Executive Summary

Student Consultant, Zofia Koscielniak
Community Partner, Lauren Rudenko

I. Background Information

Angel's Place is a nonprofit organization that provides a comprehensive family development program for student parents. Their mission is to:

> *"Provide the opportunity for single, low-income student parents to complete their education, secure satisfying employment, establish careers and become self-sufficient."*

Angels' Place provides free childcare for student parents as well as parenting classes, career planning, job placement, and practical needs such as food, clothing, and furniture. The parents must be full-time students in high school, community college, trade school, or college. Angels' Place operates three childcare facilities in Swissvale, Brookline, and the North Side. The administrative offices are housed at the North Side center. Angels' Place has seven administrative employees at the North Side offices, several teachers and volunteers. In the fiscal year ending July 2007, their revenue was $1.04 million and their expenses were $0.99 million. The Community Partner, Lauren Rudenko is the Director of Marketing at Angels' Place.

II. Consulting Tasks

The first major consulting task involved a re-design of the Angel's Place website. Before the consulting partnership, Angels' Place had a website, but it was difficult to navigate and looked outdated. A third party was responsible for website maintenance and it had not been updated for several months. The Student Consultant and Community Partner carefully assessed the old website, documenting which content needed improvement. They then made a plan for the new website. This plan involved re-organizing the old content, adding new content, and a cosmetic upgrade. The Student Consultant and Community Partner worked in Microsoft FrontPage to create the new website.

The second major consulting task involved writing a technology plan for Angels' Place. Before the consulting partnership, Angels' Place did not have a plan for future technology use, and they were not using the available technology to its' full potential. The Community Partner expressed many ideas on how technology could be used more effectively at Angels' Place. The Student Consultant and Community Partner interviewed the other employees at Angels' Place, brainstormed, and compiled a list of technology-related projects to be completed at Angels' Place in the future. These projects included: an inexpensive, efficient system to backup data on the office computers, technology-use classes for the student parents, a plan to turn an office into a business center and

many others. The Student Consultant and Community Partner researched the projects and documented step-by step work plans for each.

III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

The Student Consultant and Community Partner have finished making the new website in Microsoft FrontPage, and it will be published at *www.angelsplacepgh.org* shortly. This new website contains several substantial improvements over the old one. The content is organized in a more intuitive fashion, and the link labels are more descriptive of the information they contain. The resulting website is easier to navigate. The new website also looks brighter and more modern. The Student Consultant and Community Partner believe the new website will serve as an effective marketing tool, resulting in an increase in donations, parent applications, and new teacher applications. There are, however, a few risks to sustainability. Right now, the Community Partner is the only employee at Angels' Place with the skills to update the website. The project would be more sustainable if other employees learned how to maintain the website.

A few features could be included to increase the value of the website. Right now it contains a printable application for new student parents, but they cannot fill it out or send it online. An electronic submission system could make it easier and safer for new parents to apply to the centers. Also, a parent blog on the website could be used as a marketing tool. One parent could be selected from the centers to write about their life and experiences with Angels' Place. This blog could be published on the website and serve to publicize the organization.

The technology plan has been completed and Angels' Place has already begun working on the first project suggested: the backup system. Work on the other projects will begin shortly, and the Community Partner is very enthusiastic about working on them. The Student Consultant and Community Partner believe this project is sustainable, since the plan is complete and the employees are excited about the projects. There is, however, a risk to sustainability. Lack of time or other resources could make it necessary for Angels' Place to abandon the projects detailed in the plan.

One way to prevent that from happening is for Angels' Place to hold regularly scheduled technology meetings. During these meetings, the employees could discuss progress on the projects in the technology plan, and suggest new ones. Getting the entire staff involved is an excellent way to ensure continued work on the technology plan, and to plan new projects.

Community Partner
Lauren Rudenko
Director of Marketing
lrudenko@angelsplacepgh.org

Angels' Place
2615 Norwood Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15214
http://www.angelsplacepgh.org

About the Consultant
Zofia Koscielniak
zmk@alumni.cmu.edu

Zofia is a senior in Mathematical Sciences. She will begin working as a Sales and Trading Analyst at Morgan Stanley next fall.

