School of Computer Science
Course 15-391

Spring 2006

Final Consulting Report

Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners

Jacob Albertson

Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners
Executive Summary

Student Consultant, Jacob Albertson
Community Partner, Jessica Varone

I. Background Information

Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners (PSVP) is an organization founded on the principles of social venture started in a similar organization in Seattle (SSVP). Rather then a traditional non-profit PSVP has a group of partners who pay 5000 dollars a year to be a partner. This gives the privilege of sitting on the board or committees. This money is then used to give long term grants to other non-profits in the area, especially those focused on underprivileged children in Pittsburgh. PSVP currently has around 50 partners and donates to 5 organizations around Pittsburgh. There are two full time employees, my CP Jessica Varone is the Program Director and Terry Beggy is the Executive Director.

II. Consulting Tasks

The first task we worked on was improving the website. The previous website was not well designed and was clumsy to update. A website is a crucial communication tool so this was a top priority. It was implemented using an arcane Access database that did not allow freedom in many of the aspects of the website design. We wanted to ensure that the website looked good and was very functional as well as being able to be updated easily. We used a Dreamweaver template as the basis of our site and with the help of a web designer customized the look to match PSVP's specifications. In order to facilitate easy FTP upload we also purchased a new web host.

Second, we created a monthly newsletter, which includes news, volunteer opportunities and new partners. This included creating a template in Dreamweaver for the newsletter as well as using a web-based program to distribute the newsletter monthly. This is important because one of the main problems identified at the start of the consulting task was partner involvement. An e-mail newsletter will ensure that partners are at the very least informed of the opportunities they have to participate.

We had also planned on importing data from Mission Maestro into SalesForce, a much better web-based customer relation management software. However due to some license issues this tasks was never started.

III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

The website was completed successfully and except for a few content additions is ready for publication. It is easily updated in Dreamweaver and can also be uploaded to the web host through Dreamweaver. This makes updating and uploading the website very easy to accomplish. As Dreamweaver is a well supported programs there are relatively few risks in the future.

I recommend that my CP spend some more time familiarizing herself with some of the more advanced features of HTML. While she is comfortable using the design view of Dreamweaver, being able to read the code view and diagnose problems will be necessary in the future. This will only be possible if Jessica has a deeper understanding of HTML and CSS.

I also recommended that they integrate SalesForce and the website. SalesForce is a very powerful platform and has many integration features already available. With the help of Seattle Social Venture Partners, PSVP should be able to integrate the website to include RSVP links and dynamically update the events page. This will save time and reduce the possibility of error by storing all of the data in one location.

The newsletter template was completed and has even been used once already to send a second newsletter. The mailing list has been used once already and should cause no problems in the future because the process for creating future newsletters has been completed without my assistance by my CP. This task is pretty well contained and should not require many changes in the future. I would only recommend improving the look and feel of the newsletter in the future if time is available.

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I. About the Organization

Organization

The Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners (PSVP) is a group of individuals who invest their time and money in philanthropic ventures in the Pittsburgh area. They are a part of a network of many such social venture partnerships started in Seattle in 1997. Their mission is as follows:

> *(1) To develop "best practices" philanthropists through providing our Partners with the tools, knowledge and experience to give back effectively over the course of their lifetimes, and (2) to maximize the effectiveness of innovative nonprofits working with at-risk children and youth in Allegheny County through providing them with targeted funding and strategic expertise over a multi-year period.*

Each member pays 5,000 dollars a year to become a partner and in doing so can participate in the many committees that run and make decisions for PSVP. They have about 60 partners in total of which about 40 of them actively participate in the organization. They also have a Board of Directors who meet monthly and are composed of 10 of the most active partners in the organization. They also have a variety of committees ranging from Finance to Communication that are also composed of partners. Together the Board of Directors and their committees decide how to run PSVP. They are also expected although not required to give some time every year to help nonprofits in their area of expertise. For example, if an advertising executive was on the board and a nonprofit that the PSVP sponsors needed to place an ad in the paper the advertising executive might volunteer 5 hours one week to help them. Nonprofits apply for multi-year grants for about 20,000 to 40,000 dollars over a 5 year period for a specific project. If they are given the grant they are expected to complete some of the work before given the grant money.

