

**School of Computer Science
Course 15-391**

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Final Consulting Report

Family Services of Western PA

Sai Ho Chung

Family Services of Western Pennsylvania

Executive Summary

Student Consultant, Sai Ho Chung
Community Partners, Mary Graczyk, Sarah Tafel

I. Background Information

Family Services of Western Pennsylvania is a non-profit organization offering services to children, adults and families living in southwest Pennsylvania. Its mission is *to foster the capacities and skills in families and individuals to direct their own lives and create a productive, caring community.*

The community partners (CP), Mary Graczyk and Sarah Tafel, are the Program Coordinator and Administrative Officer of the Family Outside Program respectively. One of their responsibilities is to gather information and compile part of the FSWP's annual report at the end of every year.

The CP extensively use a Clinical Management System called CareLogic which is a web-based system storing the details of the clients such as demographic information and financial accounts.

II. Consulting Tasks

The CP and consultant designed and implemented a database together to store some organization-specific data which cannot be stored in CareLogic.

III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

The main outcome is a Microsoft Excel database residing in the shared network. It also includes user interfaces for the CP to input data and generate a customized report. They are expected to save 8 weeks in preparing for a quality annual report which may attract more funding from various sources. They can also spend the time saved to meet with more families. In order to have a sustainable system, the CP should have the necessary Excel skills to maintain the system which records all the information they need. Otherwise they may not exercise the new work process.

Two recommendations have been made to FSWP:

1. Enriching the skills of the CP in Microsoft Excel. This enables them to maintain the database and opens up some opportunities to apply this technology to other operations. The difficulties lie on whether the CP have the time to pick up this skill.
2. Merging the new database into CareLogic. The new information will then be managed by the professionals. The system will be more sustainable in the long run. The cost of building the extra functionalities will determine the feasibility of the recommendation.

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I. About the Organization

Organization

Family Services of Western Pennsylvania (FSWP) is a non-profit organization offering services to children, adults and families living in southwest Pennsylvania over 50 years. They offer more than 35 different types of services at program centers located throughout the region and served more than 7,500 people last year.

FSWP's mission is *to foster the capacities and skills in families and individuals to direct their own lives and create a productive, caring community.*

FSWP has a number of funding sources, from state government to individual donors, contributing to an annual budget of \$19,000,000. Every year, their staffs spend at least a month to prepare the annual report to show the donors their work in the previous year.

FSWP has 13 program centers throughout the region of southwest Pennsylvania, providing different kinds programs and services. The East Liberty center is where the community partners go to work and all the consulting tasks were done there.

Facilities

The East Liberty is located on 6401 Penn Avenue in Pittsburgh. The office is right above a mall and next to a middle school. It is on a major bus route and easily accessible by many of the residents. The center occupies one floor of the building. Staff either works in offices or cubicles, and there are also a pantry, a storage area and a visiting room which has video conferencing equipment.

Programs

FSWP achieves its mission by providing the following programs and services:

1. Vocational Services
2. Child and Adult Case Management
3. Mental Health Programs
4. Behavioral Health Programs
5. ACES-Allegheny Crisis
6. CORE Services
7. Families Outside
8. Ways to Work
9. Foster Care Program

10. Anchors program

The East Liberty office mainly provides the Foster Care Program, the Family Outside Program, the Ways to Work Program and the Anchors Program. The Foster Care Program offers 24-hour, 7-day-per-week care in the homes of approved and supervised foster families to children unable to live with their birth parents. The Families Outside Program assists family members to cope with the stressful period when a loved one is lost. The Ways to Work Program helps working families maintain economic stability by providing loans to cover "job related" expenses or transportation needs. The Anchor program assists with re-establishing family roles in a way that is safe, healthy and nurturing for the children involved by providing therapies to children and parents. During the therapy, the child develops trust with the therapists and gains a fuller understanding of the non-custodial parent. This can ensure both the custodial and non-custodial parents having the necessary skills in co-parenting.

Staff

FSWP is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees, made up of many of the region's leaders and members of the communities served by FSWP.

FSWP has more than 400 employees and 30 of them are in the East Liberty Office. Everyone has either a desktop computer or a laptop computer. All of them have an email account and are comfortable with the IT applications being used daily, such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook. They are especially comfortable using a web-based Clinical Management System, CareLogic, to keep and retrieve the basic information of the clients. They use it extensively.

