ZAJAC RANCH

Out here we raise spirits.

THE MEL JR. & MARTY ZAJAC FOUNDATION

for Seniors & Children



Senior Manager, Major Gifts

Executive Profile Presented By

THE DISCOVERY GROUP

"Every kid should get to go to summer camp. Let's work on that together."
Mel Zajac, Founder

The Mel Jr. & Marty Zajac Foundation is a not-for-profit organization located in Vancouver, BC, whose mandate is to support children, seniors, and individuals with special needs through innovative community projects focused on developing life-long skills and independence.

Its flagship project is Zajac Ranch, a fully accessible camp in Mission, BC, dedicated to providing enriching experiences for children with chronic, life-threatening, and/or debilitating conditions.

The Senior Manager, Major Gifts is a senior fundraising professional responsible for securing significant philanthropic support for the Mel Jr. & Marty Zajac Foundation and Zajac Ranch through major gifts, corporate sponsorships, and fundraising events.

Reporting to the Executive Director, the Senior Manager will personally manage a portfolio of donors and prospects, with a primary focus on gifts of $10,000 and above. The role is responsible for identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding individual donors, corporate partners, and other prospective supporters while building strong, long-term relationships that advance the Foundation's mission.

The Senior Manager will also contribute to the development and implementation of the Foundation's overall fundraising strategy in collaboration with the Executive Team and other members of the Development team. The Senior Manager will also play a key role in the Foundation's signature fundraising events, driving sponsorship development, donor engagement, revenue generation, and post-event stewardship.

The successful candidate will be an experienced, relationship-driven fundraiser who is comfortable making asks, closing significant gifts, building donor pipelines, securing sponsorships, and managing multiple fundraising initiatives.

This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced fundraiser to:

- Become a key partner with one of BC's best-known and most-loved philanthropic family foundations;
- Bring their fundraising drive and acumen to leading a portfolio of major donors and corporate partners;
- Lead major donor and sponsorship strategy for signature events, including Zajac Nights Gala and Lunch with a Legend;
- Help secure the funding that makes camp so accessible and affordable for children with medical conditions and disabilities;
- Shape fundraising strategy alongside the Executive Team and help grow the Foundation's donor base;
- Help carry forward Mel Zajac's legacy at a pivotal moment, as his family leads the Foundation into its next chapter.

Information for Candidates

This search is being led by the Foundation's search partner, **The Discovery Group**. If you or someone you know is interested or curious, please connect with Christoph Clodius at christoph@thediscoverygroup.ca.

We welcome questions and enquiries prior to applications.

Application Timing & Process

All submissions should be received as soon as possible, as they are being reviewed on an ongoing basis.

To apply, send a cover letter/expression of interest and resume/CV together in a single document to Christoph, or through The Discovery Group's website.

Compensation & Benefits

The successful candidate can expect a starting annual salary of $90,000 – $100,000. The Foundation offers a comprehensive benefits package, including extended health and dental coverage, on-site parking, and three weeks of annual vacation.

Location & Working Environment

Full-time, on-site, Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM. Evenings and weekends occasionally required for fundraising events, donor meetings, and other organizational activities.

Location: #300 – 2006 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, BC. The Senior Manager will be employed by the Foundation, whose primary beneficiary is Zajac Ranch.

Territory Acknowledgement

The Foundation's Vancouver office is located and works on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səl̓ílwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Zajac Ranch, located in Mission, is situated in S'ólh Téméxw, the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Stó:lō people. We respectfully acknowledge the Leq'á:mel, Semá:th, Kwantlen, Sq'éwlets, Máthxwi and Katzie First Nations, whose traditional territories encompass the Mission area. Across both locations, we are grateful to live, work and gather on these lands and waters, and we remain committed to continued learning, respectful relationships and deepening our understanding of the histories, cultures and ongoing presence of Indigenous Peoples.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Inclusion is at the heart of what the Foundation does. Zajac Ranch is built to be fully accessible to children of all abilities, and its values include "respect and appreciation for the value and diversity we each represent" and "inclusive opportunities that welcome all participants regardless of ability."

