

**Information Systems Management
Course 95-822**

Spring 2007

Final Consulting Report

Heritage Health Foundation Inc

Sonya J. Wierman



Executive Summary

Student Consultant, Sonya J. Wierman
Community Partner, Ron Gaydos

I. Background Information

Heritage Health Foundation, Inc., as part of its mission “to improve the capacity of the communities of the Mon River Valley,” sponsors the Tri Boro Development Forum (TBDF). TBDF is a coalition of community organizations, municipal governments, businesses, and residents in the four boroughs of Braddock, North Braddock, Rankin, and Swissvale.

The mission of the Forum is to collaborate and use the combined strengths and individual talents of its members to improve the overall quality of life in its constituent communities. It sponsors activities in these communities and serves as a neutral facilitator bringing local groups and individuals together to achieve this goal.

The Forum holds monthly public meetings in which members discuss issues that affect residents of the four boroughs. These meetings are currently poorly attended, due in part to the fact that many residents are unaware of the organization’s activities. Because the Forum needs community involvement to meet its mission, it seeks to raise its profile and better engage community residents.

II. Consulting Tasks

In order to communicate more effectively with the community, we decided to create a website. This site would be able to convey information about the organizations to the public, as well as hold details about upcoming and past events. A requirement for this site was that it be easy to update and allow multiple contributors, so that the site reflects the distinct communities that make up the Forum.

In addition to the website, we planned to create an e-newsletter that could be easily sent to people involved with or interested in the organization. This newsletter would complement the website by highlighting new content and reaching out to people (rather than waiting for them to look for the website). To gain readership, the newsletter would be incorporated into the website, to allow people to read old issues and subscribe to future ones.

III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

A website for the Forum was created and can be viewed at www.tbdfconnects.org. The site contains information about the organization, including its mission, activities, and members. It also has an interactive calendar, user registration, and pages for news from each borough. Each borough page is to be maintained by a volunteer from that borough.

The site was built on DotNetNuke, a content management system. This software makes the administration of the website simple, with WYSIWYG text editors and buttons to add and delete

pages. The software also has built in features that we utilized, such as user registration and the calendar, as well as some that could be added in the future, such as a blog or message board.

The major risk to the sustainability of the website is that it will require consistent maintenance on the part of the organization. The administrator and borough volunteers will need to ensure that the content on the site stays current to keep the interest of the community.

In addition to the website, a procedure for creating and distributing an e-newsletter was created. The newsletter is created in Microsoft Word using a template and then converted into html format. It is then sent using the bulk email feature on the website. Anybody can subscribe himself or herself to the newsletter by signing up on the website.

The risk to the sustainability of the newsletter is similar to that of the website. Each issue of the newsletter will need new content and will take time to prepare. The risk is that the motivation for creating the newsletter will subside and that it will be neglected. To counter this risk, the process of creating and sending the newsletter has been made simple and fast. Additionally, the monthly Forum meetings serve as a motivator for sending out the newsletter.

In the future, I recommend that the organization create and implement a maintenance plan. This plan encompasses maintaining both the content and the software of the website. Policies for content update should be created and followed to ensure that the content stays up to date. Additionally, upgrades to the DotNetNuke core software and modules should be monitored and installed when available.

I also recommend that new features be added to the website over time. The site usage should be monitored to gauge interest in the website before adding new features. In addition, care should be taken in adding features that will require a lot of upkeep, such as a blog.

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I. About the Organization

Organization

The mission of Heritage Health Foundation, Inc. (HHFI) is:

to improve the capacity of the communities of the Mon River and Turtle Creek Valleys to improve the quality of life of their residents.

This broad mission encompasses health, human services, and economic development. HHFI was created as part of the Braddock Medical Center in 1983 and is now an independent organization.

To accomplish its mission, HHFI runs programs in early education, family services, affordable housing, economic development, workforce transportation, and community organizing. Many of the programs are operated jointly with other organizations. The Tri Boro Development Forum (TBDF) is one of these organizations, and it will be the focus of the community partnership.

TBDF is a coalition of community organizations, municipal governments, businesses, and residents in the four boroughs of Braddock, North Braddock, Rankin, and Swissvale.

The mission of the Forum is to collaborate and use the combined strengths and individual talents of its members to improve the overall quality of life in its constituent communities. It sponsors activities in these communities and serves as a neutral facilitator bringing local groups and individuals together to achieve this goal.

Founded in 1996 by HHFI and the Braddock Carnegie Library, TBDF seeks to address social and economic issues shared by the 20,000 residents living in the four communities it represents. Among these issues are education, business development, safety, and government structure. TBDF holds monthly public meetings, and its projects range in size from planting flowers to contributing to the redevelopment plan for a former steel furnace site. The current annual funding for the Forum is less than \$5,000.

Facilities

The administrative offices of HHFI are located at 445 Fourth Street in Braddock. The building was formerly a funeral home, but now houses the staff that runs the foundation. Each member of the staff has their own office and desktop computer. The 4 Kids Early Learning Network, one of HHFI's programs, has four learning centers and several home-based care facilities. The learning

centers are located in Braddock, East Pittsburgh, Homestead, and Rankin. The learning centers have computers available for children to use in the classrooms.

