

Auberle
Student Consultant, Angela Huh
Community Partner, Michelle LaRue

About the Organization

Auberle is a non-profit service agency that strives to help strengthen the family unit by providing physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and educational needs to children and families at risk. Auberle began as a home for adolescent males and has now prospered into a multi-faceted agency and has expanded its programs to girls as well as families.

Auberle believes that children belong in a permanent family, and thus aims to reunite families and return children home. Auberle has approximately \$12 million allocated for its budget which it receives from county contracts, government, along with many other funders and donations. Auberle offers many programs and services for both children and families. The programs and services offered at Auberle fit into eight areas: Residential Programs, In-Home Services, Education, Family Foster Care, Shelter Programs, Work Readiness/Youth Employment and Training, Community Connections for Families (CCF), and Communities That Care (CTC). These programs are tailored to accomplish Auberle's mission, values, beliefs, and vision.

Mission Statement: "Auberle, in the Catholic tradition of service to others, serves the needs of children and families at risk. Auberle enables and empowers children and families to build upon their inherent strengths in order to create and preserve healthy family life, and to contribute to the quality of community life."

Auberle's values and beliefs:

- Children are defined within the unique context of their families.
- Children and families belong together in a safe environment.
- Children have the right to live and thrive in a permanent and stable home environment, which may include birth, kinship, or adoptive living.
- Children and families possess the strengths necessary to meet and master challenges.
- Children and families can use crisis as the opportunity to learn the skills to assume responsibility and take control of their destinies.
- Children and families are treated with dignity and respect through Auberle's innovative interventions. Auberle's professionalism is marked by dedicated and caring individuals who welcome challenge and persevere through adversity.
- Children and families are viewed holistically and are appreciated for their distinct familial, cultural, and spiritual beliefs and differences.
- Children and families are in partnership with Auberle. Together, we work toward the common goal of achieving a healthy, self-sufficient, and productive family and community life, while realizing our spiritual connection with one another.

It is Auberle's vision that "children and families will grow together in love and trust to realize their individual potential and mutual interdependence while contributing their riches to community life."

Programs

Auberle offers eight different types of programs, but the programs that Auberle began with is the Residential Programs.

Residential Programs- are geared toward children ages 8 to 18 and designed to provide the children with structure, stability and life skills within a nurturing environment. The programs serve to help children who are experiencing behavior issues or family problems that hinder them from being able to remain at home and in the community. In addition, the programs aim to provide children with reunification or semi-independent living, so that each child can learn to live independently and responsibly.

The Residential Programs are “rooted in the belief that every child has the potential for positive growth and development.” The Residential Programs are divided into separate programs for girls and boys.

- *Male Residential Programs* are split into Community-Based Living and Campus Programs. The Community-Based Living Program consists of the Group-Oriented Adolescent Living (GOAL) Program, and two Semi-Independent Living (SIL) Programs. The Campus Program consists of the ADAPT Program, the PACT Program, the TARGET Program, and the Junior Program. The Junior Program is targeted toward pre-adolescent boys ages 9 to 12. The males in all these programs are referred by Allegheny County Children Youth and Families (ACCYF) or the Juvenile Court.
- *Female Residential Programs* are also divided into Community-Based Living and Campus Programs. The Community-Based Living Program consists of the Girls’ Group Home (GGH) Program. The Campus Program is made up of the Girls Adjusting to Treatment and Education (GATE) Program. The females in these programs are also referred by Allegheny County Children Youth and Families (ACCYF) or the Juvenile Court.

Technical Environment

Auberle currently has around 170 computers, which are mostly used by staff members. The majority of the computers use Windows 98, with some using Windows 2000 and Windows XP. There are three Windows 2000 servers and five Windows NT 4.0 Servers. Most of the computers use Office 97, but they are in the progress of upgrading to Office 2000.

Auberle has a central server that enables files to be shared. There is one folder that can be shared throughout all the staff members who have logins and passwords. In addition, within each program are separate shared folders that are only accessible to staff involved in that program. To ensure data security, the router is based on packet filtering and is backed by a firewall. There is centrally managed antivirus software installed on the individual computers as well.

Information Management

Maintaining financial, donor, client, and case management information in an organized manner is vital to Auberle. All the information is managed both electronically and by paper.