Final Consulting Report

Student Consultant, Zofia Koscielniak
Community Partner, Lauren Rudenko

I. About the Organization

Organization

Angels' Place is a non-profit family services organization that provides comprehensive support services to single low-income student parents and their children in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Their mission statement is to:

> *"Provide the opportunity for single, low-income student parents to complete their education, secure satisfying employment, establish careers and become self-sufficient."*

Angels' Place strives to break the cycle of poverty for young parents, helping them continue their educations and escape the welfare system. They offer free child care to single, low-income students. Angels' Place is a comprehensive family support center, and they also provide tutoring, support groups, counseling, grandparent and father figure outreach as well as informal classes in parenting, nutrition, child safety, and life skills. Since Angels' Place opened its doors in 1984, they have served over 600 families in the city of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Parents are between the ages of 14 and 35 and must be full time students in high school, trade school, junior college or college. Angels' Place serves children of any age, from newborns through pre-school. Angels' Place has an annual budget of about $1.1M, 61% of which comes from foundation grants, 23% from contributions, and the rest from special events, fundraising, government grants, donated goods, and investment return. The budget is broken down as follows: 83% program services, 13% management, and 4% fundraising. The Executive Board consists of 14 members who meet monthly, and the Advisory Board consists of 16 members who meet bi-annually.

Facilities

Angels' Place operates facilities in three locations: North Side, Brookline, and Swissvale. All three house child care centers and the administrative offices are located in the North Side facility. This large, three-story building houses a child care center on the first floor and administrative offices on the top two. Every administrative employee has their own office, some of which are quite spacious. The second floor houses several offices we well as lounge area with a mini-kitchen. The third (top) floor houses several more offices, including the Community Partner's and the Executive Director's. It also has a large conference room with a rectangular table, projector, and screen. There is a computer lab for the student parents, which has been set up by the Boy Scouts of America.

Programs

Angels' Place serves 25 children at each center. Some parents have more than one child, so every center serves about 18-20 families. The centers have the capacity for more children, but a lack of teachers makes Angels' Place unable to care for any more at this time. Childcare is provided at each of the three centers mostly during the fall and spring school semesters, although some children stay for the summer. In return, parents have several responsibilities. They attend weekend parenting classes. They attend monthly meetings with the family support specialist where they discuss jobs, family, and welfare and receive referrals. Finally, parents complete two service hours a week at the center. They are required to maintain an adequate grade point average and attend classes on a regular basis. Angels' Place also works to provide basic needs, such as baby furniture or clothes.

Staff

Mary Winter, Director Emeritus:

Delegated representative of the Executive Board of Directors at all Angels' Place Houses in Allegheny County. Oversees all staff and departments.

Michelle Tipton, Executive Director:

Delegated representative of the Executive Board of Directors at all Angels' Place Houses in Allegheny County. Oversees all staff and departments.

Jen Leck/Beth Banas/Annette Aguiar, Program Directors:

Develop and implement a developmentally appropriate program for infants, toddlers, and pre-school age children. Supervise classroom Lead Teacher, Assistant Lead Teacher, Secretary, Aides and volunteers in the implementation of program philosophy and activities.

Meliza Jackson, Director of Development:

Secures major and individual financial gifts through the use of foundation and proposal grant writing.

Teachers:

Provide a warm, nurturing, safe and loving environment in which the child can grow physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually where self concepts are enhanced, independence encouraged and individuality respected.

April Scassera, Family Support Specialist:

Collaborates with directors to regularly assess and observe all families in the organization, providing services and referrals if needed.

Diane Mazza, Finance Administrator:

Keeps orderly records of the financial transactions of the Corporation and to provide accurate and timely financial data to the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and auditors.

Leslie Sparks/Joan McElhinny, Administrative Assistant:
Manage all office tasks in a professional manner.

Lauren Rudenko, Director of Marketing, Community Partner:
Creates, implements, effects and improves resource development and marketing/communications programs for Angels' Place.

Among the employees at the North Side center, the Community Partner is considered the most technically-savvy and she is often called upon to answer simple questions about software usage and printing problems. The other employees are comfortable using the Microsoft Office suite to perform their daily tasks. Word and Power Point are the most often-used programs, and the employees are usually self-sufficient in their use. The Finance Administrator uses QuickBooks to maintain financial records, and various employees use DonorPerfect to update donor records and print out labels.

Technical Environment

The technical environment at Angels' Place is fairly up to date. Every employee has their own computer with at least 512MB RAM, 1.5 GHz processor, and flat screen monitor. Every computer is hooked up to the internet, the server, and a printer.