The Tri Boro Development Forum does not have its own facilities. TBDF holds its monthly meetings in the HHFI building. The chair people work from home or their workplaces, where most have computers and internet access.

Programs

HHFI Programs [1]:

The 4 Kids Early Learning Program provides affordable child care and education for young children. It is wholly owned and operated by HHFI and is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. 4 Kids offers educational programs for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children that prepare kids for success in school. The children that graduate from these programs have shown remarkable advancement: they are less likely to be held back in school or be placed in special education. 4 Kids also offers before and after school programs, summer camps, and free drop-in child care centers. These programs allow parents to work and attend job training, thereby increasing the economic capacity of families.

WorkLink is a program that provides free shuttle service to residents. Many low-income residents live in areas that are not served by public transportation. This limits their job opportunities and access to essential services, such as health care. WorkLink connects these people to public bus routes, thereby connecting them to more opportunities. This increases the quality of life for the residents that WorkLink serves.

The Enterprise Portal is a program under development that helps business owners, developers, and homebuyers navigate the steps involved in purchasing property and starting a business. The Portal offers education in local laws, processes, financing, and technical opportunities. It also brings together many agencies that aim to increase the economic development of the Braddock area, such as the Enterprise Zone Corporation of Braddock and Allegheny County agencies. The efforts of the Enterprise Portal aim to remove persistent barriers to economic development. This will increase the economic capacity of the community by bringing in jobs and investments.

The Hospital Park Housing Initiative helps low-income families purchase their first homes. The program has made available for sale new and newly remodeled homes at low cost. The program also provides education and counseling to potential home buyers, increasing the potential for families to purchase a home.

HHFI purchased the 5th Avenue Tavern, a “nuisance bar” in the community that contributed to crime and detracted from the quality of life. It plans to renovate the building to hold the Enterprise Portal, physicians’ offices, new HHFI offices, and retail space.

TBDF Programs:

TBDF holds monthly meetings, which are open to the public and act as a community forum. Residents are able to bring forward issues that affect their lives, such as education, government and safety concerns. The Forum is then able to raise these issues with the borough governments. The authority of the forum gives it more credibility and influence with the borough governments than individual residents usually have. These monthly meetings are currently poorly attended; few people beyond the chairpersons attend.

The Carrie Furnace Site is a former iron blast furnace plant on the Monongahela River in Rankin, Braddock, and Swissvale. It was recently purchased by the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development for mixed-use development. TBDF brought together the borough governments, county officials, and community organizations to execute a cooperation agreement to set the stage for creating a master plan for the site that would be beneficial for residents of the existing communities and be economically sustainable. The master plan includes residential and commercial spaces, as well as a museum dedicated to the history of the location.

The Image and Beautification Committee plans projects to improve the image and enhance the urban environment of the four boroughs. Projects range from planting trees to transforming a vacant lot into parking. These projects require the participation of many volunteers, who are found by contacting local churches and schools when they are needed. The Forum collaborates with the borough governments, the Enterprise Zone Corporation of Braddock, the Rotary Clubs of Braddock and Swissvale, and several other institutions and businesses for these projects.

Staff

HHFI has 62.5 full time equivalent employees. 50 of these employees work in the 4 Kids centers, three are at WorkLink, and nine work for the foundation. The employees at the foundation all have computers in their offices and are proficient in word processing software and email.

TBDF does not have staff, but rather operates as a volunteer collective. It has a General Chair and a Chair for each borough. The General Chair, Bob Grom, is also the President and CEO of HHFI. The borough chairs are concerned citizens of the communities – some have been appointed by the borough government while others are self-appointed. Many have long histories in their communities and municipal governments. The community co-chairs are:

- Braddock – Evelyn Benzo
- North Braddock – Vicki Vargo
- Rankin – Gaye Velar
- Swissvale – Ann Peelor

The co-chairs range in computer proficiency. Three are comfortable with email and web browsing, while one does not use the computer.

Technical Environment

HHFI incorporates technology into the running of the foundation and into several of their programs. The CEO embraces technology and sees it as a useful tool that can help with the running of the foundation. The employees all have desktop computers, which are connected to a local area network. The LAN is connected to the internet via a cable internet service provider. The computers run mainly Windows, with the exception of one Macintosh. The office hosts several printers and a print server for use over the network. A couple staff members and interns have laptops, which connect to the LAN via a wireless router.

The staff computers all run the standard Microsoft Office suite of Word, Excel, and Outlook. The employees are comfortable with these programs. Bob Grom and one other employee, Rosemary Sallinger, also have Adobe Illustrator installed. Bob and Rosemary edit the monthly newsletter that HHFI distributes. The newsletter is printed for physical distribution and is edited using Word.

HHFI maintains a web presence in the form of a single page that links visitors to program websites (www.hhfi.org). The 4Kids program's website, www.4kidsearlyed.org, contains information about

the program, web forms, and search functionality. WorkLink has a website with information, online sign-up forms, and maps (www.worklinkvan.org). Another program, Kards 4 Kids, sells greeting cards online (www.kards4kids.org).