The staff in FSWP can be categorized into:

1. Administrative Staff – they use computers to input client information, do scheduling, generate reports and perform counseling. Some of them have strong experience using Microsoft Excel.
2. Therapists – they use computers to retrieve client's information from CareLogic. Some of them are not comfortable with using Microsoft Excel and are afraid they would make the system go down. They have to carry many paper documents with them while performing therapies.
3. Staff in Management Information System (MIS) – the team has 4 people and they provide daily IT support to the whole organization, mainly by phone call and emails. They are also experienced in Microsoft Excel and Access, especially writing Marcos in Visual Basic for Application.

The community partners are Mary Graczyk and Sarah Tafel. They are the program coordinator and the administrative officer respectively. Besides the job responsibilities of the administrative staff, they are responsible for analyzing the assessment scores and generating the reports every year. Mary is also responsible for communicating with the clients when they first seek for help from FSWP. For technical skills, they are experienced in using Microsoft Office to manage their email accounts in Outlook, perform word processing in Word, create presentation slides in PowerPoint, publish flyers in Publisher and analyze data in Excel. In particular, Sarah has taken some courses recently to improve her skills in Microsoft Excel.

Technical Environment

All computers use Microsoft Windows as their operating system with Microsoft Office Suite installed. The versions are either Windows 98, 2000 or XP, depending on the time that the computer

was purchased. Each of the staff has access to both a personal and public network drive. All of the common documents are put in the public network drive. All the servers are located in the UParc office. Not every office has staff responsible for technology support which is sometimes handled by a particular staff who is interested and has the most knowledge in computer. Staffs in MIS will take over the job if no one is able to solve the problem.

FSWP is one of the very few organizations in the country having a mature Clinical Management System called CareLogic, which is a web-based system storing all the relevant information of the clients, including demographic information, relationship with other clients and financial accounts. The system was created and is maintained by a company called Qualifacts Systems Inc. FSWP's staff can update the system by sending online request to the company and the request will be handled within the next 24 hours. The cost of building this system was \$157,000 which is shared by two other similar organizations.

Technical Management

Staff in MIS provides general technology management to the whole organization. They outsourced the creation and maintenance of the CareLogic and website to external companies.

Technology Planning

The technology planning and budgeting is determined by the division director. The budget is allocated according to the projects of a division. A project would get a larger budget if it involves a significant number of people or users. Specifically, directors are responsible for requesting new computers. The cost of a new computer is written off evenly in the coming three fiscal years. After the request is made, the MIS director will order the computers and the associated software.

Internal and External Communication

FSWP's staff has good communication in general amongst themselves. Email and phone calls are the primary channels of communication. All of the computers are connected to an internal network. Files can be shared internally. Every staff has an email account and access to the web. However, senior staff prefers to use the paper organizer to schedule their meetings. They would only use an email program if they are using computer to communicate.

The website of FSWP is one of the main external communication channels. It provides some basic information about the program and services provided by the organization. There is one staff responsible for the information update. It also takes online donation but there were only a few cases in the previous years.

Information Management

FSWP manages most of its data and information electronically using CarLogic. However, Qualifacts has contract restricting the content in the system, so FSWP is not able to store some organization-specific data into CareLogic. For example, FSWP requires some of its clients to take a set of assessment tests during their therapies. This kind of information is not common to every organization using this system. Extra cost is necessary to implement additional functionalities. In order to keep those data electronically at minimal cost, a new centralized database developed by FSWP's software is required to store the extra data but it may introduce inconsistencies between the old and new database. Further effort has to put in order to synchronize the data.

II. Scope of Work

Task 1. Efficient Data Storage and Report Generation

Problem

In the Anchors Program, assessments of the children and parents are conducted before and after their therapies. The scores of the assessments are recorded on some standardized paper forms and are kept in the office where the assessment is carried out. These scores are very important to FSWP because they are required for donor reviews. The benefactors look at the result to measure the progress and support continued funding.

When compiling the annual report at the end of the year, the staff has to gather the forms from different offices, enter the data to a Microsoft Excel file and compute the rates of the improvement for every case manually. They are looking for a new database and some software that will do the job for them. FSWP is not able to integrate the data into their main information system due to the contractual restrictions set by Qualifacts which built the system.

How the Mission is Affected

If FSWP has an efficient system to store the data, perform analysis and produce a quality report, they would be able to provide more comprehensive results to prove their work of the previous year. More funding would be possible in addition to the fact that a lot of time will be saved. The FSWP will have more resources, in terms of money and time, to provide more services to the people in need. For instance, the community partners will have the time to meet with more families, understand their problems and determine which programs or services are able to help them.