Computers at North Side office:

- New Dell Laptop. Intel Core2Duo 2GHz Processor. 2Gig RAM. Windows Vista. CD/DVD R/RW.
- Michelle Tipton: Dell PC. Intel 1.66GHz Processor. 1Gig RAM. Windows XP Home Edition with Service Pack 2. Flat screen monitor.
- Lauren Rudenko: Dell Dimension PC. Intel Celeron 2.53GHz Processor. 512MB RAM. Windows XP Home Edition with Service Pack 2. Flat screen monitor.
- April Scassera: PC. Pentium 2 processor. 64MG RAM. Windows 98.
- Meliza Jackson: Dell Dimension 9150 PC. Intel Pentium D 3GHz Processor. 1Gig RAM. Windows XP Home Edition with Service Pack 2. Flat screen monitor.
- Server: Dell Server DESC440 PC. Intel Pentium D 2.8GHz Processor. 2Gig RAM. Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Small Business Edition with Service Pack 2. Flat screen monitor.
- Leslie Sparks: Dell Dimension DE051 PC. Intel Celeron 2.53GHz Processor. 768MG RAM. Windows XP Home Edition with Service Pack 2. Flat screen monitor.
- Jen Leck: Dell Dimension DES01. Intel Celeron 2.53GHz Processor. 512MG RAM. Windows XP Home Edition with Service Pack 2. Flat screen monitor.

Other technologies at the North Side Office

- Dell Photo Printer. Several HP LaserJet Printers. Two Brother color laser printers. Scanner. Conference room projector. Digital camera.
- DonorPerfect donor management software. QuickBooks accounting software.

- Website: www.angelsplacepgh.org

Technical Management

Angels' Place outsources most of its technology management. They recently hired Williams Consulting to host the website and email accounts. Williams Consulting changed the website hosting, and provided an HTML editor that is available online via a password. Recently, Williams Consulting also provided Angels' Place with an email address domain name (@angelsplacepgh.org). All employees are now required to use their Angels' Place email addresses for all organization-related business. For technology maintenance, Angels' Place employs Mike Shaughnessy, who provides on-call IT service. He is responsible for basic maintenance of all computer systems such as keeping software up to date, anti-virus protection, and installing new printers and other peripherals. He is also available for troubleshooting.

Technology Planning

Angels' Place recently received a $10,000 technology grant. With this money, they have purchased a new projector for the conference room, laptop, digital camera, and scanner. Before the consulting situation, no formal technology plan existed. The on-call IT service was responsible for all technology upgrades, and most Angels' Place employees were not involved in technology-related decision making. Decisions were usually made by the Community Partner, with approval from the Executive Director. As a result, Angel's Place was not using their technology resources to their full capacity.

Internal and External Communication

Angels' Place has good communication amongst its staff. The main computer server is housed at the North Side office, and is used to store any data that needs to be shared among employees. The server can be accessed from any computer at the North Side center as well as the Brookline and Swissvale facilities via VPN. This system is fairly reliable, and there are very few technical problems. When a connection is lost, the employees can use the on-call IT service to fix it. The server houses all business software for Angels' Place, such as QuickBooks and DonorPerfect, so that any employee can look up accounting or donor information easily from their own computers. Every employee has their own office, and telephone communication between centers is common. Because the offices in the North Side center are spread out over two floors, the employees use an intercom system to communicate with each other. Email is also occasionally used for inter-office communication, usually to send files.

Angels' Place also has good external communication. Their website, *www.angelsplacepgh.org*, contains a lot of information about the organization including mission statement, programs offered, applications to become an Angels' Place parent, donation information (including a site to donate online with a credit card), volunteering, internship programs, upcoming fundraising events, Crib Notes (quarterly newsletter), and contact information. Before the consulting partnership, none of the content had been updated in several months. Also, some of the website was difficult to navigate. Angels' Place also sends out Crib Notes, their quarterly newsletter. Paper copies are sent out to hundreds of donors. Employees and parents also receive copies. An electronic (pdf) version of the newsletter is made available on the website. This newsletter is well-made, both appealing

and informative. Director of Marketing is currently working on a new marketing strategy for the organization, so in the upcoming months, a new plan for external communication will be implemented.

Information Management

Most of the information management at Angels' Place is performed electronically. The server is used as the hub for all information needed by the organization. Everyone has their own folder to keep documents on the server. Every employee's computer, in all three locations, is connected to this server. The files on the server are somewhat disorganized. They are labeled with the employee's names, some of whom no longer work there. Angels' Place does not backup the information on the server or any other computers, but they are currently working on a backup solution.

Business Systems

Angels' Place keeps financial records in QuickBooks, which is installed on the server. The Finance Administrator is responsible for updating and maintaining these records, and other employees occasionally look up information, but rarely change it. Angels' Place recently got their own email domain name, and employees use Microsoft Outlook as their email software. Other Microsoft Office programs, such as PowerPoint, Word, and Excel are used often. Finally, Angels' Place uses DonorPerfect to keep track of their donors and mailing list. This software is housed on the server and each employee has access to it. Several different employees add to and look up information in this database.