Due to some mandatory regulations for certain funders, some forms must be filled out on paper. However, these forms are usually stored electronically as well. Most of the documents that are stored electronically have a backup hard copy.

Auberle makes use of its network and its email privileges to circulate this information among the necessary staff within the organization. Each staff member shares the responsibility of maintaining information about Auberle and its programs.

Auberle uses these tools to manage and circulate many important forms such as the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports for the children or clients within the organization. The ISP/Monthly Progress Reports are filled out once a month and are used for recording progress of the children involved in Auberle's programs. The reports consist of information regarding the client such as name, date of birth, etc. It also has fields such as goal, objective, strategies, methods, summary and completed goals for each Life Domain.

The Consulting Situation

The Student Consultant has been working with Michelle LaRue, Continuous Quality Improvement Associate, to develop a more consistent method of recording ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.

Description:

The Male and Female Residential Programs work to provide children with structure, stability, and life skills within a nurturing environment so that they can learn to live independently and responsibly as young adults. Auberle uses ISP/Monthly Progress Reports to keep track of the progress of the children involved in the programs. The purpose of these ISP/Monthly Progress Reports ties into their mission of "serving the needs of children and families at risk" because it keeps track of their treatment, goals and objectives. After the reporter completes the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports, they are put into a shared folder within the network where the relevant staff members would update them.

Specifically for the Male and Female Residential Programs, the ISP/Monthly Progress Report consists of eleven Life Domains, which each have certain goals, objectives and strategies. The Life Domains consist of areas such as Behavioral, Physical Environment/Structure, Peer Group/Social Interactions, etc. Within each goal there is one objective and three strategies. Each of the goals within the domains track how the progress of the children with respect to the goals.

Problems:

There were two problems with the information management method of reporting the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.

- *Poor Control of Input* - They were in electronic fill-in-the-blank form. The forms are saved electronically, but the goals, objectives, and strategies were filled in by the reporter. Since not all reporters type in the information in the same way, this leads to

inconsistency in the reports. For example, “To reunite youth with family” could be worded in many different ways, and could be seen as different goals. With inconsistency in the goals, objectives, and strategies, it makes it more difficult to keep track of the progress of the children.

- *Quality of Reports* - These ISP/Monthly Progress Reports are essential for Auberle since they are part of the requirements that need to be met for the funders. Every program in Auberle must update the treatment, goals with a monthly report. Since the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports are a major treatment, goal and objective, it is a good idea to keep them as consistent and easy to do as possible. This way, there is a smaller chance that people will make mistakes in the reports. If they have consistent reports, this leads to producing quality reports, which are good for Auberle as well as its funders and families.

The consulting task was to work with the Community Partner (CP) to develop a good prototype for expanded use in other programs and to also provide ways in which she can troubleshoot possible problems that may come up. In order to have consistency in the reports, the Student Consultant worked with the CP to improve the ease of input by providing a list where one could click on a choice rather than typing in a verbal description. By doing this, it would provide a structure to assure that information is collected most accurately and consistently. This was achieved by integrating the drop-down menu tool into the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.

Approach:

- Research ways using Microsoft Office, or any of the other resources available, on how to create drop-down menus while still conserving the format of the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.
- Test the methods to make sure they work the way they are expected to work.
- Work with the CP to create a prototype for the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.
- The CP will demonstrate the prototype for the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports to other key staff members to ensure that it fits in with the requirements and expectations of the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.
- Document the procedures on how the prototype for the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports was implemented as well as a document for the users of the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.
- Provide methods to help troubleshoot problems.

Impacts and Outcomes:

Programs

The ISP/Monthly Progress Reports for the programs are more accurate and consistent, and thus improves the quality of the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports and produces a higher standard of care.

Staff

The CP demonstrates knowledge on how to go about creating a drop-down menu to use for the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports. The CP will be able to use the knowledge gained along with the prototype to integrate drop-down menus for all of the domains of the Male and Female Residential Programs as well as for Auberle’s other programs. The CP will

also be able to describe to other key staff members about how to use the new ISP/Monthly Progress Reports. With the knowledge gained, the CP is able to find available resources for troubleshooting more easily.