Approach

The solution to this problem is a database residing in the shared network storing the clients' basic information and their assessment scores. There are user interfaces for creating or modifying a client's account, inputting the assessment scores and generating a customized report. Microsoft Excel is the only platform to handle all these requirements for the sake of sustainability. It is because the staff does not have strong experience in other sophisticated databases, for example, Microsoft Access. In addition, Excel provides the staffs the ability that they can customize their report easily by directly manipulating the data stored in the worksheets.

How the Organization is affected

The organization is affected both positively and negatively by the new system in the following ways:

Staff

Administrative Staff and therapists now need extra time to enter clients' basic information and assessment scores into the system respectively. Therapists are responsible for inputting the test scores while the administrative staff is responsible for creating accounts and generating reports. It also means that they do not have to gather all the assessment forms from different offices when they need to generate the annual report.

Technical Environment

FSWP wants the new database and user interfaces to ultimately integrate with CareLogic. The new system provides the basic framework for reference when the company, Qualifacts, is ready to incorporate the new data into their system. This will accelerate the whole integration process if it happens.

Information Management

The new database becomes another source of data which contains similar data set as the Qualifact's. Inconsistence may appear if the staffs do not manage to update the two databases at the same time. Other staffs may not be able to differentiate which database contains the most up-to-date information.

The standardized assessment forms become the backup of the data once the information is entered and delivered to the new database electronically. The administrative staff does not have to request for the paper copies of the scores and therapists do not have to carry the document around. Their laptop computer will allow them to retrieve the information at anywhere.

Other factors contributing to the success of the implementation

The community partners were very passionate and committed to providing continuous support to the consultant. Both the consultant and community partners share a common goal to tackle the problems and improve the organization.

FSWP is a relatively large non-profit organization. They have sufficient resources for this project. A laptop computer with Microsoft Office suite was assigned to the consultant. The computer was equipped with all the necessary software to implement the whole system.

The consultant is a master's student in the Electrical and Computer Engineering department at Carnegie Mellon University. He has experience in building databases and using Microsoft Excel from various coursework and internships. His skills and knowledge allow him to provide relevant and accurate information during the consulting process.

The current solution was chosen in such a way that the staff has the necessary skills to manipulate and manage the new system. The system is implemented in Microsoft Excel because some of the staff already has strong experience in this software and some others are also attending various seminars to acquire some hand on experience.

The user interfaces also mimic the design of CareLogic so that everyone in the organization can pick up the new system easily.

The sustainability of the system is further ensured by the staff in the MIS department. They have very good knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite and they are able to analyze the Excel database if it goes down. In this case, the general staff will be able to handle some minor problems, because most of them have background in Excel, while the MIS staff is going to deal with more complex situations.

The risk of this project is that the staff may be reluctant to make use of the new system. There may be several reasons. First, the user interfaces are too complex and not user friendly enough. The staff stops using it before they can really see the benefits. Second, the new system cannot provide every piece of information they want. They still need to refer to the paper documents. Finally, the extra time to manage the system is not justified by the time they save in analyzing the data.

III. Outcomes and Recommendations

Task 1. Efficient Data Storage and Report Generation

Outcome

The main outcome is a Microsoft Excel database residing in the network drive. 10 worksheets are used as user interfaces and the other 6 are for data storage and processing. Every employee with the corresponding network folder access permission in any office of the organization is able to enter and retrieve information from this database through the user interfaces.

The user interfaces are able to:

- Add a client into the database
- Edit the information of an existing client
- Input test scores into the database and delete them
- Generate a customized report by selecting the fields to be shown
- Show the history of the transaction of the database

The new work process is that the community partners, Mary and Sarah, will enter the demographic information of the clients into the system when the clients first visit FSWP's offices. After the clients completed an assessment test, one of the 5 therapists who carry out the assessment will enter test scores into the system. All these information should appear in some of the worksheets.

When the community partners prepare the annual report for the organization at the end of the year, the Excel system will generate a report which contains all the test scores and the improvement rates for all clients visited in that year. This process can possibly be done in 4 weeks and the whole compilation process of the annual report may be shortened from 12 weeks to 8 weeks. .

By the time this final consulting report was drafted, Mary and Sarah had added 2 clients into the system for the purpose of testing. They also edited their information on purpose. The scores of 4 of their tests had been input into the system too.

Comparison with the Previous Situation

Prior to the consulting work, there was no electronic database that stores the scores of the assessment. All the test scores are recorded on papers which are kept in the office where the assessment was done.