Facilities

PSVP rents space from the Pittsburgh Foundation which is located in One PPG Place. They have one office and one cubicle directly across each other each with ample desk space and a computer with Internet access. The floor is shared with many other organizations as well but their individual offices are about 10' by 15'. They have access to a conference room, kitchen and lunch area that is shared with the other organizations on the floor. The office is kept clean and has a very nice view of Heinz Field and the river. Overall the office space is very satisfactory.

Programs

Their main program is giving grants to their partner organizations and organizing opportunities for their partners to volunteer. Besides this, PSVP holds a wide variety of events ranging from information sessions for perspective partners to a holiday party for their partners at the end of the

year. Occasionally they will host speakers who they believe their partners or others in the philanthropic community would be interested in. They will often host events that explain the current state of at-risk children in Pittsburgh and how they can better serve them. Their unique model of philanthropy (social venture) also gives them the opportunity to hold events explaining how this unique venture works. Finally about 3 or 4 times a year they will hold information sessions that are meant to bring together their current partners and recruits new ones.

Staff

PSVP has two full time staff members who work together. Terry Beggy is the Executive Director and Jessica Varone is the Program Coordinator. Jessica is in charge of programming the various events as well as doing general office tasks. Jessica has just started recently but Terry has been working with the PSVP for a few years. They are both comfortable using the technology useful to them on a daily basis.

Technical Environment

Both of the staff members use Windows XP based computers with Internet connections and necessary software. Both use Microsoft Office on a regular basis. Terry uses QuickBooks to manage the finances and Jessica uses Mission Maestro to manage their contacts. They are currently in the process of setting up a Microsoft Sharepoint content management system for their internal use and for their partners to use as well. They have acquired SalesForce a web-based Customer Relation Management program.

Technical Management

Overall there is very little technology management. The organization has run smoothly for many years using the same software and has run into few problems. There is an onsite IT consultant who they go to for small computer related problems. He is more than happy to help them set up their e-mail but is not on their payroll and does not work on long term projects with them. Technology Planning

Technology Planning:

The Communications Committee is responsible for technology planning but very little of it is done. A few of their board members have technology experience and offer guidance when asked. One of the board members has been helping them update their website as well. They might suggest a new piece of software but no formal technology plan is in place for the upcoming years.

Internal and External Communication

Files can be shared internally over a shared drive which is done on a regular basis. However they can not share their calendars with each other which often causes problems when scheduling meetings. Both staff members have e-mail accounts and use e-mail in their daily routine. The organization has a website (www.psvp.org) but it is not updated frequently. The events listed are out of date as are some of the forms that are linked to the website. None of the staff is capable of updating the website currently besides making very minor changes. They are looking to update their website to more closely match the website of their parent organization which is the Seattle Social Venture Partners, www.svpseattle.org.

Information Management

The information that is most critical to the organization is the information regarding its partners and the organizations it gives grants to as well as potential partners. The information is stored in Mission Maestro, a clumsy program that has worked for simple needs but requires many steps to perform simple tasks such as printing mailing labels. The information regarding its donor organizations is kept on the computer as well as in files in Jessica's cubicle. The information regarding potential partners is kept privately by Terry in e-mails she receives. They use QuickBooks to manage their finances but only Terry is capable of using it. Because there are only two staff members, information is not kept well organized. They have very little incentive to organize their information well because it is rare that they don't know where something is stored.