Technical Management

The computers at the offices are mainly managed by staff members. The CFO, Jeff Au, is “good with networks” so he deals with everyday networking issues. Small problems are diagnosed and solved in house. A computer system consultant company is brought in to solve larger problems, and install and configure HHFI’s hardware and software. The computer consultant’s services are needed about once per month.

HHFI uses consultants to design and maintain their websites. John Cosgrove from Cosgrove Communications writes and edits content for the web pages, brochures, and other publications. Jay Volk, an independent consultant, maintains the technical aspects of the websites. The web sites are hosted by Crystal Tech, where they take up about 60% of the current available disk space that HHFI subscribes for. These consultants provide a seamless and professional web presence, but they make it difficult to effect changes. When 4 Kids wishes to make edits to the website, they must send the changes to the communications consultant, who forwards them to the technical consultant, who then updates the website. This process results in delays to updates, and changes are consequently infrequent.

Internal and External Communication

Staff members of HHFI communicate internally via phone, email, and a monthly newsletter. External communications take place through the websites, phone, email, or in person during meetings. TBDF members have little forum-related communication outside the monthly meetings. However, they do meet informally as members of other organizations and as residents of the community.

Information Management

Most data that HHFI staff members have is in Word and Excel documents. The ‘My Documents’ folder for each user is located on a shared file system. The documents that multiple people need to work on are shared in public folders. The shared file system also holds templates for the documents that the staff produces. This solution is adequate as staff members work on separate programs and projects, for which there is no standard format for information. All computers are backed up locally and onto the shared file system each night. The shared file system is also backed up.

TBDF information consists mainly of meeting minutes, which are stored in Word documents in the HHFI system. The Community Partner (CP) also has a list of email addresses that are stored in an Excel spreadsheet.

II. Scope of Work

Task 1. Improve TBDF Communications

The monthly meetings of TBDF suffer from poor attendance by the community, mainly because the public is unaware of the organization's ongoing efforts. While there have been some high-profile projects in the past, current activities may be indistinguishable to some from municipal or institutional work. Without community involvement, TBDF's goal of acting as an intermediary between residents and borough councils cannot be met. Issues that may be important to the community are not being heard. With more involvement, TBDF would be able to better serve the needs of the people.

Prior to this consulting project, there was little information that TBDF distributed to the public. Meeting minutes were mailed out monthly, but only to those already involved in the Forum. Participants knew about TBDF through the co-chairs and the other organizations with which the co-chairs are involved. To allow TBDF to more easily advertise its presence and inform borough residents of its purpose, the CP and I planned to develop a website.

The main requirement for this website was that it be easy to maintain and update for the organization. Because of the grass-roots nature of TBDF, the content of the website should come directly from its membership. It should not be required to pass through the filters of communication consultants and web designers.

The resources for hosting a website already existed at HHFI, allowing for the site to be developed at no cost. HHFI maintains websites through Crystal Tech, which uses Windows 2003 servers for its shared hosting. Crystal Tech offers various plans based on storage capacity, bandwidth, and supported services. The plan that HHFI subscribed to allowed for the necessary storage space, bandwidth, and scripting capabilities needed for the TBDF website. In addition to utilizing the existing Crystal Tech hosting service, we used a free and open source content management system, DotNetNuke (DNN), to develop the site.

Expected Outcomes

- The TBDF website will contain information and be publicly available.
- The CP will be able to make changes to the website including:
 - Add and remove pages
 - Modify content on page
 - Adjust DNN configuration settings
- The website will contain interactive features that allow users to add content

Task 2. Develop an e-Newsletter

In order to expand upon the communication opportunities offered by a website, the CP and I planned to create an e-newsletter. In addition to the rather static material that websites hold, an e-newsletter would be able to convey the recent news about events held by TBDF and the issues under discussion at the meetings. This would allow TBDF to reach out to people, rather than waiting for them to view the website.

The main requirement for developing the e-newsletter was to make it easy and quick to produce each issue. The newsletter will be sent out each month, so any manual costs involved in making the

newsletter will be incurred every month. To reduce these costs, we planned to create a format for the newsletter that will facilitate both email and print editions. Another factor involved is the ease of sending the newsletter and managing the subscription list – for this we planned to use the content management system. It allows for the sending of bulk email to users who have registered on the website.

Expected Outcomes

- The CP will have a newsletter template.
- Procedures for creating the newsletter each month will exist.
- Methods for sending the newsletter and managing the email list will exist.

Improve communication with community – The number of email subscribers will gauge the level of communication. A contact list for the Forum currently contains approximately 50 email addresses and will be used as the initial subscription list. This number will increase through online subscribers and current subscribers spreading the word by forwarding the newsletter.

III. Outcomes and Recommendations

Task 1. Improve TBDF Communications

A web portal site was created and can be viewed at www.tbdfconnects.org. Screenshots of the website can be found in Appendix A. The site was developed using DotNetNuke, which makes it easy for the members of the Forum to update. The website contains information on TBDF itself, community resources, and the four boroughs. It also has the following features:

- Events calendar
- User registration
- Subscription to newsletter
- Search functionality

Registered users are automatically subscribed to the newsletter. They also have the ability to add events to the calendar and register for events.