The community partner had to gather the papers from all the offices and input the scores into an Excel file manually. They made use of some of the basic Excel mathematical formulas to generate the rate of improvement between the tests. For example, the community partners spent 12 weeks on this process last year.

Expected Outcomes that cannot Be Observed

The ability of the community partners to maintain the system completely has not been observed. Although the community partner has basic knowledge in Microsoft Excel, their capacity can be reached further if they have more advanced knowledge and understanding of what Microsoft Excel can do, especially VBA. Part for the system was built by VBA. This skill may help them to

minimize the risk that the system is not sustainable by giving them the capability to fix the errors and develop some new systems to suit the need of the organization after the consultant is left.

The ultimate goal of this database is to assist them to compile the annual report but the efficiency of this end-of-year processing is also not yet known because this process will only happen at the end of the year.

Increased Capacity

The outcome suggested that the community partner can save up to 8 weeks in preparing some statistics for annual report. Mary, who is also responsible for communicating with the clients when they first seek for help from FSWP, can spend the time saved to meet with more clients and more people can be served. In the meantime, they have to restrict the number of clients that they can take. They have already planned to receive more cases in the following year due to the availability of the new tool.

The new database also provides a better organization and presentation of data which in turn leads to a better annual report. A good annual report may be able to attract more funding from various sources.

The outcome gives the organization more resources in terms of both time and money. The capacity to provide more quality services thus increases.

Sustainability

The users will keep using the system to store clients' data and generate report because this system is designed to be similar to the existing Clinical Management System which has been used for long. They should have no problem in performing similar tasks in the new system.

But this will only happen if the system can be fixed when the system goes down. The staff in MIS department agreed to pick up the responsibility to maintain the system. They have sufficient knowledge in Visual Basic for Application in Microsoft Access and Excel.

There are a couple of risks that the outcome may not be sustainable. First, a programming bug may not be fixed by the technical staff. Second, the new system cannot provide every piece of information they want. They still need to refer to the paper documents. Finally, the extra time to manage the system is not justified by the time they save in analyzing the data.

Recommendation for Task 1. Enriching the skills in Microsoft Excel

The new system was totally implemented in Microsoft Excel. Every component of the system was built by some of the important functionalities provided by Excel, for instance, data validation, worksheet protection and Visual Basic for Applications (VBA). In particular, VBA was used to implement some complicated tasks that cannot be done by normal Excel formulas. Generating a report from the database dynamically based on the user's selection is a good example.

In order to maintain the system and add in more test assessment data later, knowledge beyond normal Excel formulas is therefore necessary. Otherwise, the community partners have to wait for their technical staff to fix it when it goes down unfortunately. If the technical staff is not immediately available, the community partner has to switch back to the original manual method to compile some statistical data for their annual report. Their effort and time spent on building this system will go in vain.

Having better skills with Microsoft Excel not only allows the community partners to sustain this system, but it also opens some opportunities to utilize technology to assist their other operations. Microsoft Excel is a powerful tool in analyzing numerical data. It offers much more flexibility in manipulating data than a relational database like Oracle and Microsoft Access. Users can directly apply formulas or other functions such as sorting on the data in an Excel worksheet while Oracle and Access may require SQL statements to retrieve the desired result. Manipulating data visually may be easier than learning SQL for people who have little experience in database. The community partners already estimated the new system may save them up to 8 weeks of time. It is reasonable to believe that some more time can be saved if the community partner can realize how Excel can help them. The amount of time which can be saved depends on the nature of the new work.

As long as the community partner can make use of their time more efficiently, it is expected to see that they can meet with more clients and help them to build a better relationship among family members. This is one of the goals of FSWP.

Implementation Steps

To maintain the system:

- If the community partners want to learn how to build the system and fix an error, they can
- Look at the documentation written by the consultant to see which Excel functions has been used by the consultant in building the system
- Read through the steps of building the system in the documentation
- Search for the online references provided below if there is a problem in understanding a particular Excel formula
- Understand VBA by going through the online tutorials suggested below
- Raise a question in the Microsoft Office Online newsgroup if the community partner is not able to solve their problems alone

Or if the community partners prefer the system to be supported by people with technical background, they can:

- Introduce the database to the MIS department
- Present all the documents to the MIS written by the consultant
- Invite the MIS to make an evaluation to determine whether they are able to support the database
- Request the MIS to examine the feasibility to outsource the maintenance

Or

- Look for volunteers who are experienced in Microsoft Exam and basic programming technique. For example, a undergraduate student who has taken an introductory programming course will suffice

