

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

Spring 2006

Final Consulting Report

Mon Yough Community Services

Shan Jiang



Mon Yough Community Services, Inc.
Final Consulting Report

Student Consultant, Shan Jiang
Community Partner, Gina Boros

Executive Summary

I. Background Information

Mon Yough Community Services (MYCS) is a mental health outpatient facility that provides various community health care services. It was established in October 1969 in McKeesport, PA and has since diversified its support services through increased funding and collaborative partnerships. MYCS is a resource for local hospitals, doctors, ministers, school counselors, and others who want to assist individuals with requiring special evaluation and treatment.¹

The mission of MYCS is “to promote wellness, recovery, community integration, and inclusion for those who face the challenges of substance abuse, mental health problems, and developmental disabilities.”

Community Partner

Gina R. Boros

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II. Consulting Tasks

After the initial analysis and review of the issues that were discussed with the community partner, one task, the creation of an internal website, was decided on because it would be the most beneficial for MYCS as well as fit very well with the available period of time.

The main purpose of this site is to provide a central location for information and for employees to be able to download various forms that they would otherwise need to request for in person. Because of the short period of time that is available, the functionalities that will be implemented are limited. The ability to download forms in Word format will be the priority with an employee directory and other information as a secondary task. The creation of an employee directory came from the CP as she was thinking about her knowledge of the

¹ <http://www.mycs.org/temp/history/htm>

employees around her. The primary appeal of the directory is that it has the ability to display a picture of the employee, which allows for the intangible benefit of bringing the organization closer together. The third function of the site will be to display any announcements and events that may be important for employees to know about. This information may vary from Employee of the Month, to a new job opening within the organization.

The most exciting aspect of the site is the expandability of its functions. Since both Gina and Jon are proficient with the .NET language, it is very easy for them to add on as much information and as many uses as they wish. For instance, a room reservation feature was discussed with the CP where administrators would be able to check available times for reservation online. This feature was not implemented because of time constraints, but the CP can easily create this after the consulting is finished. For the consultant, establishing a skeleton site which can be expanded is just as important, if not more so, as creating the currently planned functions. The room for growth is tremendous, and the potential for the site benefiting MYCS is just as great.

Because the creation of the site will take a long time, it was decided that the consultant only implement this one task. Because the site will be available to all MYCS employees, it has the potential to really impact the way MYCS operates.

III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

To ensure that the website would be sustainable after the consulting period has ended, I worked closely with Gina during the development of the site, from initial planning to having her update the site herself during testing. Gina can confidently:

- Add text to any page.
- Add and remove employees from the employee directory.
- Add and remove forms from every form category.
- Understand each database table and its fields.

Having user tested a number of the staff members, there are no problems with the usability of the site. Each staff can:

- Navigate smoothly throughout the entire website.
- View the employee directory.
- Download a form onto their computer and view it.

The first recommendation discusses the sustainability of the site as well as ideas that were discussed with Gina regarding future expansion. A few ways are detailed that can reduce the amount of time required to maintain the site. Reference resources were also listed to provide additional information on the programming language and software.

The additional recommendation tries to improve the way inventory is currently taken using a barcode system instead of a paper form one. This recommendation was originally a task but after further review, it was decided that time be focused on making the site well rather than to split the consultants attention on another task. It also does not fit the consulting process model as well which is why it is included as a recommendation.



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The Consulting Situation

I. Organization

MYCS began as a mental health outpatient facility in 1969 with three employees and a budget of \$139,000. Since then, it has established partnerships and various sources of funding, and now it has an annual budget of \$15million with 400 employees. With its partnerships, MYCS has been able to solidify its core services, while also providing many specialized support services. MYCS is a resource for local hospitals, doctors, ministers, school counselors, and others who want to assist individuals with requiring special evaluation and treatment. They have a highly trained and experienced staff, and have been servicing the needs of the community since 1969. MYCS is a branch of UPMC.³

More recently, MYCS has committed its resources to meeting the demands of the emerging managed care environment. This includes participation in local and statewide initiatives as well as a constant emphasis on program development and quality improvement. MYCS' goal is to remain a recognized and respected provider of behavioral health care throughout southwestern Pennsylvania.⁴

II. Programs

MYCS provides many programs for the mentally ill, people with developmental disabilities or for those suffering from alcohol and substance abuse. Below are some of their main services.

