

# The Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association

## Moving to a Data Rich Research Environment

Greater  
Los Angeles  
ZOO Association

“WealthEngine has given us so much to work with,” explains Keith Niles, senior database analyst for the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association (GLAZA), the fundraising arm of the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens. “Basically, we now have a wealth of quality, actionable data, thanks to the screening we performed through WealthEngine.”



GLAZA has traditionally had a sizable number of prospects and names; in fact, the membership database alone holds 64,000 households and about 300,000 records. Meanwhile, the Zoo staff includes only one prospect researcher, Michelle Mesrobian. And, while Mesrobian handles the Zoo’s prospect research, she is also responsible for donor relations and, most recently, was named project manager for the Zoo’s feasibility study in preparation for an upcoming capital campaign.

This past spring, management began to consider research approaches with two goals in mind: 1) save time and 2) deliver increased return on investment. In May 2009, management selected WealthEngine and engaged its screening services.

The Zoo now uses the results of this screening in three ways:

- **To increase gift amounts from direct-mail respondents.** The Zoo conducts four direct mail appeals each year: the President’s appeal, a General Conservation appeal, a June appeal and a December appeal. Mesrobian says, “To date, the giving has gone well and gift amounts have increased. The latest appeal included a match challenge, and results were up.” Niles reports the Zoo mailed to 1,340 households and achieved an average gift response of \$338—more than double the norm. Niles adds, “Our average gift amount has typically been \$150.”
- **To identify interviewees for the upcoming campaign feasibility study.** The Zoo used the WealthEngine screening results to help identify 600 potential donors that have been invited to participate in personal interviews. The information collected from those participating in the interviews will be used to help determine the fundraising potential and goal for the campaign.
- **To help launch a planned giving program.** The Zoo had begun its planned giving program early this year with the first mailing of a quarterly planned giving newsletter to 7,400 households. Niles says, “The WealthEngine screening helped us refine and better focus our mailing efforts. The age overlay alone was huge for us because it allowed us to add new prospects that are more financially mature and have high P2G<sup>SM</sup> (Propensity to Give) scores. It also allowed us to save money by helping us clean and streamline our list, removing prospects not likely to give to the Zoo.”

“The screening results were amazing. For example, we were immediately able to identify one-time small donors of under \$100, but who had great capacity to give larger gifts.”

— Michelle Mesrobian

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### More Data for Better and Faster Fundraising Results

Niles finds the WealthEngine data invaluable in analyzing past donor attributes and compiling profiles for new prospects. He says, “I look at past donors and their attributes and then analyze the prospect profiles we receive from WealthEngine for similar attributes.” For annual appeals, Niles looks at charitable giving history, stock holdings and pensions, real estate holdings, political campaign donations, and gift capacity ranges. Again, his goal is to identify direct-mail respondents who will make increasingly larger gifts.

WealthEngine data also played a significant role in helping Niles analyze planned giving prospects. He says, “For our planned giving prospects, I look at data from WealthEngine such as P2G scores, political donations, and age. Also, gift capacity amounts are very important for me when putting together this prospect list. WealthEngine is able to give me all this information and more.”



### WealthEngine: “Always Quick and Easy to Use”

Mesrobian uses another WealthEngine tool, FindWealth Online<sup>SM</sup>, when she needs to research new prospects. She says, “FindWealth Online is the first place I go, when I’m given a new name. It has a great interface and is always quick and easy to use.” Typically, she will use FindWealth Online to pull a profile on a first-time donor, a new Zoo member, or an individual that a board member or the Director of Development plans to meet with or solicit. Both speed and ease of use are requirements for Mesrobian in her busy work day—she has found that WealthEngine delivers both.

WealthEngine is proud to be helping GLAZA save time, improve efficiency and realize a real return on their fundraising investment.