To explore more opportunities in using Microsoft Excel:

- Attend different levels of Excel seminars according to the experience of the employees. Mary, Sarah and the therapists can be benefited the most
- Analyze the daily operation to see whether there is any data which can be stored electronically

- Evaluate the benefit of adopting this technology. The metrics can be the time saved, money saved or the number of clients can be served more
- Evaluate the cost of the implementation and maintenance by negotiating with Qualifacts

Resources

1. Excel formulas
<http://www.techonthenet.com/excel/index.php>
 There is a list of all the available Excel/VBA functions. One can look for the examples in using a particular function.
2. Visual Basic Programming Tutorial
<http://www.anthony-vba.kefra.com/vba/vbabasic1.htm>
 This is an introductory tutorial on VBA for beginners. One should be able to understand the code of the new database after going through this tutorial.
3. Microsoft Office Online Newsgroups
<http://www.microsoft.com/office/community/en-us/default.mspx>
 This is an official newsgroup where there are many active members answering questions regarding Microsoft Office products. One can expect there is a quick and accurate response from there.
4. Microsoft Excel Courses
http://www.rmu.edu/OnTheMove/findoutmore.open_page?iCalledBy=findoutmore&iPage=66365&iT=&iattr=&ivisor=0&ichap=bcnm_courses
 This course is offered by Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh. There are two levels of courses which are introductory and intermediate. The knowledge offered by the intermediate course may not be enough to understand the whole database. The knowledge in VBA may have to be picked up from online tutorials. The community partners are also welcome to take the courses in other learning centers.

Additional Recommendation 1.

Merging the new database into the Clinical Management System – CareLogic

CareLogic is a web-based information system currently used by FSWP to store and retrieve their clients' main information such as demographic information, billing and current status. It is implemented and managed by a company called Qualifacts. Due to the contractual agreements with the company, the scores of the assessment tests in the Anchor Program are not able to store in this system unless FSWP is willing to increase their fees to Qualifacts to manage the extra data. This is one of the reasons that a new Excel database is built to store the scores and generate some reports at the end of the year.

The new database can save much time in handling the data but it has some trade-offs too. The community partner has to assign someone to maintain the new database. If it goes down, the time required to fix it depends on the experience of the person who is responsible for it. Furthermore, some basic information in the new database will be duplicated from CareLogic. This information is input manually to the database because there is no direct export from CareLogic. This process is

error-prone and leads to inconsistency between these two systems. The users may not be able to identify which information is up-to-date if the values are not the same across the two systems. As the new database only contains a subset of the basic information of the clients, it is also not suggested that the data in the new database should be exported to CareLogic because the users still have to input data into two different places in this case.

The new database is a tentative solution to store the data and generate some statistical reports which are included in the annual report and may be able to attract more funding if the result is convincing. The perfect solution is to merge the database into CareLogic. By doing so, FSWP can have a central place of information access and no inconsistency of information. The test scores will also be managed by the experienced professionals of Qualifacts. The system will be obviously more sustainable in the long run. We can also request them to make use of the existing web-based infrastructure to allow the clients to answer the test questions online so that almost all the information will flow electronically without the intervention of human.

We do not expect a lot of time will be saved from this merging because the system only requires maintenance if it goes down. But Qualifacts is able to maintain the systems better because they have the skills and expertise which FSWP does not have, so it may in fact be more efficient for Qualifacts to maintain them. Moreover, having the system merged into CareLogic and online test forms implemented, the clients can perform the test anywhere with Internet access. Therapists do not necessarily bring test forms to the patients by home visits and they are able to enter scores online. The time they saved enables them to provide some more other services which need their presence and expertise.

Implementation steps:

- Discuss the cost with the company. It is important to note that the additional functionalities required to store the assessment scores would be a very important enhancement to CareLogic. They can attract more customers by having these functionalities or at least maintain their market share. FSWP can assist the development of these functionalities. In this case, FSWP is no longer a customer of Qualifacts but co-developer. FSWP should negotiate for a free development cost in return of their effort in helping Qualifacts
- Introduce the Excel database to the company as a prototype
- Introduce extra user requirements after using the Excel database for a while
- Draft a policy to delegate the responsibilities of maintaining the system to different people

Resources

1. TechSoup article – *“Managing the Relationship with a Contractor”*

<http://www.techsoup.org/howto/articles/techplan/page3394.cfm?cg=searchterms&sg=contractor>

This article is about managing the relationship with the contractor which will be Qualifacts in our case. The biggest obstacle in implementing the recommendation is not technology but how to negotiate with the contractor to deliver what we desire at the minimum cost. Moreover, TechSoup is a very comprehensive website which provides technology support and information to non-profit organizations.