The Foundation is an equal opportunity employer, committed to the principles of equality and diversity in the workplace. If you require accommodation at any point in the application process, please contact Christoph, who will work with you to accommodate your needs.



About the Foundation and Ranch

For nearly four decades, The Mel Jr. & Marty Zajac Foundation has supported children, seniors, and individuals with special needs across British Columbia. Its flagship project is Zajac Ranch, a fully accessible camp in Mission, BC, that provides enriching experiences for children with chronic, life-threatening, and/or debilitating conditions.

Foundation Mission Statement:

To support children, seniors and those with special needs through innovative community projects focused on developing life-long skills and independence and improving the quality of life for individuals across BC.

Mel and Irene Zajac established The Mel Jr. & Marty Zajac Foundation as a living legacy in memory of their two sons, Mel Jr. and Marty Zajac, who lost their lives within eight months of each other in separate sporting accidents. For over 50 years, Mel and Irene Zajac raised funds for the children of British Columbia through the proceeds of the Zajac Golf Classic and private donations from friends and family members. Daughters Corinne, Carmen, and Karen have been their biggest supporters and are dedicated to ensuring the perpetuity of the Foundation. The Zajac Foundation's biggest project to date is Zajac Ranch for Children.

About the Ranch

Zajac Ranch aims to provide a camp experience for all children. With a focus on accessibility and inclusivity, the Ranch serves over 400 children and young adults with medical conditions each year.

Located on the shores of Stave Lake in Mission, BC, just one hour east of Vancouver, the Ranch sits on more than 41 acres of pristine forested land. During the summer, it runs camps for children and young adults with chronic, life-threatening, and/or debilitating conditions, ensuring that hundreds of children with long-term medical conditions and disabilities can come to camp each year. In the off-season, the Ranch welcomes school groups and private rentals, with rental revenue supporting its summer medical camps.

The Ranch opened its doors in June 2004 and welcomed more than 50 children in its first season. Its mission is to be an accessible, innovative, and inclusive facility for children and young adults with medical conditions who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend camp. Its long-term goal is to one day offer a camp experience to any child, regardless of medical condition or financial situation, free of charge.



Our Vision

Provide memorable experiences that empower campers of all abilities to participate, develop life-long skills, create lasting friendships, build independence, and have fun.

Our Values

In fulfilling our Mission and Vision, Zajac Ranch is guided by the following Values:

- **RESPECT** and appreciation for the value and diversity we each represent
- **INCLUSIVE** opportunities that welcome all participants regardless of ability
- **EMPOWER** through opportunities
- **COMPASSION** empathy and concern for the well-being of others
- **INTEGRITY** and consideration for one another
- **EMBRACE** the possibilities
- **EXPERIENCE** the thrill of participating

Camp Programs

Each summer, the Ranch runs a range of medical camps tailored to campers' ages and needs, alongside leadership and partner programs.

Summer Medical Camps:

- **Mixed Medical Diagnosis Camps**: ages 7–17, with three week-long sessions each summer;
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder Camps:** three week-long sessions each summer;
- **Young Adult Camps:** ages 18–40, with sessions at the start and end of the summer;
- **CIT Program:** a Counsellor-in-Training program for youth aged 16–18;
- **Partner camps:** the Ranch also hosts camps for partner organizations, such as the Arthritis Society.

Campers take part in horseback riding, ropes courses, canoeing, and swimming, with activities adapted so everyone can participate. Camps are supported by enhanced staffing, a minimum counsellor ratio of 3:1, 1:1 Inclusion Support Specialists, and an on-site medical facility, "the OK Corral," staffed by volunteer doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals.

Making Camp Affordable

One week of camp costs about $2,300 per child. Through the Zajac Camper Allowance, families pay no more than $1,150, and other subsidies are available for families with significant financial need.