Prior to the creation of the website, there was very little information about TBDF accessible to the public. Brochures with obsolete information were available at the HHFI building, but they were not in distribution. The only method of spreading information was by word of mouth from active participants in the Forum and occasional flyers for events. Now, TBDF has a web presence that informs the community of its purpose, accomplishments, and current initiatives. The site invites readers to get involved in the community by attending the many events, including the monthly Forum meetings. Furthermore, the site can be easily updated by the CP, so the information will stay current.

The website serves the mission of the Forum by increasing the awareness of the organization within the community. By knowing about the Forum, it is likely that more residents will want to participate and attend the monthly meetings. Increasing the number of people involved in the organization directly serves the mission of “bringing... individuals together.” The events calendar on the website also helps to increase the capacity of the organization, as it allows more people to learn of, and therefore attend, the activities that TBDF sponsors.

The sustainability of the website is dependent upon the motivation of the CP and the members of the Forum. Four people, one per borough, will be in charge of maintaining the borough sections of the website. Two of these editors have been identified, while two still need to be found. These volunteers will be trained at the next borough meeting (May 15) in maintaining the website in DotNetNuke, specifically in adding/deleting pages, creating and configuring modules, and adding calendar events. To sustain the knowledge gained in the training session, I recommend that the organization purchase a book or two about DNN and bookmark DNN websites. By training multiple people in the website maintenance, the knowledge is more likely to be sustained and passed on than if only one person was trained.

The CP is in charge of the administration of the website. He will maintain the user accounts and permissions, decide when upgrades are needed, and maintain the non-borough pages (About TBDF, Resources, etc). His training has occurred throughout the development process: he helped configure the website, so is well versed in creating pages and adding modules. He has not only added events to the calendar, but has changed the calendar settings and added event options. He has created user roles, modified their permissions, and adjusted user account settings.

The website has been online as of April 18th, and has not yet had many visitors. Only three people have registered with the website, and they work at HHFI. The TBDF e-newsletter sent on May 4th announced the launch of the website, which will hopefully help bring in new visitors, who will register for the site.

The biggest risk to the sustainability of the website is that the editors and administrators will neglect their maintenance duties. Because the editors are volunteers, it will be important to motivate them to update the website. The monthly e-newsletter will serve as a deadline for website updates, and policies for borough editors have been developed (see Appendix B). The newsletter deadline will require news and events to be added to the website before the newsletter is sent out.

Other risks to the sustainability of the website are of a technical nature. Web sites are always at risk of being compromised due to security vulnerabilities, which can result in the site being disabled or having unauthorized content added. One way to mitigate this risk is to keep the software on the site up to date. For this reason, I am recommending as part of a maintenance plan that the CP periodically check for DotNetNuke updates. If the website is compromised, the site can be restored to its previous state. CrystalTech creates daily backups of the database and file system, which can be restored for a small fee. Jay Volk should be contacted to request a site restoration.

The website has allowed members of the forum to see the potential for technology in their group. When introducing the website and describing what features it would have during the monthly meeting, some members thought of new uses for the website, such as putting up the minutes from the borough council meetings. They realized that the website will allow them to involve the community in many ways. Also, by using a portal website that will allow users to contribute content, the website has the potential to be an online version of the forum – by allowing users to comment on ideas, they can have input from members of the community that are not able to attend meetings.

Task 2. Develop e-Newsletter

An e-newsletter has been developed in order to expand upon the communication opportunities offered by a website. The newsletter is able to communicate the most recent happenings at TBDF to residents in a timely manner. This will allow citizens to know what is happening in the organization and community, even if they are unable to attend the meetings.

A process for creating the e-newsletter and distributing it has been developed by the CP and the consultant. The CP has a template in Word (see Appendix C) that he uses as a basis for each newsletter. The CP is well versed in using Word, so no new software needed to be learned in order to create the newsletter. After the newsletter has been created, the Word document is saved as an html webpage. The e-newsletter is sent out via the newsletter functionality of the DotNetNuke system. It automatically sends the newsletter to all subscribers of the site and any additional addresses specified. The html code created by Word is copied over to a text box on the website, where it can be previewed and edited before being sent out. In addition to sending out the e-newsletter, it will also be archived on the website and distributed in paper form for those without computers.

The CP has sent out several test newsletters during training sessions with the consultant. He also created and sent out the first e-newsletter using the website service on May 4th. This newsletter was sent to a list of e-mail addresses that the CP already had, and it contained an announcement for launch of the website.

The e-newsletter increases the capacity of the organization in the same ways that the website does: it informs the community and encourages involvement in the organization and its activities. The e-newsletter allows TBDF to reach out to people to tell them what is happening, rather than waiting for people to look at the website. Because it will be sent out on a monthly basis, it will keep people current with Forum happenings.

The e-newsletter can be sustained by making it easy to create and send out. Because it can be made in Word, the newsletter does not take long to create. The template reduces the time needed to format the document. By using the website newsletter capability, the CP can easily send the newsletter to everyone who has subscribed themselves, so he won't need to maintain a separate email list. Heritage Health Foundation, TBDF's parent organization, already sends out a monthly paper newsletter (Snapshots), so it has demonstrated the ability to sustain a monthly newsletter. The staff members who put together Snapshots can serve as a resource for the CP in formatting the newsletter for printing.