II. Scope of Work

Task 1. Website Upgrade

The website at the beginning of the partnership was unable to be updated easily and was not intuitive to use. It required an Access database to be updated in order to update the website. While this eliminated having to use HTML it severely limited the customization possibilities. We planned to use the SVP Seattle site as a template and help Jessica to build a new site for PSVP but eventually decided to purchase a template. PSVP purchased a copy of Dreamweaver for use in this project. Communication with the public is crucial to the PSVP mission of developing best practices philanthropy as it provides a location for resources regarding this topic. A good website is also crucial to any organization as it allows contacts to find out information about PSVP as well as apply for grants or become a partner. These two tasks are the main functions of the PSVP and without them it would not be able to function.

After the template was purchased it required some modifications and then it was ready to be used as a base for the PSVP website. Once the template was modified appropriately we were able to start adding content. This task will be complete once I had finished the modifications and Jessica and the Communications Board had approved them. It is likely that some more modifications will have to be made after that but I expect those to be small. After this part is complete the website should be fully functional and able to be updated by my CP. While it may not be possible for Jessica to make major revisions day to day updates should be possible as well as some more complicated revisions. Should major revisions be needed it is relatively easy to find web designers and many of the partners have web design skills and could help as well. If Jessica wanted to improve her web design skills should could enroll in classes at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh (http://www.aip.aii.edu/events_news.asp?PressID=827) . They offer night classes as well as online courses in web design.

This was a major improvement to their external communication as a good looking and functional website makes the organization seem professional and encourages visitors such as perspective partners and investors. This helped to reduce the time required to update the website which will give Jessica more time to program events, her main job.

We have almost finished the website and a few more pages of content need to be added before it is ready to be published. Jessica wants the website to be updated as it should make her job easier and is motivated to help throughout this process. Currently she has to send forms over e-mail by request because the website is out of date. I have done some website design and have the skills necessary to make the changes to the website. My CP did not have these skills at the beginning of the process but developed them quickly throughout. There were minimal risks involved in this project except for the website being down for a few days or the new website not functioning properly. Through testing this should not be an issue and I see very little real problems for this task.

Task 2. Newsletter

In the past PSVP did not have any sort of newsletter that it sent out to its partners on a regular basis. Because partners are a crucial part of PSVP getting them involved in the organization is a top priority. This will improve their relations and hopefully encourage the partners to participate more

as well as learn about recent PSVP news. Partner involvement is crucial to the mission as well because their involvement in a non-profit is much more valuable then a monetary donation.

First we designed a HTML newsletter so it can be easily distributed over e-mail. Using Dreamweaver we made a good template newsletter that can be changed easily month-by-month. The newsletter includes news, volunteer opportunities as well as any other relevant information. This took no longer than a couple weeks. As my CP already has some web skills from designing the webpage it was simple to help her design an e-mail newsletter. After the first template is complete it should be easy to change the template from month to month.

After the newsletter is complete we used a web-based newsletter mailer that allows multiple lists of recipients. The program can also track e-mail statistics such as who has opened the e-mail or if they clicked any of the links. After this initial list is set-up it will be trivial to upload the newsletter to the site and send it out every month.

This greatly improved the external communication of PSVP. By communicating directly with the partners on a monthly basis you are encouraging participation in the organization and at the very least giving partners a way to find out about current PSVP news.

This project was relatively easy to complete on time and took no more then a month. All of the required programs have been purchased and are ready to use. This is within the skill level of both my CP and I. It should still be easy to modify the template and upload it to the website to mail as Jessica has done this on her own already. It is also easy to add new people to the mailing list through a web-based interface. There are few risks involved except for the fact that partners may not want to receive a newsletter. However this is addressed through a "click to unsubscribe" link at the bottom of the e-mail.

III. Outcomes and Recommendations

Task 1. Website

The goal of this task is to build a new website for PSVP that will attract people to the organization and provide resources to the community.