Information Management

The CP would be in charge of maintaining the reports after the Student Consultant leaves. With the skills gained by the CP, she would be able to expand her knowledge to provide more consistent methods for information management within the organization.

Expanded Capacity:

As a result of achieving these outcomes, the CP will be able to implement the drop-down menu tool for all of the ISP/Monthly Reports for Auberle's programs. This will enable Auberle to have greater consistency within the programs, and thus increase quality in their work. With the knowledge gained in the partnership, the CP will be able to apply it to many other projects and have an easier time with troubleshooting. As the CP explores the many features of Microsoft Office, she will become more proficient in its uses. While the CP involves more staff members in becoming more proficient with the available features, Auberle would be able to expand their uses of technology. As a result, Auberle would make better use of technology, which would lead to greater sustainability of technology in the organization.

Results of Consulting Work

The consultant has been working with Michelle LaRue, Continuous Quality Improvement Associate, to develop a prototype for the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports which has a more consistent method of recording the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports. The tool used to achieve consistency in the reports is a drop-down menu. The drop-down menu provides reporters with a list of choices for the goals, objectives, and strategies.

Outcome:

Created prototype for new ISP/Monthly Progress Reports which has the added functionality of allowing reporters to select a choice given options from a list. The new ISP/Monthly Progress Reports would allow for reporters to choose from a list of choices rather than typing in a verbal description. By having this new feature, this assures that there is proper and consistent collection of information in ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.

- This improves not only the quality of the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports, but the quality of the organization as well. Reports that have greater quality also reflect the quality of work produced by the organization.
- Allows for better control of the input.
- Allows for more consistent information collection.
- Provide a structure to assure reporting is done in appropriate categories and terminology.

Ms. LaRue is now able to add this functionality to the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports without changing the layout of the forms. Before, the forms were in electronic fill-in-the-blank form and would take a good amount of time to fill out. Now, with the added capability to select from a list of choices, the forms are not only more consistent, but also easier and faster to fill out.

When the prototype for the new ISP/Monthly Progress Reports was given to certain staff members to try out, they all liked the added features. They liked the prototype for the new ISP/Monthly Progress Reports because it is:

- Is identical to the layout of the old ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.
- Easy to use.
- Saves time from typing.
- Allows for fewer mistakes from the reporter's part.

Evidence of Expanded Capacity

Ms. LaRue has gotten more comfortable with the features and use of Microsoft Office and is able to:

- Create the ISP/Monthly Progress Report with little to no help from the consultant
- Demonstrate to others how to use the ISP/Monthly Progress Report.

She is also able to troubleshoot through problems. During the consulting process, many obstacles were faced which included:

- Used Word to compose the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports and tried to add in drop-down menus to the forms using Word's automated form feature. (Learned that it does not work completely as hoped)
- Used Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) to implement a drop-down menu. (Unsuccessful attempt)

Evidence of Sustainability

Since Ms. LaRue is mainly in charge maintaining the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports prototype, she is able to apply the skills gained to all the other programs at Auberle. Ms. LaRue would be responsible in applying the prototype and creating new templates for the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports of all the various programs at Auberle. Ms. LaRue, as well as many other key staff members, is very excited about the consistency and ease that the drop-down menu feature provides. Since the consultant had not created the prototype for the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports, but supplied Ms. LaRue with ways to go about doing it, this outcome is sustainable after the consultant leaves. Especially since the drop-down menu feature will be applied to the other programs at Auberle the consistency within the reports will be sustained for a long period of time.

The purpose of these ISP/Monthly Progress Reports is to provide the funders, families, and key staff members with vital information about the progress of the kids. By having more consistent reports, the quality in Auberle's programs is greatly increased.

Ms. LaRue would continue to make use of the drop-down menu tool and expand it for the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports for all the programs at Auberle. The consultant and Ms. LaRue have created a prototype, which will hopefully be expanded for use in other programs at Auberle. The consultant has also developed reference sheets that reporters could use while filling out the ISP/Monthly Progress Reports. Since these reference sheets are probably not enough to ensure that the reporters use the new ISP/Monthly Progress Reports correctly, Ms. LaRue would be in charge of leading a training program for reporters. Since the consultant has mainly worked with Ms. LaRue on developing the prototype, Ms. LaRue has most of the knowledge for its usage. Therefore, Ms. LaRue has the responsibility for informing other key staff members on how to use the prototype so that they would be able to use it for other programs at Auberle. She must also be able to troubleshoot through problems effectively since other staff members would most likely approach her with questions. This would ensure that there would be continued consistency in their future ISP/Monthly Progress Reports.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Develop a mailing list

The consultant recommends that Auberle develop an email mailing list to increase fundraising and publicity. This would involve creating a newsgroup either from their Internet Service Provider or from a free newsgroup service such as Yahoo! Groups.