2. The Excel database

The Excel database is a very good snapshot of all the user requirements. It can accelerate the implementation process because Qualifacts do not necessarily collect all the user requirements again

3. Law consultation

<http://www.nonprofitissues.com/>

If the main problem is really coming from the contract, the community partner may need law consultation to understand what they can do in order to incorporate those data into CareLogic. This website has some articles about various law issues. The community partner may be able to acquire some information out of there.

About the Consultant

Sai Ho Chung is a graduate student in Information Networking at Carnegie Mellon University. He received the Bachelor degree in Computer Engineering from the University of Hong Kong in 2004. His academic interests are image processing and computational finance. He will start a career as IT analyst at Barclays Capital in Fall 2006.

Appendix A.

Screenshot of the user interfaces

Editing a client

Step 1
Searching criteria
 Name
 QSI

Step 2
 First Name
 Middle Initial
 Last Name
 Family Name
 QSI*
 Gender
 Date of Birth
 Role in the family
 Date of First Session
 Date of Final Session
 Program

*Please do not update

Figure 1. The user interface for editing the information of a client

Columbia Impairment Scale (Parent Version)

Choose A Client (Child) by Name Pre Test/Post Test

Name
 QSI #N/A Gender #N/A

Date of Evaluation (mm/dd/yyyy)

Question Number	Answer
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
Total	<input type="text"/> 0

Figure 2. The user interface for inputting the test scores

Printing the result		Role
Select a client (leave the field empty to select all)	<input type="text" value="#N/A"/>	#N/A
OSI	<input type="text" value="#N/A"/>	
Select the category you want to see		
AAPI		
Score Format	<input type="text"/>	
Form A (Pre Test)	<input type="text"/>	
Form B (Post Test)	<input type="text"/>	
Rate of Change	<input type="text"/>	
Conflict Tactics Scale (Parent Version)		
Pre Test	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>	
Post Test	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>	
Rate of Change	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>	
Conflict Tactics Scale (Child Version)		
Pre Test	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>	
Post Test	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>	
Rate of Change	<input type="text"/>	
Columbia Impairment Scale (Parent Version)		
Pre Test	<input type="text"/>	
Post Test	<input type="text"/>	
Rate of Change	<input type="text"/>	

TestDateID	TestDa	TestDa
#N/A	1	
#N/A	1	
#N/A	1	
#N/A	1	
#N/A	1	
#N/A	1	

Figure 3. The user interface for generating a customized report

Past Community Partners

4 Kids Early Learning Centers
Addison Behavioral Care, Inc.
Alafia Cultural Services
Alcoa Collaborative
Allegheny Co. Housing Authority
Allegheny General Hospital Pastoral Staff
American Association of University Women
Animal Friends, Inc.
ASSET, Inc.
ASTEP-Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church
Auberle
Auberle In-Home Services
Bedford Hope Center – Resident Council
Bedford Initiatives
Bethany House Ministry
Bishop Boyle Center
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation
Borough of Crafton
Boys & Girls of Wilkinsburg
Braddock Carnegie Library & Community Center
Brashear Association, Inc.
Breachmenders
BTC Center
CADA-Citizens to Abolish Domestic Apartheid
Career and Workforce Development Center East
Carnegie Library of Homestead
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Carnegie Science Center – Hill House
Association
CART-Consumer Action Response Team
Center Avenue YMCA
Center Avenue YMCA, Allequippa Terrace
Center for Creative Play
Center for Hearing and Deaf Services, Inc.
Center of Life
Central Academy
Central New Development Corporation
Children Youth Ministry
Children's Museum
Christian Life Skills
Community Day
Community Day School
Community Human Services Corporation
Community Technical Assistance Center
Competitive Employment Opportunities
Conflict Resolution Center International
CONTACT Pittsburgh
CTAC-Community Technical Assistance Center
East End Cooperative Ministries
East End Neighborhood Employment Center
East End Neighborhood Forum
East Liberty Development
East Liberty Presbyterian Church
East Side Community Collaborative
Eastminster Child Care Center
Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center
Education Center
Every Child, Inc.
Fair Housing Partnership
Faison Development & Opportunities Center
FAME
Family Services of Western PA
First Charities/First United Methodist Church
Friendship Development Association
Garfield Jubilee Association, Inc.
Gateway to the Arts
Glen Hazel Family Reading Center
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
Greenfield Senior Center
Gwen's Girls
Hazelwood Senior Center
Hazelwood YMCA
Hill House Association
Hill House Association – After School Program
Hill/Oakland Workforce Collaborative
Hope Academy of Music and the Arts
Hosanna House
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Hunger Services Network
Jane Holmes Residence
Jewish Family & Children's Service
Jewish Residential Services
Joy-Full-Gospel Fellowship After School Program
Just Harvest
Kingsley Association
Lawrenceville Development Corporation
League of Young Voters
Light of Life Family Assistance Program
Madison Elementary School
Manchester Academic Charter School
McKees Rocks Terrace
McKeesport Collaborative
McKelvy Elementary School
Methodist Union of Social Agencies
Miller Elementary School, Principal's Office
Mon Valley Initiative
Mon Valley Providers Council
Mon Valley Resources Unlimited
Mon Valley Unemployment Committee
Mon Yough Community Services
Mount Ararat Community Activities Center
NAACP National Voter Fund
NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania
National Association of Minority Contractors /
Black Contractors Association
Negro Educational Emergency Drive
New Beginnings Learning Center
New Penley Place
Northside Coalition for Fair Housing
Northside Institutional Children Youth Ministry
Northside Leadership Conference
Northview Heights Family Support Center
OASIS Senior Center
Opera Theater of Pittsburgh
Operation Better Block
Orr Compassionate Care Center
Outreach Teen & Family Services
Parental Stress Center
Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership
(This list is continued on the next page...)