II. Scope of work: Website Redesign

Although, at the beginning of the consulting partnership, Angels' Place had a functioning website, it stood to be improved in several ways. It was designed by a high school student, and used to be hosted on GoDaddy. The hosting responsibility was switched to Williams Consulting, who provided an online HTML editor accessible via password to update the website. With the exception of the "upcoming events" section, none of the content had been updated in several months, and none of the employees at Angels' Place knew how to update it using the new HTML editor. Also, the old website was difficult to navigate. The links did not have descriptive titles, and the content, although very thorough, was somewhat disorganized. Finally, the old website looked outdated. It mostly consisted of large, navy-blue boxes that held the content.

The goal of this project was to create a professional, concise, easy-to-navigate website that attracts new donors, volunteers, parents, teachers, and the media. Our goal was to create a new website that would help Angels' Place achieve their mission on many fronts. The child care centers were not filled to capacity, mostly due to a lack of teachers. The new website would provide information about teaching opportunities at Angels' Place, and attract teachers to the organization. The website would also target young parents, drawing more to the centers. Furthermore, a professional website could be used as a marketing tool. Greater public recognition could lead to greater attendance at fundraising events, as well as more human resources such as volunteers or teachers. The website is

in many ways the face of an organization, and should reflect the professional image they wish to convey.

It was very important to the Community Partner for Angels' Place to maintain the website in-house. The web design process would also be very helpful at achieving this goal. Through the design process and implementation, the Community Partner could gain valuable skills in web design and maintenance. In order to preserve sustainability, other employees should learn to update the website as well. The planning process would provide a blueprint of things to consider and questions to ask when updating the website in the future.

Approach:

1. **Learn the HTML editor.** Angels' Place hired Williams Consulting to host the website, and provided an HTML editor to make changes to the website. This is proprietary software. The Student Consultant and Community Partner's first task was to learn how to use this software efficiently and to its full potential. The Student Consultant and Community Partner decided to create the new website in Microsoft FrontPage, so part of this task was to become more familiar with it.
2. **Assess the current website.** The old website contained a lot of good information. The Student Consultant and Community Partner evaluated every page, decided what should be used in the re-design, and what needed to be changed.
3. **Create an organization plan.** The Student Consultant and Community Partner drew out (on paper) a plan for the organization and layout of the website. This plan included the information architecture and layout of the new website.
4. **Decide on the new look.** The website needed a cosmetic upgrade. The Student Consultant and Community Partner decided how to change the layout, colors, fonts, etc. to make it look as professional and modern as possible.
5. **Implement the changes.** The Student Consultant and Community Partner made changes specified by the plan

III. Scope of Work: Technology Plan

At the beginning of the consulting partnership, Angels' Place did not have a technology plan in place. Any technology changes or upgrades were reactionary. When something broke, the staff called the on-call IT service fix it. Angels' Place was not using its technology resources to their full potential.

The goal of this project was to create a technology plan that could help Angels' Place achieve its mission in several ways. A good technology plan could help the organization get the most out of their technology. It would detail the technological solutions the organization needs to perform their daily tasks, and how they should be maintained and upgraded. It would allow employees to efficiently perform their work because they would have the technological tools in place to help get it done. A good technology plan could also spell out when upgrades and changes need to be made, so equiptment is more likely to function properly, eliminating "down time" of broken equipment.

The process of working on a technology plan could also be very beneficial to the organization because it requires introspection about what tasks they need to complete and the most efficient ways of doing so. The planning process would very involved, require a lot of research into the employee's work habits, and the technology used. This process would require the employees of Angels' Place to think about how they use technology, and whether they can improve their methods. It would leave a lasting impression on how they think about their work. The process of writing the technology plan could empower the organization as a whole. The employees would learn research and implement new technologies, greatly increasing their capacity to work with technology in the future.

Finally, a technology plan could save the organization money. It could be used to secure funding for the technology needed. Also, by detailing the kind of work that needs to be done with technology, it could help the organization make informed purchasing decisions. Thus, they only buy what they really need, saving the expense of unnecessary technology.