Over the years, the Foundation has provided more than $5.8 million in camper subsidies. Sustaining this commitment, and moving toward the Ranch's goal of free camp for every child, depends on the donor support this role will help secure.

Facilities and Site Rentals

The site includes three lodges (sleeping 30–100 people), a dining hall, a 60′ x 40′ gymnasium, an arts and cultural centre, an outdoor amphitheatre, sports fields, and waterfront access to Stave Lake. The Ranch hosts school groups, retreats, and weddings of up to 120 guests; proceeds support the Zajac Camper Allowance.



About the Zajac Family

Mel Zajac was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and lost his father at age six. He was working by age 11, delivering newspapers and later working in a bowling alley. He moved to Vancouver in 1949 and, in 1958, built one of the first high-rise apartment buildings in the West End, followed by about 22 more. Between 1966 and 1969 he developed the Pacific Palisades Apartments, office complex, and hotel, serving as President of the Pacific Palisades Hotel until 1989.

Mel's philanthropy began long before the Foundation. In 1964 he conceived an annual charity golf tournament, which supported the Variety Club until 1987. After the tragic deaths of his sons Mel Jr. and Marty in separate sporting accidents, Mel established The Mel Jr. & Marty Zajac Foundation in 1987. What began as a deeply personal tribute to his sons grew into an enduring organization committed to improving the lives of children, seniors, people with disabilities, and families throughout British Columbia.

The Foundation went on to partner on the $4 million BC Centre for Ability (1992) and Zajac Norgate House, a 36-unit wheelchair-accessible residence for seniors and people with disabilities (1999). Zajac Ranch for Children was perhaps Mel's most ambitious and deeply personal project.



Mel's honours included:

- Order of Canada (2007), in recognition of his many years of philanthropic work;
- Order of BC (2015), for his extensive philanthropy, community leadership, and lifelong dedication to supporting children and people with disabilities.
- Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Confederation (1992);
- Queen Elizabeth II Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medals;
- Variety Heart Award, Humanitarian of the Year (1986);
- Leadership Award for Ethical Service to the Community, Institute for Ethical Leadership (2005);
- Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow Award (2013).

Mel Zajac passed away in May 2026, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy of generosity, determination, compassion, and service. His influence can be seen not only in the buildings and organizations he helped create, but most importantly in the thousands of children, families, seniors, and community members whose lives were changed because he believed in helping others.

His wife Wendy and daughters Corinne, Carmen, and Karen continue the family's commitment, with Carmen serving as President of the Foundation and Zajac Ranch.

To learn more about the Foundation and Zajac Ranch, see:

- Ranch homepage: https://zajacranch.com
- About the Ranch: https://zajacranch.com/about/about-the-ranch
- Mel Zajac's story: https://zajacranch.com/leadership-staff/mel-zajac
- Camps: https://zajacranch.com/camps/schedule

Fundraising Context

The Foundation has built a stable and diversified fundraising base, with revenue growing 36% over the past decade. Annual revenue averages approximately $2.5 million, balanced across individuals, corporations, foundations, and events. Thanks to strong family connections to prominent donors, a number of families and family foundations have given at significant levels for more than a decade, a loyal core to build from. There is significant opportunity to expand the donor pipeline with new audiences.

Senior Manager, Major Gifts: Position Summary

Specific responsibilities of the Senior Manager, Major Gifts include:

Fundraising Strategy & Major Gift Development

- Contribute to the development and implementation of annual fundraising strategy in collaboration with the Executive Team and other members of the Development team.
- Provide input into fundraising priorities and cases, revenue goals, donor pipeline strategy, campaigns, sponsorship opportunities, and donor engagement initiatives.
- Develop and execute individual cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies for major gift prospects.
- Identify and qualify new prospective donors, corporate partners, and sponsorship opportunities that align with the Foundation's mission and priorities.
- Work collaboratively with the President, Executive Director, Board members, and other organizational leaders to support donor cultivation and solicitation where appropriate, including leveraging the Zajac family's long-standing donor relationships.