Past Community Partners (continued)

Pennsylvania Low Income Housing Coalition	St. James School
People's Oakland	St. Stephen Elementary School
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape	Sustainable Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh Citizens' Police Review Board	The Community House
Pittsburgh Health Corps	The HUB Downtown Street Outreach Center
Pittsburgh Mediation Center	Thomas Merton Center
Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners	Three Rivers Center for Independent Living
Pittsburgh Vision Services	Three Rivers Youth
Pittsburgh Voyager	TLC-USA
POISE Foundation	Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments
Program for Health Care to Underserved Populations	Tzu Chi Wen Chinese School
Providence Family Support Center	Union Project
Radio Information Service	United Cerebral Palsy
Reading Is Fundamental Pittsburgh	Urban League of Pittsburgh
Regional Coalition of Community Builders	Urban Youth Action
River Valley School	Ursuline Services
Rodef Shalom	Vintage Senior Center
Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church	Weed & Seed Program, Mayor's Office
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh	Wesley Center
Rosedale Block Cluster	West Pittsburgh Partnership
Rx Council of Western PA	Wireless Neighborhoods
Sacred Heart Elementary School	Women's Enterprise Center
Salvation Army Family Crisis Center	Working Order
Schenley Heights Community Development Center	YMCA McKeesport
Second East Hills Social Services Center	YMCA Senior AIDE Center
Sharry Everett Scholarship Fund	Youth Fair Chance
Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health	YouthBuild
	YWCA Bridge Housing
	YWCA of McKeesport

Community Partner Information FAQ

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7. What does it cost to be a Community Partner?

The cost for participating in this experience is your time and your commitment to follow through as agreed. As leaders of community organizations, we know your time is of premium value. Those who have made this investment of time have reaped returns many times over.

8. What does the Community Partner have to offer Carnegie Mellon students?

- Students learn to structure unstructured problems. Community organizations are complex environments with complex problems. Your organization provides excellent environments in which to practice the art of structuring problems.
- Students come from different cultural backgrounds and most have never been in a nonprofit organization. They are practicing how to communicate across cultural differences and across technical knowledge differences. They need to be able to make mistakes and learn from them. Community partners provide a supportive relationship in which students can take risks and learn about how to communicate, how to relate, and how to maintain professionalism.
- Students get the opportunity to practice process consulting. They are learning that expertise is only as valuable as the ability to help others solve authentic problems. You provide a context in which students can practice these skills.
- We've found that Community Partners are very appreciative for the students' assistance. There is nothing more rewarding than to experience your efforts as valuable and rewarding for others. You provide that experience for students.
- Finally, you offer a glimpse into career opportunities in the nonprofit arena. Students learn to appreciate those who work in the nonprofit sector, and they grow to appreciate the role and function of community organizations. We hope this appreciation not only informs the choices they make in life, but also encourages them to care and give back to the community throughout their professional careers.

