
- At age 18: Student automatically becomes own guardian unless legal steps are taken. May need to establish guardianship or health care proxy and/or power of attorney.
- Males register for selective service at 18, regardless of disability (can apply for exemption if/when a draft is instituted).
- Inquire as to eligibility for SSI/SSDI income at age 18 and review health insurance coverage.
- May want to encourage student to exercise right to vote at age 18.

# WILDWOOD SCHOOL STUDENT AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTINUUM

## YOUNG ADULT LEVEL (Ages 18 – 21):

- **OUTCOME:** Establish Post-Educational Goals and Services and Build a Network of Support within the community.
- **THINGS TO CONSIDER/TASKS:**
  - Encourage increased independence and responsibility for decision-making.
  - Involve student in information gathering and decision making regarding his or her own future.
  - Build network for individual, i.e. recreational opportunities to enjoy with peers, finding groups to support young adult interests, keeping in mind their ability to be involved in social relationships, dating, etc.
  - Assist student as needed to determine post-educational goals for education/training, employment/volunteer and living arrangements.
  - Work with others in community to create a plan that most closely achieves goals.

# Professional Learning Communities

Wildwood School follows the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model. It is defined as an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action to achieve better results for the students they serve. PLC's operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators. Since learning is accepted as the fundamental purpose of the school, all staff are willing to examine educational and therapeutic practices in light of their impact on student achievement. There is a strong commitment to working collaboratively to achieve the collective purpose. A collaborative culture is cultivated through the development of high-performing teams in which staff work interdependently to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve individual and collective results. - DuFour, DuFour & Eaker (2002).

# Professional Learning Communities at Wildwood School

We adhere to the Standards of Professional Learning and understand the relationship between professional learning and student results. The foundation for our Professional Learning Plan is PLC's. Staff within each program level and department are expected to work collaboratively to:

- Clarify 10 essential common outcomes (skills, concepts and dispositions)
- Develop Common Formative Assessments based on essential outcomes
- Establish benchmarks for each assessment derived from the outcomes
- Collect data for each student from the formative assessments
- Analyze results with entire team and include discussion to inform instruction
- Identify and implement improvement strategies where needed
- Identify further resources and training needed to implement teaching strategies

Effectiveness is assessed on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals and teams work collaboratively to seek relevant data, gather evidence of student learning, analyze the evidence and identify the most powerful and effective means for promoting continuous improvement.

# Wildwood School Parent Group

All families are welcome to join this friendly, low pressure network of parent volunteers. School administration and parent representatives work in partnership to keep families connected to the school and to each other. With the written release of family email addresses, families will receive up to date information on school happenings, events, advocacy, and parent trainings. For further information, please contact: Wildwood Parent Network at [wildwoodparent@gmail.com](mailto:wildwoodparent@gmail.com).

# Admissions

## Step 1: **FAMILY INFORMATIONAL VISIT & TOUR**

The family and any other relevant parties come for an informational tour and visit. The purpose of this visit is to receive general information in regard to the program, family involvement, and support services. A tour of the building and brief observation of a classroom will also take place. Tours can be scheduled by calling the main office at 518-836-2200.

## Step 2: **REFERRAL BY SCHOOL DISTRICT (if not already completed)**

A referral is made by the school district and sent to the admissions chairperson. Referral information should include: current IEP, most recent psychological eval, speech eval, OT/PT evals (if applicable), and FBA and BIP (if applicable).

## Step 3: **COLLECTION OF RELEVANT DATA**

The family sends in parent questionnaire (received on informational tour) along with the student's most recent physical examination (updated within a year), immunization records, and current photo.

# Admissions

## Step 4: **REVIEW OF INFORMATION**

All gathered information will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee to determine if the student meets the mission of Wildwood School.

## Step 5: **FAMILY AND STUDENT ADMISSIONS REVIEW**

If the student appears to meet the mission of Wildwood School, an admission review will be scheduled with the family and student to come to Wildwood School to gain more information about student and family needs. On the visit, any additional questions the family may have regarding our program will be answered as well. After the admissions review, the Admissions Committee will observe the student in their current program (if applicable) to aid in the decision-making process.



# Admissions

## Step 6: **ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE MEETING AND DECISION**

- Following the admissions review, the Admissions Committee will evaluate the student's needs and determine if Wildwood School can meet the needs of the student.
- If the student is accepted into Wildwood School, the school district and parent will be notified by telephone and in writing. Enrollment papers will be provided to the parent for completion.  
If it is determined that the student is appropriate, but an appropriate placement is not available, the school district and parent will be notified by telephone and in writing and the student will be placed on a waitlist.  
If it is determined that Wildwood School is unable to meet the student's needs, the school district and family will be notified by telephone and in writing that the student has not been accepted.

## Step 7: **PLACEMENT**

Once a program is formulated and agreed upon, placement of the student will be carried out. CSE approval is needed before the start of the program. All enrollment paperwork must be received one week prior to the student's start date or the date may be moved back.

# Wildwood Programs Values

- RESPECT**      Appreciating and considering the individual nature and needs of others
- INTEGRITY**      Doing the right thing in an honest and reliable way,  
according to the rules and standards of your job and profession
- CREATIVITY**      Transcending the ordinary by building what has not existed,  
by remaking, in an improved fashion that which does, or by finding  
solution when one is not obvious
- HOLISM**      Acknowledging that all people cannot truly be understood  
and actively engaged until their whole lives are considered and  
embraced. Understanding that our mission will only be realized through  
our cooperative efforts.



# Wildwood Programs and Wildwood School

Family and District Overview