Recommendation 1. Create and implement a maintenance plan

A well-maintained website means having current content and software. These two concerns are likely to generate interest among visitors and keep them coming back. Current content ensures that visitors will have a reason to return, while current software will make the experience of visiting the site more pleasing. Keeping the software up-to-date allows better features to be implemented and reduces security risks.

To ensure that the content of the website stays current, a policy for updating it should be developed. By keeping the content up to date, visitors will be more likely to return repeatedly: few people will return to a site that never changes. However, this will require diligence on the part of the website administrator and borough editors. Content should be updated on a monthly basis, at minimum.

To ensure that the software for the website is up-to-date, the website administrator should check for updates every three months. Updates to the DotNetNuke modules can be performed by the administrator, while updates to the DotNetNuke core should be installed by the technical web consultant.

Approach

The policy for updating content should include statements such as the following:

- The monthly TBDF meetings generate ideas and issues that should be shared on the website. Prior to the meetings, the agenda should be added to the website. If visitors can see what will be discussed, they may attend to voice their opinions. This could bring new members into the Forum. After meetings, the minutes should be added to the website within a few days. This will allow people who were unable to attend to stay current with the issues discussed.
- Large initiatives taken on by TBDF, such as the Carrie Furnace redevelopment planning, should have their own web page on the site. This page can then be updated when progress is made on the project.
- Community events should be added to the calendar as soon as their details have been finalized. Additionally, posting digital versions of event flyers or creating event web pages will allow for detailed descriptions. Posting pdf's has the benefit of allowing others to print and distribute copies of the flyers.

- After events, photos should be added to the web site gallery within a few days.
- Recurring calendar events should be checked periodically (every 2-3 months) to make sure the information is current. Also, the end date for ongoing periodic events should be kept at least three months into the future.

The following procedures describe how to check for and install updates to DotNetNuke.

- To check for module updates, log in to the Host account on the website. In the administrator toolbox at the top of the page, click on the “Install New Features” link. This will open the “Module Definitions” page, which lists the current module versions. A green check mark located next to the module name indicates that an update is available.
- To install a module update, download the install version of the selected module from the Downloads section on the DotNetNuke website (www.dotnetnuke.com) and save it to your computer. After that, follow the procedure in the previous item to get to the Module Definitions page. At the bottom of this page, click on the “Install New Module” link. This will bring you to a File Upload page, where you will add the zip file you just downloaded from the website. After locating the file, press “Add,” and then “Save File.” A log of the installation process will appear, and it should end with “Installation Successful.” Click on the return link. An error page may appear at this point, don’t be alarmed. It is a bug in DotNetNuke; reload the page and it will load normally.
- To check for updates to the DotNetNuke portal software, look at the Downloads section of the DotNetNuke website. Determine the most recent version of DotNetNuke in the 3.x branch. (4.x versions require ASP.NET 2.0, which is not supported on the current web hosting plan). To check for the installed version, log in to the Host account. Go to the Portals page, located in the Host menu. This page shows the current version of the DNN core software (3.3.7 as of this writing).
- Jay Volk should be contacted to assist with updating the DNN core software. The process will involve manually backing up the database and files, which only Jay has the ability to do.

Recommendation 2 • Introduce new features

In order for the website to reach its full potential as an interactive online version of the Forum, new features should be added. These should be rolled out as interest in the site grows, rather than implemented suddenly. If too many features are added before the site has a solid user base, they run the risk of laying dormant. Possible features include an online forum, blog, and surveys. In addition to these features, the possibility of local sponsors should be explored.

Approach

Before adding new features, monitor the site usage. This can be done in from the Site Log page in the Admin menu. A variety of report options are available. A detailed site log contains information on each visitor, including name, browser used, referring link, and pages visited. A page popularity report details the number of times each page has been requested. The Page Views by *time_unit* report will show how many pages were viewed on each hour, day, or month during the specified time period. Lastly, the Site Referrals report states each link that referred visitors to the site (and how many times). These reports will give a good indication of how much the site is being used and which pages are the most popular.

Adding new features that are already included as modules in DotNetNuke is fairly straightforward. Create a new page and add the module to the content pane. I recommend keeping the visibility of the new page to the administrator only during the setup. This will prevent people from seeing the page before the module is configured. In addition to those modules included with DotNetNuke, many independently developed modules are available for sale on www.snowcovered.com.

When considering new features, look for information on how to make them successful. For instance, “The ABC of building a successful forum” has several good tips on how to manage an online forum [2]. One such tip is to not start out “with too many sub forums... you'll get much more activity and participation if you have five interesting threads next to each other in one forum, rather than five threads in five different forums.” For a blog, the key is to post updates frequently. Sharon Housley [3] warns “that blogging requires time and effort, don't create unrealistic expectations and be unable to deliver.” She also recommends including the blog content in an RSS feed to increase readership.

An additional feature to pursue would be to get local businesses to sponsor the website. Having information about the number of site visitors and page views will help when approaching businesses. A simple text/html module containing a logo, link, and/or blurb about the sponsor can be added globally to the side panel of every page. Local sponsors will help defray the hosting cost of the website, as well as encourage the economic development of the area by promoting local businesses.