Before we were able to update the website we needed a new web host. The current host was not able to support direct FTP uploading of the website and also had poor e-mail support. We spent some time reviewing possible hosts and found one, www.pair.com, that was both affordable and provided the features that PSVP needed. The site will be receiving relatively low traffic and will not have to host many large files so we purchased a web host that had about a gigabyte of space and could support PHP, MySQL as well as other dynamic protocols. This host should provide all of the space and bandwidth that PSVP needs and can be easily upgraded for more space or bandwidth later if necessary.

After purchasing the host we spent more time deciding on a good looking template. We looked at a variety of templates and in the end decided on one from www.pixelmill.com. It provided the look that PSVP wanted as well as being a Dreamweaver template. This allowed it to be easily used within Dreamweaver with little modification. Once the template was purchased, we received the templates along with a variety of images in Photoshop format so that they could be edited as well. This allowed much more customization of the look and feel of the website than was previously available.

After purchasing the template a usable base was in place that could be used as PSVP's website. We spent most of the rest of the semester working on the content of the website. We began by making a site map that outlined the various pages and sub-pages that the website was going to have. The home page is a 3 column format and lists upcoming events and announcements. On the top navigation bar there are links to information about the organization, how to join PSVP, events, investments (organizations PSVP gives grants to), news and a page about venture philanthropy. Each of these links contains more pages that separate the broader topic into specific pages. For example the link to information about PSVP contains links to contact info, the board, the mission as well as a general page about PSVP. The top navigation bar is always available allowing easy navigation through the site.

We decided that the default pictures and color scheme were not what PSVP wanted. One of the partners is a graphic designer and she created some very nice images that were put in the website in place of the default pictures. She also sent a new CSS style sheet which we put in place of the old one. This updated the site to match the colors that PSVP wanted. Because the old website did not use CSS this would have been very hard to accomplish previously.

In order to make remembering events easy for the partners we added links that will add the event info to Outlook automatically. This can be done easily be creating the event in Outlook and then exporting it as a vCard. Once the link is click and begins to download Outlook will realize it is a vCard and ask if you would like to add it to your calendar. Before this partners would have had to add the events to their calendars themselves, something most of them would probably not do. This addition makes it easy for partners to remember events as well as their location which can be stored in the vCard as well. Since my CP will probably already have the event in her Outlook calendar already it is easy for her to upload the vCard to the website and make a link.

While creating the website herself Jessica became very familiar with Dreamweaver and HTML. While she was editing the website she would work without my assistance until she ran into a problem. Once she identified the problem I would suggest a few ways it could be fixed and she would continue working on adding content. This process made her familiar with tables, links, anchors, headers and CSS. By the end of our time Jessica was very comfortable using the basics of HTML as well using a reference book to look up tags or Dreamweaver commands that she doesn't know. With these tools she was able to create a very good looking website that she can update in the future. Previously the only was she could update the website was through updating an Access database that contained the events on the webpage. Then she would upload the database to the server and a script would create the page. By understanding how to change the HTML directly she has increased the capacity of PSVP to create a professional webpage themselves.

After most of the website was created we set up the Dreamweaver built in FTP program so that it could put and get files from the website directly. Instead of having to use a clumsy FTP program she did not understand Jessica can now click on a page and then one more button to have it uploaded to the website. Dreamweaver knows where on the website the page should go and the changes are immediately viewable. Jessica has already done this a few times on her own which shows increased capacity to understand web publishing. She also learned how to only update the modified process saving her time.

The only step in the website development process that was not completed was updating the DNS server to point to the new web server. This could not be done because some of the website is not completed and Jessica wanted to wait until it was ready before she made the switch. However I have explained the process to her and she has the phone number of the DNS server they use so once she decides to put up the new website it should be a relatively easy process.

The new website has increased their capacity in many ways by increasing their communication with their partners, prospective partners and members of the community. These are all central to their mission of providing services to the community through its unique partnership program. This outcome should be sustainable because most of the website was completed and my CP will have a working knowledge of creating and updating a basic website. There are many resources on the web and in books on web design and Dreamweaver specifically. This has not really supported a new vision but rather has increased their current capacity.