Base Service Unit (BSU) – serves those with complex needs relating to mental health issues. Individuals receive assistance with identifying needs, goal planning, and accessing MYCS and other community supports and services.⁵

1. *Administrative Case Managers* - provide service as needed when a person who is otherwise stable in the community has a specific need for assistance. Examples include: accessing entitlements, helping with housing problems, and accessing community supports and services.
2. *Resource Coordinators* – provide continuous and regular support for those whose needs are more complex and persistent.
3. *Intensive Case Managers* – provide the most intensive support for those who are most challenged by their illness.
4. *Children's Case Managers* – provide all three levels of case management for their clients. These individuals are devoted solely to assisting children, adolescents, and their families in navigating the complicated children's system of service delivery.

Psychiatric Rehabilitation – assist persons with moderate to severe functional disabilities resulting from mental illness. The program begins right after clinical diagnosis and treatment starts, and continues in concurrence with those treatments.⁶

³ <http://www.mycs.org/temp/history/htm>

⁴ <http://www.mycs.org/temp/history/htm>

⁵ <http://www.mycs.org/mentalhealth.htm>

⁶ <http://www.mycs.org/mentalhealth.htm>

Services:

1. Rehabilitation for people with long-term mental illnesses.
2. Free and confidential HIV testing and counseling
3. Provides prescriptions and healthcare for the homeless. Referrals and transportation to detoxification, inpatient, and mental health treatment.
4. Educational services, such as condom demonstrations.
5. Referrals and transportation to shelters for the homeless.
6. One-on-one risk reduction and HIV education to inmates of Allegheny County Jail.
7. Rental assistance to families/individuals receiving financial support to prevent homelessness.
8. Personal perspectives and HIV/AIDS education for schools and community groups.
9. Education and support for individuals with HIV in Allegheny County Jail.
10. Prepare non-custodial parents to participate in job-readiness and employment.
11. One-time cash assistance to the homeless, must meet criteria.
12. Counseling for women and children who are HIV+ or at high risk.

Vocational Services – supports individuals living with developmental challenges in their effort to obtain vocational roles.⁷

Drug and Alcohol Services – provides support and treatment for those living with substance abuse and alcoholism. MYCS also as an outpatient clinic solely dedicated to women and their children (The Women & Family Center). Drug and Alcohol services also provides certain patients access to the Center for Substance Abuse.⁸

III. Facilities

The main MYCS complex is located in McKeesport, and consists of 3 buildings that are actually interconnected. There are 30 residential sites that are in the surrounding areas of Duquesne, Clairton and Liberty Boro. We have 1 site in East Liberty.

IV. Staff

My community partner is Gina Boros, the director and manager of the MIS department. I will also be working with Jon Lewis, a computer technician from UPMC. Gina is involved with training for PsychConsult, MYCS's SQL database that contains patient information and documentation, as well as different types of reports from staff productivity to patient attendance. She is also the main user of that database for report writing for the agency. Jon maintains all computer equipment/network and handles all the maintenance for them. This includes installing and upgrading new hardware and software to maintaining the MYCS network. Jon also does the electronic equipment inventory and training of software. Both Gina and Jon are involved in a variety of other tasks as well.

Jon is the main user of the Microsoft Access inventory/purchasing database although Darlene, the facilities manager – in charge of non-electronic equipment, and Karla, the fiscal administrative assistant, also uses the database occasionally. Gina is the main user of the

⁷ <http://www.mycs.org/vocation.htm>

⁸ <http://www.mycs.org/drugandalcohol.htm>

SQL database, but Kathy Buksar, our Information Systems Clerk, also uses it for report writing.