Approach:

1. **Establish Leadership and Support.** The first task in this project was to make sure that management and staff were working together to build this technology plan. The Community Partner was leader on the project. On the management side, the Executive Director was involved in making decisions.
2. **Assessing Resources.** The Student Consultant and Community Partner carefully inventoried the technology already in place, and decided what was working well and what needed improvement.
3. **Define Needs.** The Student Consultant and Community Partner meet with all the employees to talk about how they use technology in their jobs, and get their input on what works well and what needed improvement.
4. **Explore Solutions.** The Student Consultant and Community Partner researched solutions to the problems specified by the employees.
5. **Write the Plan.** The Student Consultant and Community Partner combined the results of the previous four steps into a written document.

III. Outcomes and Recommendations

I. Results of Consulting Work

A. Task 1: Website Redesign. For the first project, the Student Consultant and Community Partner worked in Microsoft FrontPage to redesign the Angels' Place website. The old website, although it had detailed information, was difficult to navigate and had a very dated look. Some of the content from the old website was used, but changes were made to the organizational structure. Several new pages were added, and website was given a cosmetic upgrade.

a. Outcomes. The most important outcome of this project is the website itself. The Student Consultant and Community Partner have finished making the new website in FrontPage, and it will be published at *www.angelsplacepgh.org* soon. The new website contains some content from the old one, but it has been reorganized. In the old website, the links were vague, and it was difficult to find information. The new website has clearer headings. Also, the old website looked very dated. It contained large, navy-colored boxes that held information. The new website looks much more modern, with a brighter color palate and better graphics. It also includes some features the old website did not. The front page of the new website will be updated regularly with news about the organization, as opposed to the old website, which had not been updated for several months.

b. Benefits to the Community Partner. The website redesign process has equipped the Community Partner with a new set of skills. By going through the process of assessing the old website, she learned to think critically about websites. When going through the old website, she was able to assess what worked, what needed to be improved, and what the end result should be. The Student Consultant and Community Partner wrote a document that included a critique of the old website, the changes to be made for the new one, and an organizational structure for the new website. Also, the Community Partner is now comfortable with using FrontPage to design new websites. She made most of the new pages by herself, adding text, pictures, and hyperlinks. The new website contains approximately 30 pages. On several occasions, she was able to troubleshoot problems such as bad links or misbehaving layouts. If time permits, the Community Partner plans to teach the Executive Director to use FrontPage and make changes to the website. Some of the content on the new website still needs to be re-written by the Executive Director, and the plan is for her to learn to update the website when this content is ready to be published.

c. Expected Outcomes. The new website has the potential to become an excellent tool in helping Angels' Place achieve their mission. The Student Consultant and Community Partner believe it will get more hits than the old one, thus increasing public awareness of the organization and encourage new parent applications. More public awareness could lead to better attendance at events and more donations. The new website also includes a page advertising employment opportunities for teachers. The child care centers are not filled to capacity because there are not enough teachers employed, and the website could serve as an excellent tool to recruit more teachers. Screen captures of the home pages from both the old and new website can be viewed in Appendix A.

d. Sustainability. The Student Consultant and Community Partner believe that this project is sustainable. As mentioned before, the Community Partner is very comfortable with FrontPage. She knows how to make changes to the website in FrontPage, and load them onto the web. She made most of the new website herself and has demonstrated on several occasions that she is capable of updating

it. Executive Director was also involved in the design process. She was responsible for writing some of the content. She was also consulted several times in the process to make sure she approved of the changes being made. Her experience with FrontPage and websites is limited, but the Community Partner plans to teach her how to make updates to the website.

e. Risks to Sustainability. There are, however, a few risks to sustainability. Although the Executive Director is learning, as of now, the Community Partner is really the only person at Angels' Place with the skills to maintain the website. If she leaves, maintenance of the new website could be abandoned. Although they have positive opinions of the new website, the rest of the staff has not shown interest in learning how to maintain it. Currently, the website is hosted by Williams Consulting. The Community Partner knows how to make changes to the website without their help, but any serious problems would require the company's expertise. This is, of course, expensive. Also, if Angels' Place decides to change their hosting company, they might no longer be able to use FrontPage to make changes, and would have to learn a new system before they can do anything new with the website. There is a chance that time and money would not allow for anyone to do this, and the website could be abandoned.

f. New Vision for Technology. The new website planning and design process has given the Community Partner and Executive Director a feeling of empowerment when it comes to technology. The Community Partner feels comfortable with using FrontPage to design websites. The entire staff is very impressed that new technology has helped achieve these results, and they are excited to see what other positive changes technology can make. For example, although most of the staff does not need to use a digital camera to perform their jobs, the majority of them came to a digital camera tutorial session held by Student Consultant and Community Partner, simply because they wanted to learn something new about technology. Before, the employees weren't all that interested in learning new technologies to improve their work. They thought learning something new was too time-consuming to be of any real help. Now, they are constantly suggesting new ideas on how technology can be used in their jobs.

g. Recommendations

a. Online submission system. Right now, the website has a pdf version of the application for parents that can be printed out, but needs to be filled out by hand and mailed into the center. An online submission system where potential parents can fill the form out on their computer and submit it through the website could improve this process. It would be easier for the parents, since using a printer would no longer be necessary. It would also be faster, since the application would be instantaneously emailed to the organization, and safer, since it would not have to go through the post office.