References

[1] Heritage Health Foundation Inc. Organization Overview & Activities. 2007-2008.

[2] “The ABC of building a successful forum” in the Community Building and Social Networks forum of WebmasterWorld.com. Found on April 13, 2007 at <http://www.webmasterworld.com/forum103/587.htm>

[3] Housley, Sharon. “How To Write A Successful Blog: Top Ten Tips” Found on May 2, 2007 at http://www.masternewmedia.org/news/2005/04/26/how_to_write_a_successful.htm

About the Consultant

Sonya Wierman is a first year Ph.D. student in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at Carnegie Mellon. She received her B.S. in Computer Systems Engineering from Boston University in 2003 and her M.S. from Carnegie Mellon in 2006.

Appendix A – Website screenshots

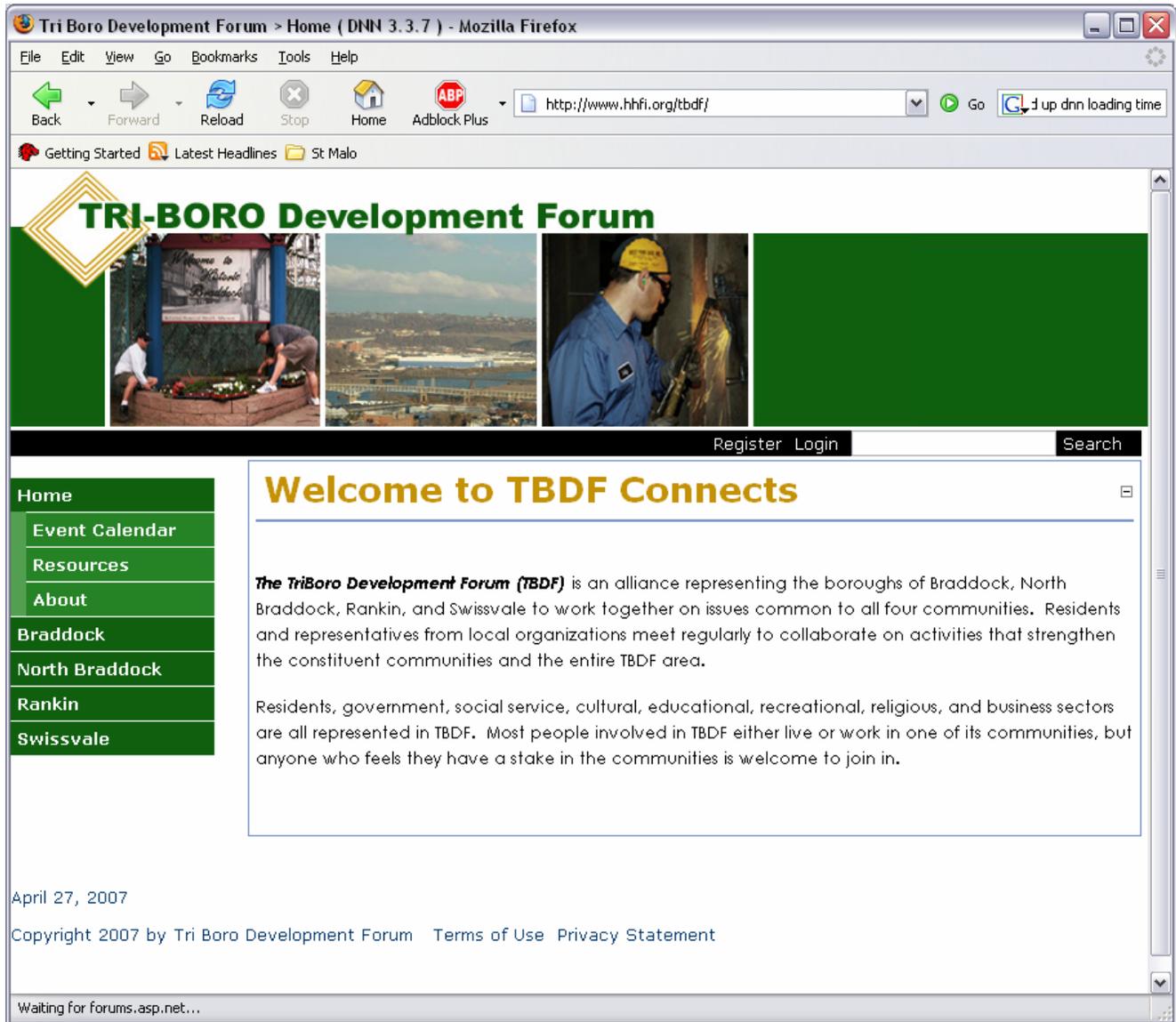


Figure 1: The main page of the web site

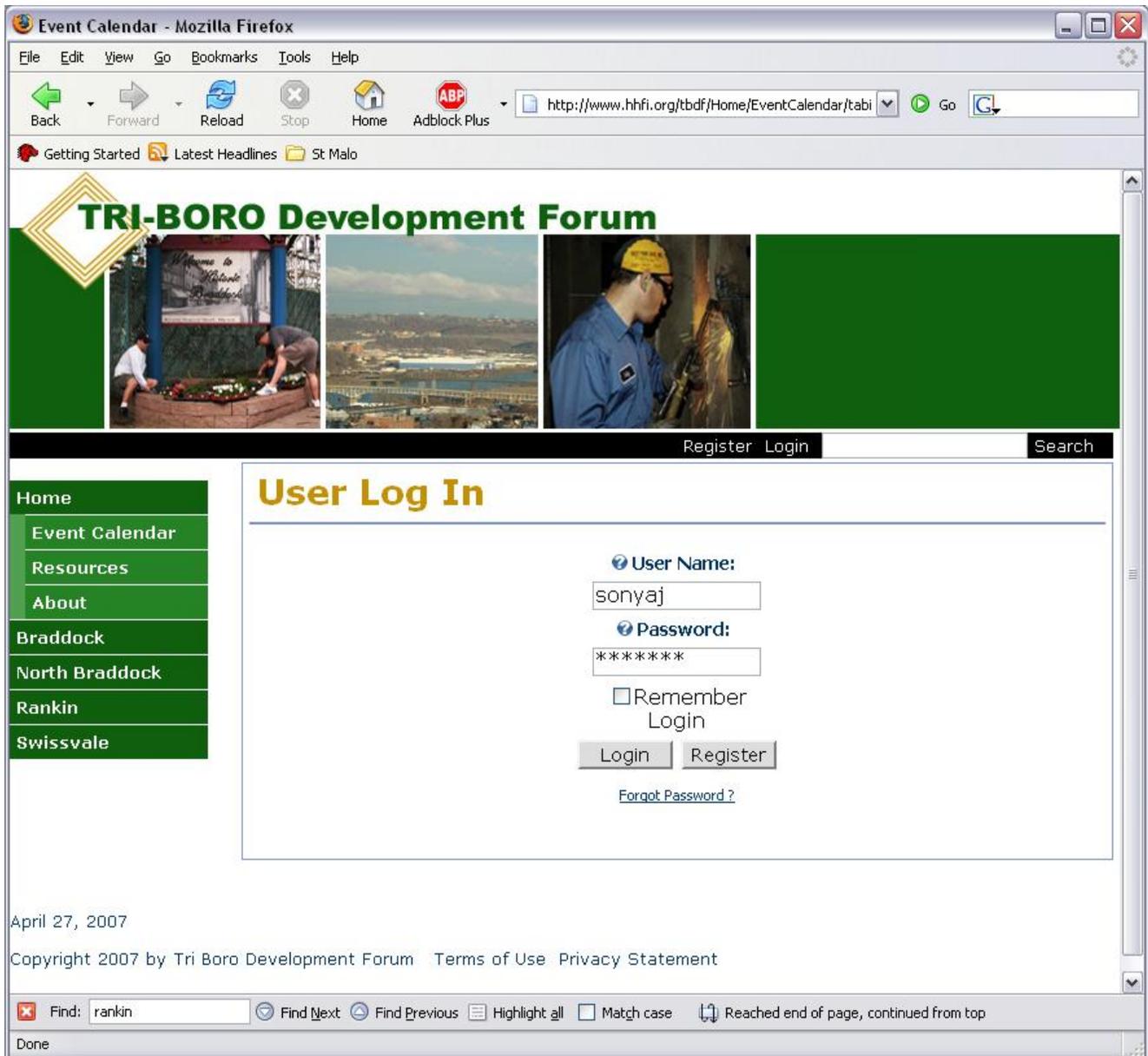


Figure 2: The user login page

Event Calendar - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Help

Back Forward Reload Stop Home Adblock Plus http://www.hhfi.org/tbdf/Home/EventCalendar/tabid/ Go

Getting Started Latest Headlines St Malo

TRI-BORO Development Forum

Register Login Search

- Home
- Event Calendar
- Resources
- About
- Braddock
- North Braddock
- Rankin
- Swissvale

Event Calendar

Today View Date: 5/18/2007 Go

Categories: All

Apr		May 2007					Jun
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
29	30	1	2	3	4	5	
			Swissvale Borough Council				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Chess Club Rankin Planning Commission	Braddock Council Rankin Council					
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
	Chess Club	North Braddock Council	TBDF Image & Beautification Tri Boro Development Forum		Rankin Bridge Planting	Friends of Braddock	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
	Chess Club						
27	28	29	30	31	1	2	
	Chess Club						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

Find: rankin Find Next Find Previous Highlight all Match case Reached end of page, continued from top