With a mailing list, it makes it easier for Auberle to keep track of the people who are involved with the organization. By keeping outside constituents informed about Auberle's progress and events, it encourages more participation within the community as well as the funders, and thus increases publicity.

Source

While investigating initial problems and opportunities for Auberle, the consultant saw that Auberle needs to have a more effective communication strategy. Ms. LaRue and the consultant realized that this is important for public relations as well as name recognition.

Rationale

Without a more effective communication strategy, it is more difficult to gather money to use towards technology, or for any of its programs. Without the use of technology, Auberle would not be able to accomplish its mission to “serve the needs of families and children at risk.” Auberle is always in search of grants so that they may further develop or extend their programs. Since Auberle is a large non-profit organization, it needs to communicate frequently with outside constituents. Most of Auberle’s budget comes from the county. In addition, a large amount of Auberle’s funds are also through grants and donations. If Auberle effectively communicates with outside constituents, then it increases the opportunity for more grants and donations. This would also save the organization a good amount of money and time compared to if they did this on paper, since they would not need to make physical documents to send out, and would not need to spend money on postage. Auberle needs to show its funders as well as the community how technology is an important factor in fulfilling its mission. By using technology, Auberle is able to keep track of children’s records, as well as fulfill certain requirements for its funders.

Currently, Auberle produces and mails a hard copy newsletter to donors four times per year. In addition various fundraising campaigns are conducted through US postage mail. Utilizing electronic mail for some of these functions could allow for a more timely correspondence and would also save postage cost.

Steps to take:

- Find a secure and reliable mailing list provider.
- Look into using their current Internet Service Provider for packages that may include a mailing list.
- Look into free newsgroup/mailing list services if their Internet Service Provider does not offer packages within their cost limit.
- Set a target group of people to add to mailing list, such as other organizations, funders, etc.
- Search for the email addresses of these people.
- Send email to them as desired. Make sure that the email is in an easy to read format and is not too lengthy. Only include most interesting/important information in the email and direct them to a place where they can go to learn more about it.
- Provide ways for people to get added to the mailing list.
- Make newsletters in an easy to email format so that they can be distributed once the email list is established. The best format to use is plain text messages that include links to the organization’s website, if needed. Also, the most effective newsletters are ones that are short and delivered frequently rather than lengthy newsletters.

Resources

Website URL	Description:
http://www.stargate.net/	Internet Services Provide Stargate Industries Stargate is the current Internet Service Provider for Auberle. They could use this website to research what Stargate offers in terms of email mailing lists.
http://help.yahoo.com/help/groups/	Yahoo! Groups This is a free newsgroup that could be used to develop an email mailing list. The website shows some benefits to using email lists.
http://www.topica.com/create/index2.html	Topica This is another free service to create an email discussion group/mailing list. This website describes how other nonprofit organizations have benefited from their email list.
http://news.gilbert.org/Savvy	Nonprofit Online News: The Email Savvy Organization This website shows benefits of using email, especially for nonprofit organizations. The “Publishing Email Newsletters” section is especially useful since Auberle is thinking of using email lists to publish newsletters.

Recommendation 2: Allow current webpage have enhanced levels of interactivity

The consultant recommends that Auberle allow for their website to have enhanced levels of interactivity. This would involve enabling visitors to send email to certain staff members or key constituents, and to donate money to the organization.

Source

While investigating the national benchmarks for non-profit organizations, it mentioned that large non-profit organizations should have a website with interactive opportunities. Ms. LaRue and the consultant realized that having a more interactive website would greatly benefit the organization.