The ease of application submission could lead to more parents applying for the center, helping Angel's Place achieve their mission.

Steps to completion. FrontPage has the capacity to make such a form on the website. Step-by-step instructions can be found under the resources section. The completed applications can be sent, via email, to the appropriate employees.

Resources. FrontPage has the capacity to set to the HTML form. A detailed set of instructions can be found at: *http://webdesign.about.com/od/frontpagehowtos/ht/htmailtoform.htm,* or *http://needa.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=SupportData.View&id=58.*

b. Online mailing list sign up. Angels' Place prints a newsletter, Crib Notes, every quarter. The newsletter includes: news from each of the three centers, parent's testimonials, upcoming events, and donor information. An HTML mailing list sign-up form on the website could help increase circulation of the newsletter. Website visitors could input their email and mailing addresses, and be added to the Angels' Place mailing list. They would then receive the newsletter and other important Angels' Place information. This form would help Angels' Place expand their mailing list, which in turn could result in more donations and attendance at events.

Steps to completion: The process of setting up this form should be very similar to setting up the application form.

Resources: The instructions on how to set up forms in FrontPage can be found in the websites listed in part a, under resources.

c. Parent's Blog. Every parent is required to complete two hours of service per week at the organization. One parent could spend that time writing a blog about their life as a young parent and student. This blog could be made into a page on the website (anonymously). If the blog becomes popular, Angels' Place could see increased traffic on their website because people will log on regularly to read it. It would also serve as an excellent marketing tool, since it would give a detailed, first-hand account of how Angel's Place helps young parents stay in school. It could help other young parents realize how helpful Angels' Place is, and convince them to apply. The ultimate result could be more traffic on the website and more new parent applications.

Steps to completion. The first step in this task is finding a student to agree to share their life, and decide on a set of rules about what information can be published and what needs to be kept private. After that, the student

can write their blog in Microsoft Word on any computer. Then, the text can be copied from Word into FrontPage and published on the website.

Resources. The Nonprofit Blog Exchange (*http://nonprofitblogexchange.blogspot.com/*) offers tips on how nonprofits can use blogs as a marketing tool. Techsoup.org also offers good information about blogging for nonprofits. For example, *http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/internet/page5509.cfm?cg=searchterms&sg=blog*, offers advice on the kind of information that would make a blog interesting and informative.

B. Task 2: Technology Plan. For the second project, the Student Consultant and Community Partner wrote a technology plan for Angels' Place. This document includes a list of projects to help Angels' Place increase their capacity for technology use. Each project has a detailed a plan to completion. At the beginning of the consulting partnership, the Community Partner listed several ideas on how to improve technology use at Angels' Place. Obviously, time constraints would not allow all these tasks to be completed, and many of them are included in the technology plan. Angels' Place now has a detailed document specifying what changes should be made, how to make them, the cost, and timeline to completion.

a. Outcomes. The most important outcome of this project is, of course, the document itself, which is finished and has been sent out to all employees at Angel's Place. Previously, Angels' Place had no such plan, and technology improvements were reactionary (if something broke, they replaced it). Work has already begun on the first part of the plan: installing a backup system for the server.

b. Benefits to the Community Partner. The writing process has equipped the Community Partner with a new set of skills. She has learned an organized, structured process for assessing the technology in the organization, identifying areas for improvement, researching solutions, and implementing them. She has demonstrated these skills in several ways. In the assessment phase, she inventoried the technology already available in the office, noting important information. She also interviewed the staff about their technology needs. After that, the Student Consultant and Community Partner listed out the problems that still need to be solved, and prioritized them. The Community Partner demonstrated her ability to research solutions to technology-related problems. She used mostly online resources, and made many good suggestions for solutions. Most of the solutions documented in the technology plan are a result of her research. Finally, she researched costs (both monetary and time), and decided on a timeline for implementing these solutions. She feels confident in these new skills, and has expressed a desire to continue identifying opportunities for technology use, and planning out solutions.