V. Technology Environment

MYCS has around 250 computers, using Windows 2000/XP, scattered in all of its building locations. MYCS maintains its own network as well as connects with UPMC's network. The central MYCS buildings are connected directly to UPMC using two 48MB DS3 connections. The buildings are connected to each other using 768K DSL lines. Most remote locations use either dial-up, wireless, or have no Internet connections. Internet access is not absolutely necessary in all remote locations because computer use is not significant in all locations.

Email is provided by a company called Pittsburgh Connect because MYCS was unable to receive funding to buy or have the staff to maintain a Microsoft Exchange Server. Currently all Directors, Supervisors, Managers and Administrative Assistants have email. MIS is starting to give individual departments email accounts on the UPMC network. By the end of this year we will have only 1 main building to move to the UPMC network and most employees will have email and internet.

MYCS also have 13 laptop computers in its central office building used for any software training. The Primary software that is used at MYCS is MS Office, Ceridian software for Payroll and HR functions, PeopleSoft for Accounting, Crystal Reports and SQL Server for reports, and PsychConsult for billing and electronic records.

VI. Technology Planning

Since it is a branch of UPMC, any technology planning will be passed down from them. In the next couple of years, MYCS will be upgrading all of their computers from HP to IBM desktops. This is a result of the new contract that UPMC has signed with IBM.

There will also be new security features that will update existing SQL database security, so approximately 50 reports must be modified in order to stay in compliance with the update. MIS is working on revamping the MYCS.org website, everyone will have email, installing network copiers, scanners and printers, all departments will be using the electronic documentation and to be able to offer computer software training.

VII. Technology Management

Jon does most of the technology maintenance. He sets up new user accounts and hooks up any new equipment to the network. It is estimated that MYCS needs \$100,000 a year to maintain their equipment. This cost covers all software and hardware updates and upgrades.

VIII. Information Management

There are 4 main databases that are used. The PsychConsult database for electronic records, Ceridian for HR needs, PeopleSoft for Accounting and the inventory/purchasing database. For purchasing, there are up to 6 separate documents that are used to keep track of an item's history. These documents include the purchase requisition form, the county purchase request form, the county purchase approval form, and the invoice for the item, the disposal request letter, and the disposal approval letter. However, the lack of staff means that there is no time to scan all the necessary paper documents into the Microsoft Access database, and therefore,

all of the documents are being stored in filing cabinets in Gina's and other administrators' offices.

IX. Internal and External Communication

The organization has a website, located at <http://www.mycs.org>. The website server is offsite and is hosted at Crescent Leaf Technologies. Crescent Leaf, however, has not updated the MYCS site in a couple of years. Another third party company, Clearbrand, has taken over the revamp of the home site. The /temp site was partially finished by Crescent Leaf and is an improvement over the original site located at <http://www.mycs.org/temp>, but is still unfinished. Clearbrand is supposed to be completing Phase I by June 30, 2006 and Phase II by September 30, 2006. MYCS will be hosting the Internet and Intranet on UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital Microsoft Web server.

Since not all employees have their own e-mail accounts, and there is currently no functional internal website, most communication is done through paper documents, phone calls and non-computer methods. These methods result in time delays and miscommunication between departments.

Consulting Task I. Internal Website

I. Problem

MYCS currently loses a lot of time and money printing, updating and mailing out forms and employee lists. When new employees start, they are supposed to receive an employee handbook. This handbook, however, is currently being rewritten so no one actually gets a copy. The employee would need to contact the HR department to receive an old version, in which case the HR department will need to print out and mail the handbook to the employee. If an employee needs other forms, they will also need to contact various departments. For instance, for a purchasing request form, an employee would contact Gina, for a disbursement form they would contact the fiscal department, and for a vacation days request form they would contact the HR department. The particular department would then need to either print out and mail the form to the employee or email it to them, either of which takes time away from both the employee and the department.