Rationale

Auberle’s website should have enhanced levels of interactivity, such as enabling people to donate money to the organization or to send email to certain staff members. They could also add

a printable form that people could fill out and send with donations. By having a website with enhanced levels of interactivity, the webpage would attract more people to want to make donations to Auberle. It would also increase the community's involvement in the programs. Since the majority of people use the internet, their website is also a great tool to enhance communication to outside constituents. The website could also contain information such as testimonials from previous people who have made donations. They could encourage people to donate by reasons why they donated to the organization and how their donation was effectively used.

Steps to take:

- Research how other organizations have enabled interactivity in their websites.
- Research ways to enable visitors to donate money through the website. For example: PayPal. People would be able to easily donate to the organization. This is beneficial because security using PayPal is ensured and is also very easy to send money through the website.
- Research the costs of having donation possibilities on the website. Look for most cost-effective one.
- Look into which staff members or key constituents would want to receive email from visitors.
- Website can furthermore be used as a marketing tool by allowing people to purchase Auberle merchandise such as tee-shirts, hats, mugs, etc. through the website. PayPal could also be used for this. The benefit of using PayPal is that it only costs the organization a small fraction (2.9%) of the money gained.

Resources

Website URL	Description:
http://www.paypal.com	PayPal This website provides information about PayPal including how it works, security information, and much more.
http://www.quatloos.com/donate.htm	Non-Profit Organization Donation This is an example of how to incorporate donation possibilities for visitors.
http://www.store.yahoo.com/lcmedia/dontononproj.html	Lichtenstein Creative Media Another example of how a non-profit organization enabled donation possibilities

<p>http://www.ghbcpa.com/articles/article_topel_accounting_for_nonprofit_website.html</p>	<p>to their website.</p> <p>Accounting for your Nonprofit Website</p> <p>This website shows the steps, in terms of cost, that a nonprofit organization should take when developing a website. It also shows ways in which nonprofit organizations could use their website effectively, as well as what things should be avoided.</p>
--	---

About the Consultant

The consultant, Angela Huh, is currently a junior attending Carnegie Mellon University. Her major study at the university is computer science and her minor is business administration. After graduating from Carnegie Mellon University, she plans to work for a couple years and then possibly pursue an MBA.

Appendix

Client:	Auberle Case:
Program:	Date of Conference: (if applicable)
Report Due:	Placing Agency(s):
Date of Birth:	Contact:
Date of Admission:	Placing Agency(s) Phone #:
Date of Readmission:	Date of Next Review:
ISP Time Period Covered (Projection of Six Months):	-
Type of Report:	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-Week Plan (Auberle Use Only) <input type="checkbox"/> 30-Day ISP <input type="checkbox"/> 6-Month ISP
Prepared by:	Title:
I. Placing Agency Permanency Plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reunification with Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Reunification with Father	
<input type="checkbox"/> Independent Living <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption	
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Foster Care	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reunification with Other (Specify):	
II. Discharge Goals	
A.	
B.	
C.	
D.	
III. Life Domains (indicate goals, objective, strategies/methods, responsible staff and time line for each goal)	
A. Family/Legal Guardian	
Goal:	

Figure 1: Old ISP/Monthly Progress Reports

Client:	Auberle Case:	
Program:	Date of Conference: (if applicable)	
Report Due:	Placing Agency (s):	
Date of Birth:	Contact:	
Date of Admission:	Placing Agency (s) Phone #:	
Date of Readmission:	Date of Next Review:	
ISP Time Covered (Projection of Six Months):		
Type of Report:	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-Day ISP <input type="checkbox"/> 6-Month ISP	
Prepared by:	Title:	
I. Placing Agency Permanency Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reunification with Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Reunification with Father <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Living <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Foster Care <input type="checkbox"/> Reunification with Other (Specify): 		
II. Discharge Goals		
III. Life Domains (indicate goal, objective, strategies/methods, responsible staff and time line for each goal)		
A. Family/Legal Guardian		
Goal:	To Reunify with Legal Guardian. Establish a permanent family. Prepare for Adult community independent living.	
Objective:		

Figure 2: New ISP/Monthly Progress Reports

III. Life Domains (indicate goal, objective, strategies/methods, responsible staff and time line for each goal)	
A. Family/Legal Guardian	
Goal:	To Reunify with Legal Guardian. Establish a permanent family.
Objective:	Prepare for Adult community independent living.

Figure 3: Close-up of the drop-down menu tool