9. How do I become a Community Partner

Contact an instructor, Joe Mertz or Scott McElfresh. Send your contact information: name, title, name of organization, address, phone, fax, location of organization and your interest in being a Community Partner. You will have a telephone conversation and possibly an on-site visit. All organizations are considered, though preference is given to organizations providing services to a low-income community or a community at risk for falling into the "digital divide."

**Send email to
instructors@tcinc.org
(email preferred)**

**Or call
Joe Mertz: 412.268.2540
Scott McElfresh: 412.268.4859**

10. Caveats

- We do our best to ensure that students who sign-up for the class are committed to completing the class, however, occasionally, a student ends up withdrawing from the class during the semester. Typically, this happens when a student has underestimated the time they need for this class. We do our best to advise students so this does not happen. When it does happen, there is nothing we can do except to invite the Community Partner to participate in the following semester.
- The semester is short and the student has to do a lot of work in a short amount of time. For this reason, it is critical that you keep your scheduled appointments, do the work you agree to do, and maintain communication with the student. The student will need your feedback on reports quickly, often the next day. When we get to the final consulting reports, we will need fast turnaround time from Community Partners because we also need to get the reports published in time for the Community Technology Forum.
- If there is any chance that you think you will not be able to follow through with the requirements of this partnership, please wait until such time as when you are able to do it. Since the Community Partner is the focus for the student's learning, it is essential that the partnership be sustained for the semester.

Community Partner Information FAQ

1. What is the goal of the partnership in this course?

The goal of this class is to expand the capacity of the Community Partner to use, plan for, and manage technology, administratively and programmatically. The student is learning process consulting, project management, communication, relationship management, problem identification, and analysis.

2. As a Community Partner, what can I expect to happen?

Once you match with a student consultant, you will set a meeting schedule that you and the student will keep for the remainder of the semester. The student comes to your location for 3 hours a week. During this time you and the student work together. This is not an internship in which the student merely works on site. Rather, it is a consulting partnership in which you must work together to achieve your technology goals. The student facilitates a process that moves from assessment, to analysis of problems and opportunities, to defining a scope of work, to developing a work plan, to analyzing outcomes and finally presenting that analysis. As the Community Partner, you are the consulting client. You provide information and discuss that information with the student. But you are more than a client; you are also a learner. In process consulting the client "owns the problem" as well as its solution. The consultant facilitates the client in achieving that solution. The consultant doesn't "do for" the client. Rather, the consultant works with the client.

3. What types of activities are typically included in a scope of work?

Each scope of work is unique and depends solely upon the specific needs and opportunities of the individual Community Partner. Partnerships have focused on a wide range of activities, including: personal information management (how to use Windows, organize files, backup files, use various software packages, use time managers, use Palm Pilots and other personal information management tools, e-mail, etc.), developing a plan for how to train staff and how to incorporate knowledge and skill into job description, designing a local area network, implementing Internet connectivity, designing and developing a web site, determining effective data storage methods, analyzing the needs for an information database, designing and implementing a database, solving technical problems, designing a public community technology access center, determining the specifications for computers, developing disaster recovery plans, and more.

4. Who can be a Community Partner?

This course target individuals playing an administrative or programmatic leadership role within a community organization. Typically Community Partners are Executive Directors, Directors, Assistant/Associate Directors, Coordinators, and Managers. But, we make the selection based on the organization and the role that the individual plays within that organization, regardless of title.

5. Why do you focus on organizational leaders?

For an organization to use information technology effectively, its leaders must have a vision for how it can support the organization's mission, they must be comfortable enough to integrate technology into their personal work practices, and they must know enough to budget, staff, and subcontract appropriately. By partnering one-on-one with a student consultant, the leader has a unique opportunity to build that vision, comfort, and knowledge, no matter where they are starting from.

6. What are the requirements for being a Community Partner?

- Hold a leadership role within your organization.
- Have a computer in your office or one you could or do use in your job.
- Reliably meet with the student consultant 3 hours per week, every week, for about the 13 weeks.
- Come to an on-campus gathering 2 times during the semester. Once at the beginning and once at the end.
- Share information about your organization with the student consultant.
- Read project reports prepared by the student and give the student immediate feedback.
- Complete a brief response form after reading each report and return to the instructor.
- Keep a log of consulting sessions and send to instructors twice during the semester.
- Read the final consulting report. Give feedback to the student immediately.
- Make a brief presentation at the end of the semester (with the student) at the Community Technology Forum. (This is the 2nd on-campus gathering you are required to attend.)

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