Upper-level management is also supposed to keep a binder for policies and procedure documents. The problem is that these documents are constantly updated and each time, the director or supervisor would need to print them out and include it into their binders. Many times, however, either the updated documents are not printed or even if they are, there is sometimes confusion as to which document is the most recent iteration.

MYCS also has a very rapid employee turnover rate, resulting in a number of issues. For instance, some case managers would come in for 2 days and quit, in which case they would need to call the HR department and have them print out a quit request form to be mailed to them. MYCS gets at least 5 new staff members every week, and each month, the HR department releases an updated agency telephone number directory which most employees print out, resulting in a large amount of wasted paper every month.

II. Opportunity

The internal website would alleviate many of these issues, saving employee time and organizational resources. First, the employee handbook can be kept, updated, and accessed through the site. If an employee needs to refer to the handbook, he will know that the version online is the most recent. This saves the HR department time and effort from having to email each employee that requests a handbook, and employees will be able to access updated versions anytime they wish instantly. If an employee needs any other forms, they can download them straight off the website immediately instead of having to figure out who to contact first, and possibly not even getting the form because the person they contacted is not there.

For upper-level management, having a central location for the most updated policies and procedures is also very helpful. If they forget to print out new versions, they can refer to the site and download it from there. It will help them do their jobs better if they always know that their information is the most up to date and accurate possible.

The employee directory will save MYCS a lot of money on printing updated phone number listings. Employees can be updated directly on the site and every employee may access that list. The HR department will also save time by not having to compile and print a new list every month. The employee directory also has the added benefit of bringing the organization closer together. Employees will get to know each other's face from the picture feature and this will make MYCS a more unified organization, which is especially important because there is such a high turnover rate.

The internal website will also save MYCS a lot of money from printing paper documents. Gina estimated that the site will reduce MYCS spending by about \$1,000 per month. The additional funds may be used to further MYCS programs to help their patients or strengthen their technology infrastructure.

The site will be available to all MYCS employees with email accounts, which is 80% of the employee population.

III. Resources

The site had to be run and tested on the CMU knight server because the site would eventually be hosted by UPMC Western Psychiatric, which would cost an annual fee of \$300 and a \$30 fee to register a domain name. The final working version would be uploaded to UPMC and whenever a page is updated, an update request to UPMC would be sent. They will first check the new page for any bugs or if it has malicious content and then update the site for MYCS. Gina was at a recent meeting where they were discussing not only needing an internal site but to have the external one completed as well. Gina used many of the points that we had discussed during our consulting sessions and the ideas were well received and more functionalities were proposed.

IV. Approach

- Designed and reviewed use case descriptions with Gina.
- Created the database using Visual Studio.

- Worked with Gina to outline the necessary table fields.
- Designed the site to visually look similar to their current external website.
- Worked with Gina to get all of the forms, policies and procedures, and other documents to be included in the site.
- Gina provided a preliminary short list of employees to add.
- Tested the site with Gina for functionality and appearance.

V. Outcomes

To complete the website, I worked closely with Gina to design the appearance and features of the site. We made the end product visually similar to MYCS's current external site so that employees will feel familiar with the appearance. User testing consisted of testing the administrator (and community partner), Gina Boros, and 5 other employees that were in her building. During the design and implementation of the site, Gina helped:

- Design and review the various use cases and use case descriptions.
- Come up with the various tables (Accounts, Employees, and Forms) and table fields.
- Design the placement of various visual elements such as navigation links and buttons.

During the user testing, Gina was able to perform all the administrative tasks perfectly, including:

- Adding 5 employees to the employee directory (this includes their first name, last name, title, department, location, work phone, cell phone, and picture).
- Creating an employee account.
- Uploading a form from each form category including HR, Fiscal, and Policies and Procedures.
- Downloading a form from each category.
- Changing the text on multiple pages.