One of the main problems with the web design process is that currently Jessica primarily uses the Dreamweaver design view rather than the code view. This can cause problems because doing certain tasks in the design view such as resizing tables or putting in new lines will generate poor HTML. This can cause complicated spacing issues to arise after a seemingly simple operation. I would recommend that Jessica become more comfortable reading HTML. This will allow her to diagnose potential problems better because she can examine the code directly. There are many resources available on the web for learning about HTML along with the book (Dreamweaver MX 2004) that she has about Dreamweaver and HTML. I would recommend http://www.w3schools.com/. This website contains tutorials on all aspects of web design and when PSVP decides to add more advanced designs and features this will be a valuable resource. I was especially recommend the advanced tutorial on web layout, http://www.w3schools.com/html/html_layout.asp. This was one of the problems that frequently arose during the web development.

Integrating the website and SalesForce should be completed soon after SalesForce is running correctly. Jessica will have the help of Seattle Social Venture Partners as they are developing a similar process for themselves. This will decrease the amount of time Jessica has to spend entering RSVP data, reminder e-mails, and other tasks previously handled over e-mail. By integrating them directly you assure that data is not lost as well as saving yourself time. For example it is possible to have a link on the events page that would allow visitors to automatically RSVP for an event after entering their e-mail address. SalesForce also allows all of its data to be dynamically exported onto a webpage. This would allow the events to be created once in SalesForce and then have them be displayed on the webpage automatically. Because the events page is divided into past and upcoming events it would easy to separate the event data onto these two pages automatically. This would be much easier than manually copying and pasting event data from one page to the other. SalesForce could also dynamically show a list of partners on a page or any other information that is available in the SalesForce database.

SalesForce also has a large community of users as well a vast amount of plug-ins available for download from their website (http://www.salesforce.com/appexchange/). These will provide applications that will increase the capacity of SalesForce and can be installed easily. SalesForce also provides tools that allow SalesForce data to be accessed from a mobile device such as a PDA (http://www.salesforce.com/products/mobile-solutions.jsp). As Terry travels often and may need access to this information it would be worthwhile investing in this software if Terry feels she needs access to this data. I would recommend looking closely at the SalesForce documentation (internal documentation once you have logged into SalesForce) to understand its capabilities. If this does not provide enough detail there is a book "SalesForce for Dummies" (ISBN 0764579215) (http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764579215/sr=8-1/qid=1146868267/ref=pd_bbs_1/104-3715468-4211969?%5Fencoding=UTF8) that can be purchased for more information.

I would also recommend adding mapquest links on the events page along with the already implemented outlook calendar links. This will make it very easy for people to remember and find directions to the event. As event attendance is crucial for the organization to function and has been a problem in the past this should be a crucial step in enlarging the organizations partner base. This website will provide information of the options available as well as instructions at http://help.mapquest.com/jive/entry.jspa?externalID=21&categoryID=14.

Task 2. Newsletter

In order to facilitate the distribution of the newsletter we used What Counts, a web-based program that allows you to upload a HTML message which will then be sent out to a distribution list that is also set up in the program. While it would be possible to send the newsletter directly, this program allows statistics to be viewed such as how many people have opened the e-mail and if they clicked on any links.

As this software was already purchased the first step was to make a distribution list. We were able to import a list of partners and people who are interested in PSVP easily. We kept these two lists separate so if any e-mails needed to be sent only to the partners this could be done easily. This also allows Jessica to view separate statistics for partners and for other people interested in the organization. Jessica is mostly interested in partner involvement so this separation allows her to see how many of the partners have read the newsletter.