Major Gifts & Donor Stewardship

- Manage an active portfolio of major donors and prospects, with a primary focus on gifts of $10,000 and above.
- Personally cultivate, solicit, secure, and steward major gifts from individuals, families, corporations, and other philanthropic partners.
- Develop customized engagement and solicitation plans that reflect donor interests, giving history, capacity, and connection to the Foundation's mission.
- Prepare compelling proposals, cases for support, briefing materials, donor correspondence, and other materials required to advance major gift conversations.
- Build strong, long-term donor relationships through meaningful communication, recognition, stewardship, and impact reporting.
- Use Zajac Ranch as a cultivation tool, hosting donor tours and site visits that bring the Foundation's impact to life.
- Ensure timely and appropriate follow-up after donor meetings, gifts, events, and other engagement opportunities.
- Identify and cultivate legacy and planned giving opportunities among long-time donors, in coordination with the Executive Director.

Corporate Sponsorships & Partnerships

- Identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward corporate sponsors and partners to generate significant philanthropic and event-related revenue.
- Develop sponsorship proposals and customized partnership opportunities that provide meaningful value to corporate partners while advancing the Foundation's mission.
- Manage sponsor relationships from initial outreach through agreement, activation, recognition, and post-event stewardship.
- Identify opportunities to deepen existing corporate relationships and develop multi-year or expanded commitments where appropriate.

Fundraising Events

- Lead the major donor strategy, planning, and execution for the Foundation's signature fundraising events, including Zajac Nights Gala, Lunch with a Legend, and other fundraising initiatives as assigned.
- Develop event revenue strategies, which may include sponsorships, major donor engagement, table and ticket sales, live and silent fundraising opportunities, and other revenue-generating activities.
- Engage event committees, volunteers, and Board members to extend the Foundation's reach and secure key donor and sponsor participation.
- Coordinate fundraising-related event timelines, donor and sponsor deliverables, recognition requirements, and stewardship activities.
- Lead post-event donor and sponsor follow-up and contribute to event evaluation, revenue analysis, and recommendations for future improvement.

Development Team Collaboration & Communications

- Work collaboratively with Development, Marketing and Communications colleagues to ensure fundraising activities, donor communications, events, and stewardship efforts are coordinated and aligned.
- Provide fundraising content and donor insight to support proposals, sponsorship materials, impact communications, campaigns, and other development initiatives.
- Maintain consistent, professional, and mission-aligned messaging in all donor and sponsor communications.
- Share relevant donor information, opportunities, and relationship updates with appropriate internal stakeholders to support coordinated engagement.

Pipeline Management, Reporting & Administration

- Maintain accurate and timely donor and prospect records, contact reports, moves-management activity, proposals, commitments, and stewardship actions in the Foundation's CRM system.
- Track progress against agreed fundraising goals and provide regular updates on donor pipeline activity, solicitations, sponsorships, event revenue, and secured gifts.
- Support forecasting, reporting, and analysis of fundraising performance in collaboration with the Executive Director and Development team.
- Manage assigned fundraising and event-related expenses responsibly and in accordance with approved budgets and organizational policies.



Desired Qualifications

The new Senior Manager, Major Gifts will ideally have:

- Significant progressive fundraising or development experience, with a proven track record of personally cultivating, soliciting, and securing gifts of $10,000 or greater from individual donors, corporate partners, or other philanthropic supporters.
- Demonstrated experience in, and understanding of, developing and securing corporate sponsorships and managing sponsor relationships.
- Experience leading or playing a significant role in successful fundraising events, including sponsorship acquisition, donor engagement, and revenue generation.
- Demonstrated ability to independently manage a donor portfolio and move prospects through identification, cultivation, solicitation, closing, and stewardship.
- Excellent relationship-building, interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills, including the ability to make persuasive presentations and direct solicitations.
- Strong proposal writing and storytelling skills with the ability to connect donor interests to organizational priorities and impact.
- Exceptional organizational and project management skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities, deadlines, donor relationships, and event deliverables.
- Ability to work independently while collaborating effectively with the Executive Team, Development colleagues, Board members, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- Knowledge of the BC philanthropic landscape and established donor or corporate networks is considered an asset.
- Experience in a family- or founder-led organization, or in the children's health, disability, or camp sectors, is considered an asset.
- Experience with fundraising software and CRM systems; Raiser's Edge/Blackbaud experience is preferred.
- Bachelor's degree in a related field or an equivalent combination of education and relevant fundraising experience.
- High level of professionalism, integrity, judgment, and discretion when handling confidential donor and organizational information.
- The ability to travel throughout the Lower Mainland for donor meetings, and to the Ranch as needed for tours, donor visits, etc.