Gina was very smooth with the navigational and operation of the site, firstly, because she helped create it, and secondly, because she is very proficient with online sites and information. The staff also successfully performed the user testing tasks including:

- Downloading a form onto their computers and viewing them.
- Browsing the employee directory.
- Navigating the entire site without confusion.

A few members of the staff were very excited about the pictures being in the employee directory and spent more time on that page looking at different employees than on any other page. Gina and the tested staff have demonstrated that the site is sustainable in that Gina knows how to update the site and the staff knows how to use the various features.

The announcements portion of the site could not be completed because of time constraints. It took much longer to implement the site than was originally planned. This portion of the original design, however, was not as significant as the forms and employee directory, which was why it was left for last to program.

Not all employees were entered into the employee directory because that is unnecessary for testing and would have taken way too long with around 400 employees. Not every form that MYCS has was uploaded onto the site, only the more important ones, also because of time constraints.

VI. Recommendations

Although the website has not been uploaded to the UPMC servers to be hosted as of yet, it is worthwhile for MYCS to do so. Because of the short consulting period, not all possible functions of the site was developed, although many expansion possibilities were discussed. During the design process, Gina has showed that she has the ability to update the site and the tables. She also has a background in programming that allows her to program new functions.

The expansion possibilities of the site are very large. Many of these features do not require any modification to the database and can be very useful to the employees of MYCS. These include a virtual tour of MYCS for employees to familiarize themselves with the entire organization. Since MYCS staff is spread around all over Pittsburgh, they may not know anything about the organization other than what they are involved in. This, with the employee directory, can help employees feel more connected with the overall organization and the people. A page for job opportunities within MYCS can also be added simply by typing the information onto a page, something that Gina has demonstrated with ease.

Other useful features include allowing employees to see their benefits, changing their benefits, viewing vacation time, allowing employees to add suggestions, and a managers hub, where managers can look at employee information, when employee evaluations are due, and when licenses are due.

In order to reduce the amount of time that the site needs to be updated, I recommend several things. First, because MYCS has a fast turnover rate, updating the employee directory should be reserved for every month, similar to how often the HR department currently updates it. If Gina feels that she needs or wants to update it more or less frequently then she may do so at her own discretion. To further lessen the maintenance load on Gina, I recommend that another employee be responsible for updating the website when the CP is unavailable. This could be anyone with a computer because documentation will be provided and all add/remove functions will have a specific button just for that purpose so it will be very easy to do. There is no sensitive information on the site (everything is made public to employees) so any employee can do any of the updating tasks.

I also recommend that in the future, for Gina to add functionality for directly filling out a form online and then submitting that online. In its current form, forms must be downloaded and still filled out by hand, which saves time but not as much as it could save. Since there are many forms, the CP may add functionality for 1 form at a time, at a slow interval since it is not urgent, perhaps 1-2 forms every week. The person receiving the forms will still need to print out the form in paper format, but the person filling out the form will have saved more time.

Steps:

1. To have an employee update the site.
 - a. Have Gina choose an employee that is familiar with using the internet and a computer. It would be best if that person has some HTML experience as well.

- b. Using the provided documentation, Gina will show the employee how to perform certain update tasks. When the employee has performed the update task 3-5 times without difficulty, then they are ready to do it themselves.
 - c. Gina can provide the employee with information that needs updating or tell the employee to check for new information and update on a set-schedule. For example, checking for new employees every month and update the site then.
2. To add additional functions on the site.
- a. New use cases should be documented and planned before implementation.
 - b. Discuss new feature at staff meeting to work out details and planning.
 - c. The use case descriptions and any changes to the database tables should be documented in the help documentation.
 - d. Have a few staff members test the new feature for any usability issues.