c. Expected Outcomes. There are outcomes for this project that have yet to be observed. Angels' Place has only begun working on the projects outlined in the plan, and none have been completed yet. More time is needed to fully assess the efficacy of the plan. The technology plan has the potential to increase Angels' Place's capacity to carry out their mission statement. Some of the projects outlined in the plan, such as the backup system for the server, will help avert disaster. Right now, if the server broke, the organization would be devastated by the loss of documents. The backup system will prevent this from happening. Other projects outlined in the plan, such as the employee tutorials, will help the employees perform their tasks more efficiently and use their technology to its full potential. Although the technology plan does not directly help Angels' Place with its' mission, if the projects outlined in the plan are carried out, the organization will have an increased capacity to use technology to help perform their daily tasks.

d. Sustainability. The Student Consultant and Community Partner believe this solution is sustainable. The plan is complete; all that is left is to follow it. As mentioned before, Angel's Place is already working on the first step of the plan. The Community Partner feels comfortable with the content of the plan; she believes she can perform the tasks listed, and is excited about the upcoming technology changes. She will be the main executor of the plan. The Executive Director is also excited about the plan. She wants to continue with making the changes, and is confident that the budget will allow it.

e. Risks to Sustainability. There are, however, a few risks to sustainability. Although The Community Partner and Executive Director are excited about the plan, it is possible that they will become busy with other work and abandon it. It is also possible that their needs will change, and some of the solutions in the plan will no longer be necessary or feasible. Finally, although the Executive Director was involved in the decision-making process, she did not participate in the assessment or research phases. The Community Partner is really the only employee who has the skills to perform these tasks. If she leaves, even if the plan is carried out, no one will be able to change it or write a new one.

f. New Vision for Technology. Learning the process of writing a technology plan has increased the Community Partner's capacity to manage the technological environment at Angels' Place. She now has the skills to research her technology needs, and plan out solutions. As mentioned above, before the technology plan, the organization had a reactionary attitude about technology. Now, they believe that the best way to get the most out of technology is to plan it out and research it carefully. Finally, writing this plan has helped involve some of the less "technically savvy" employees. In the beginning of the process, every employee was interviewed about their technology use, any problems they have, and suggestions for improvements. Several of these suggestions ended up in the technology plan, and will be implemented. Involvement in the planning process has helped some employees get more excited about technology use.

g. Recommendations

a. Technology meetings. A technology plan is most effective when it is a working document. As new needs arise and old ones become less important, the plan needs to be altered, or else it might become outdated. Regularly scheduled technology meetings, where the staff can gather to express their technology-related problems and needs, are an excellent way to ensure the technology plan is maintained. These needs could then be included into the technology plan and implemented. This way, all employees are included in the technology planning process, and their needs continue to be addressed. Also, more employees would learn the technology planning process, making the technology plan more sustainable.

Steps to completion: Angels' Place already holds monthly staff meetings. These meetings could provide the perfect forum for discussing any technology issues. This discussion should be made part of the agenda. Topics of discussion should include technology-related problems the staff is facing as well as suggestions for the future. After the meetings, the Community Partner can research possible solutions for the problems listed. She and the Executive Director can decide on a course of action, present it at the next meeting, and add it to the technology plan.

Resources: *www.techsoup.org* offers many good suggestions for technology-related problems. A *www.google.com* search can provide vast amounts of information as well. Finally, ideas can be discussed with the on-call IT service. They will be able to offer expert advice.

II. Other Recommendations

A. Computer Training Sessions for Parents. Angels' Place seeks to provide more than just child care to young parents. Angel's Place is "committed to providing student parents with the help needed to complete their education, secure satisfying employment, establish careers and become self-sufficient and responsible citizens." One of their main goals is to help students with their careers, and computing skills are a very important part of a resume. Angel's Place recently got a new computer lab for parents at the North Side center, and it provides a great opportunity for parents to learn computing skills which could later be helpful in their careers. It is also important for parents to learn the basics of online safely, so they can protect themselves from potential harm. Technology training sessions for parents could not only help Angel's Place fulfill its mission, they could be very beneficial to the organizers. The employees responsible for planning and holding these tutorial sessions would have their own computing skills reinforced and even expanded.

Steps for completion. First, the Community Partner and Executive Director need to list and prioritize the topics to be discussed. This list could include Microsoft Office programs, web search, web safety, and many others. From there, they need to research the topics (see below), formulate a lesson plan, and practice the lesson. It might also be a good

idea to make handouts of the information presented, so the students can take them home as a reference.

Resources. The most important resource for this task is a good search engine, like google. There are many websites that provide valuable, well-organized information. Other employees can also be used as references. They can provide insight on what features are extremely useful, and which ones are not so important.