Traits and Competencies

To thrive in this role, the Foundation ideally seeks someone who is:

- A relationship builder who enjoys personally cultivating donors and is confident making direct asks.
- Genuinely moved by the Foundation's mission and inspired to help make camp possible for children of all abilities.
- Driven, self-motivated, and results-oriented, with a genuine passion for fundraising and the resourcefulness to meet ambitious goals.
- A persuasive communicator who can tell a compelling story and connect donor interests to the Foundation's impact.
- Highly organized, able to manage a donor portfolio, event timelines, and sponsor commitments at the same time.
- Warm, emotionally intelligent, and discreet, able to earn the trust of the Zajac family, long-time donors, and colleagues alike.
- Collaborative, contributing to fundraising strategy alongside the Executive Team and Development colleagues.
- Entrepreneurial and comfortable with ambiguity, excited to help build and shape a growing major gifts program as the Foundation evolves.



Leadership Biographies



Carmen Zajac, President

Carmen Zajac serves as President of the Zajac Foundation and Zajac Ranch, providing dedicated leadership and strategic oversight across the organization's operations, philanthropy, and long-term vision. As the daughter of the late Mel Zajac, Founder and Chairman of the Foundation, Carmen carries forward a deep family commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for children and young adults with complex medical conditions and disabilities.

Carmen began her professional career in the hospitality industry at the Pacific Palisades Hotel before expanding into commercial real estate and property management. During her time in Arizona, she earned both her Real Estate License and Commercial Pilot's License—reflecting the drive, discipline, and determination she brings to every endeavour.

Since joining the Foundation and Ranch, Carmen has been integral to the organization's growth and success, particularly in fundraising, donor relations, and development initiatives. She has played a key role in strengthening community partnerships, advancing signature events, and helping secure the resources needed to sustain and expand programs for campers and families.

Carmen is passionate about preserving and growing the legacy her father began while ensuring the Foundation continues to evolve for future generations. She is proud to lead an organization where compassion, opportunity, and impact are at the heart of everything it does.



Sepideh Tazzman, Executive Director

Sepideh Tazzman joined the Zajac Foundation in August 2024 and serves as Executive Director. With over 15 years of leadership experience, she brings a strong background in operations, strategic planning, and organizational leadership, with a focus on guiding organizations through growth, complexity, and systems transformation. Known for her systems-driven and people-focused approach, Sepideh is passionate about building efficient, sustainable organizations that can scale their impact.

Since joining the Foundation, she has played a key role in strengthening internal processes, enhancing cross-department collaboration, and advancing fundraising operations and long-term strategic planning. She works closely with senior leadership and the Board to support governance, alignment, and organizational sustainability.

Sepideh was drawn to Zajac Ranch by its mission to remove barriers and create life-changing experiences for children and young adults with complex medical needs. She is deeply committed to building the structures and support systems that enable both campers and staff to thrive, and values being part of a team dedicated to meaningful, lasting impact.



Navigating complex challenges for social profits

The Discovery Group is an international consulting firm dedicated to the social profit sector. We believe that social profit organizations can change the world. Since 2017 it has been our mission to help social profits across the globe achieve their vision and elevate community impact. We work side-by-side with our clients to help them envision change, determine how to make it happen, and put the necessary tools and skills in place for success.

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