Resources:

- Microsoft provides many .NET training guides and videos on their own website.
 - <http://msdn.microsoft.com/asp.net/learning/learn/newtodevelopment/default.aspx#Multimedia>
 - Even though this covers more than what an employee needs to do simple updates, it can still be useful if the employee would like to further his knowledge.
- Microsoft's official MSDN site, which provides information for Visual Studio, ASP.NET, and many other languages, is <http://msdn1.microsoft.com/en-us/default.aspx>.
- The above links are free resources, but if the site ever becomes more complex, Gina can also buy Pro ASP.NET 2.0 by MacDonal and Szpuszta from Apress publishing. This is an excellent reference that is used by the CMU Information Systems program.

Additional Recommendations

I. Barcode System for Inventory

The rationale behind this recommendation is that we wanted to reduce tediousness and the amount of time that it takes to do inventory. Currently, each item at MYCS, from computer equipment to furniture, has multiple property tags that indicate information about that item. The person responsible for taking inventory is Jonathan Lewis, a computer technician from UPMC. The main problem is that too much documentation is required each time inventory is taken. Each item may have multiple property tags, as many as five or six, and each tag must be documented on an inventory form. Each time Jon needs to do inventory, which is at least once or twice a year, he must walk around the building and fill out a form for each item. This process takes him around two weeks straight to complete, reducing the amount of time that he has for more important projects or tasks.

Jon has already mentioned that a barcode system would make taking inventory much easier. All information for an item can be inputted once into a PDA and a barcode sticker would be created. Using this system, taking inventory would simply be a matter of reading a single barcode instead of documenting by hand multiple tags and other information, thus saving a significant amount of time.

Steps:

- Search electronic stores and websites for a cost-efficient barcode reader. Stores may include Bestbuy, and CircuitCity. Websites may include www.hpsshopping.com, and www.scanonline.com.
- Write a purchase request to submit to the Fiscal Department for review.
- Gina also has a book of funding sources (such as government or other organizations) for non-profit organizations in her office. Either her or Jon can write a fund proposal to the different organizations listed in the book.
- Once the barcode reader has been obtained, Jon should set it up to be ready for use the next time he does inventory.
- Jon should store each items' information into the barcode software the next time he does inventory so that he can store all of the old items' information and do inventory at the same time.
- New items' information will only be recorded on the barcode reader.

Resources:

- For information on which type of barcode reader is best, Jon can visit http://www.taltech.com/TALtech_web/resources/intro_to_bc/bcpwork.htm, which gives detailed information on barcode readers.
- For information on grant-writing and proposals, Gina can use <http://www.npguides.org/links.htm>, which has a lot of useful information on how to write grants and has a lot of sample ones.

About the Consultant:

Shan Jiang is a Senior at Carnegie Mellon University majoring in Information Systems and minoring in Business Administration. He wishes to work as a analyst in the future and possibly moving into a career of trading and investing.

Appendix A: Data Dictionary

Table Name	Field Name	Data Type	Required	Primary Key	Description
tblAccount	account_id	int	1	1	The unique id number for this user.
	first_name	string	1	0	The user's first name.
	last_name	string	1	0	The user's last name.
	isAdmin	int	1	0	0 is the user is not an Admin, 1 is he is.
tblEmployee	employee_id	int	1	1	The unique id number for this user.
	first_name	string	1	0	The user's first name.
	last_name	string	1	0	The user's last name.
	title	string	1	0	The official title of the user.
	department	string	1	0	Which department the user works at.
	location	varchar	1	0	Which location the user works at.
	work_phone	varchar	1	0	The work phone of the user.
	cell_phone	varchar	1	0	The cell phone of the user.
tblForm	picture	image	0	0	A picture of the user.
	form_id	int	1	1	The unique id number for this form.
	form_name	string	1	0	The name of the form.
	category_id	int	1	0	Which category the form belongs in.

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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