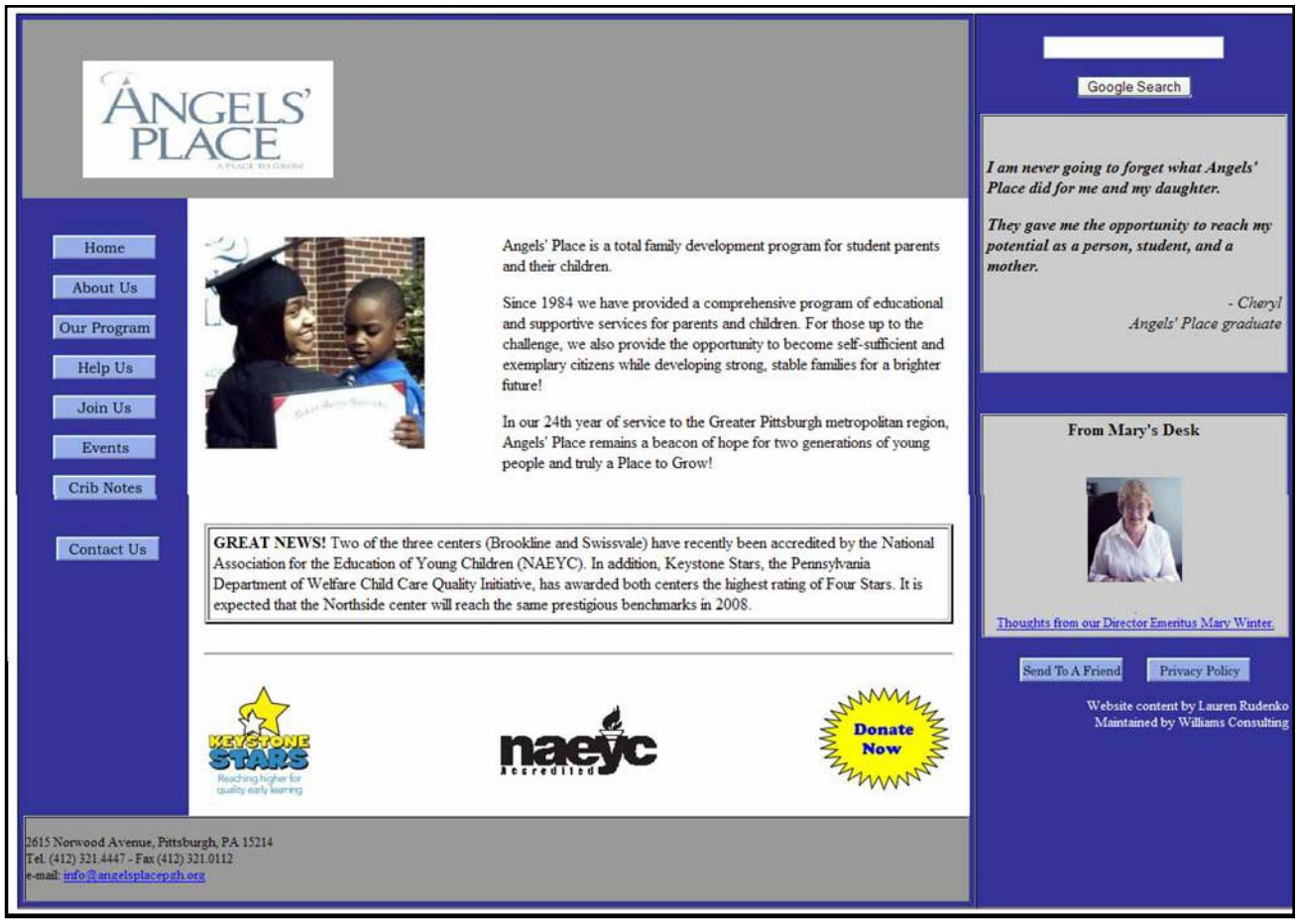
Suggested websites:
Web safety tutorial: *http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/community_tutorials/web/safety/*
Microsoft Office tutorial:
http://www.officetutorials.com/
Anti-phishing information.
http://www.antiphishing.org/
Communal website safety.
http://www.twu.edu/O-sl/counseling/SelfHelp066.html

About the Consultant

Zofia Koscielniak is a senior in Computational and Applied Mathematics with minors in Computer Science and Computational Finance at Carnegie Mellon University. This summer, she will begin working as a Sales and Trading Analyst and Morgan Stanley in New York City.

Appendix A.

Screen capture of the home page of the old website.



Screen capture of the home page of the new website.