After this we created a webpage in Dreamweaver that will be used as the newsletter. Because Jessica wanted to include pictures as well as text a HTML newsletter provided these options. Jessica

was also already comfortable using Dreamweaver and HTML so no new skills were needed to be learned. Jessica was able to create most of the newsletter on her own and I assisted by fixing a few of the spacing issues that arose. What Counts allows a link to unsubscribe to be put easily at the bottom of the newsletter. This saves Jessica time as she no longer has to manually remove people from the list. It also allows a HTML form to be created that can be added on a webpage to add a new e-mail to the subscription list. This input box was put on the homepage so that any potential visitors could easily add themselves to the list.

This outcome is easily sustainable as evidenced by the second newsletter for May that was made by Jessica independently. It is also easy to add new partners to the distribution list through a simple web interface. These are the two main tasks that may be needed in the future to support the current newsletter and both have been completed at least once with few problems. As this process continues it will only get more streamlined and my CP will only improve her HTML skills. This has supported a new vision of partner involvement. Before the newsletter most of the partner involvement was at board meetings and committee meetings if at all. By utilizing technology effectively PSVP can increase their communication capacity.

While the general structure of the newsletter is complete I would recommend that you consider the look and feel of the newsletter closely. This will hopefully improve partner relations and get more partners to read the e-mails and be involved in the organization. I would recommend that after the newsletter has been distributed for a few months a survey is also distributed asking each recipient some *brief* questions about what they like and dislike in the newsletter. Using this information as well as improved HTML skills (http://www.w3schools.com/) the newsletter should be updated easily.

Finally I would recommend that the CP set aside a day each month to update the website and the newsletter. By doing these tasks at a set time it will assure that they are completed and since they are similar I would recommend doing them at the same time.

Recommendation 1. Backup System

Although a networked backup system is already in place I would recommend an independent monthly backup of the PSVP_Data folder. Jessica computer is equipped with a CD burner and this is probably the easiest way to backup crucial documents. Jessica is comfortable using the built-in Windows tools to burn CD's. If Jessica was to make a monthly backup which she took home with her this would provide extra security from data loss. This will ensure that a backup is always made and provide extra security in case your data is not backed up automatically. This backup should include any documents that have been updated in the part month if a full backup is not possible. The fact that SalesForce is a hosted solution means that no backup is required of that system. In order to learn more about the reasons behind backup and other options available I would recommend looking at the following website (http://www.datamills.com/Tutorials/backup_tutorial_Index.htm).

About the Consultant

Jacob Albertson is currently a sophomore in Computer Science with a minor in Chinese. He is unsure of his plans after college but hopes they are interesting.

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
People's Oakland
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape
Pittsburgh Citizens' Police Review Board
Pittsburgh Health Corps
Pittsburgh Mediation Center
Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners
Pittsburgh Vision Services
Pittsburgh Voyager
POISE Foundation
Program for Health Care to Underserved Populations
Providence Family Support Center
Radio Information Service
Reading Is Fundamental Pittsburgh
Regional Coalition of Community Builders
River Valley School
Rodef Shalom
Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh
Rosedale Block Cluster
Rx Council of Western PA
Sacred Heart Elementary School
Salvation Army Family Crisis Center
Schenley Heights Community Development Center
Second East Hills Social Services Center
Sharry Everett Scholarship Fund
Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health

St. James School
St. Stephen Elementary School
Sustainable Pittsburgh
The Community House
The HUB Downtown Street Outreach Center
Thomas Merton Center
Three Rivers Center for Independent Living
Three Rivers Youth
TLC-USA
Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments
Tzu Chi Wen Chinese School
Union Project
United Cerebral Palsy
Urban League of Pittsburgh
Urban Youth Action
Ursuline Services
Vintage Senior Center
Weed & Seed Program, Mayor's Office
Wesley Center
West Pittsburgh Partnership
Wireless Neighborhoods
Women's Enterprise Center
Working Order
YMCA McKeesport
YMCA Senior AIDE Center
Youth Fair Chance
YouthBuild
YWCA Bridge Housing
YWCA of McKeesport

Community Partner Information FAQ
(continued from back cover)

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 under estimated 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.)