Done

Figure 3: The event calendar page

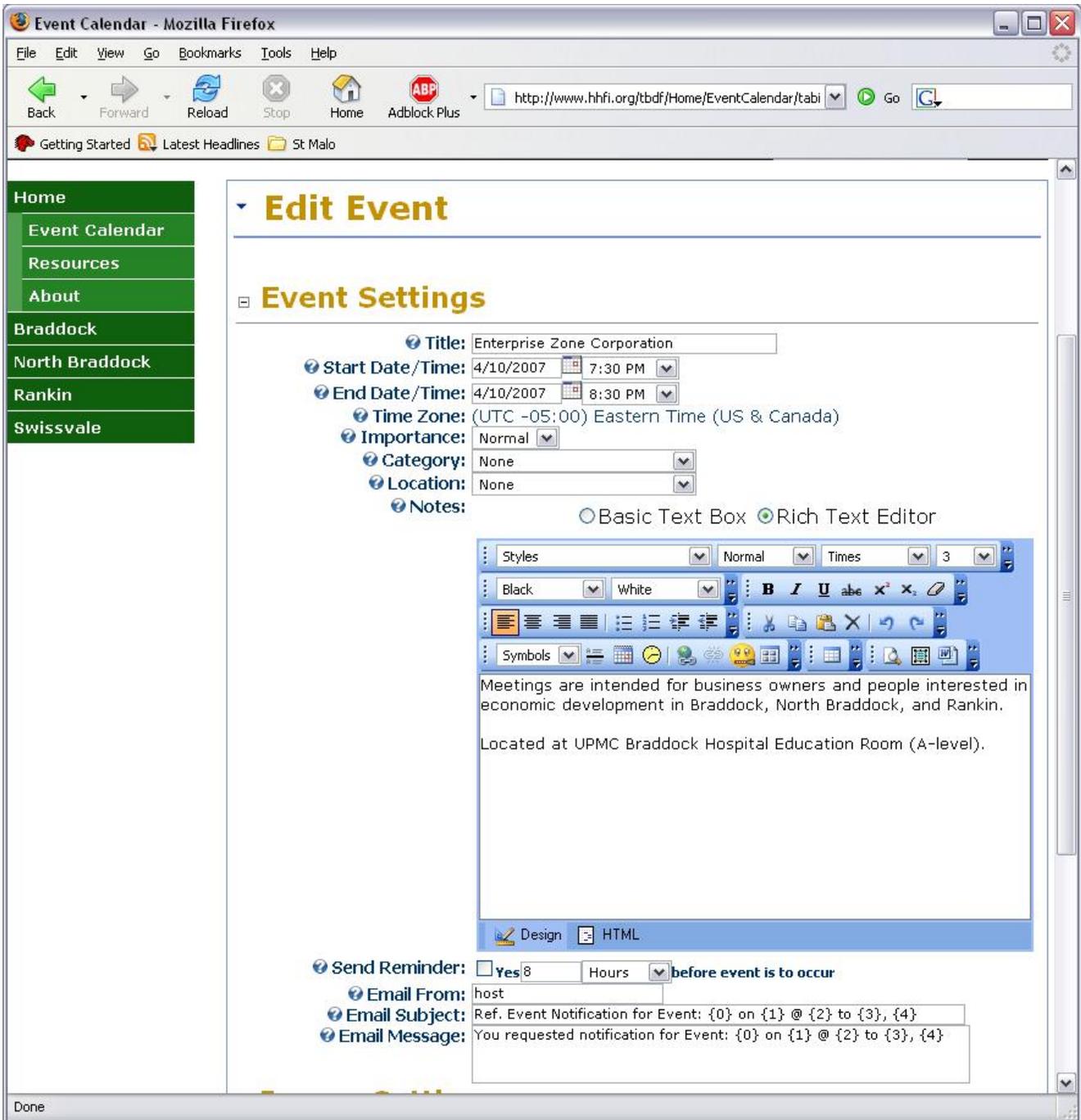


Figure 4: The page to add an event to the calendar

Appendix B – Guidelines for Borough Editors

Borough Editor Policies

The information contained on ww.tbdfconnects.org should reflect the interests of the organization. You should behave with professional conduct at all times: be positive and respectful of your subject and your audience.

Communication

Keep in touch with your borough chair to determine what they would like to see on the borough page. Also, your fellow borough editors and the administrator are a good source of information if you have any questions about the website, so you should communicate with them periodically. In addition, it would be nice if you could attend the monthly TBDF meetings.

Frequency

You should update the borough page monthly, or as needed to keep content from being dated. For example, after an event occurs, remove it from “Upcoming Events” and add a summary or pictures from the event to “News.” In addition, you should keep the community events calendar up to date by adding events when you hear of them.

Content

The content of the borough pages should reflect the TBDF vision while focusing on the individual communities. Examples of relevant material are:

- News & Events – local happenings, celebrations, obituaries, awards, etc.
- Civic Affairs
 - Borough meeting minutes – can be obtained from the borough buildings
 - Public notices (but note that these don’t replace legal notice)
 - Police blotter-type information
 - Candidate profiles at election-time – present in a non-partisan way
- Community Information (that is not already in the main TBDF section)
- Letters to the Editor – If you receive letters from residents, feel free to post them

Access

You will have special access to your borough page. To obtain access, first sign up for an account by clicking on the Register link in the top right of the website. After you register, the Register link will be replaced by your name – click on your name. Then click on Manage Services – here you will enter your RSVP code. Your code is xxxxx. Now click on your borough page in the menu, a toolbar should appear at the top of the screen, which will allow you to add pages and modules. If the toolbar does not appear, contact Ron or Sonya and they will give you access manually.

Appendix C – Newsletter template



TRI BORO Development News

MAY 3, 2007

Braddock, North Braddock, Rankin, and Swissvale

[HEADING1](#) [HEADING2](#) [HEADING3](#)
[HEADING4](#) [HEADING5](#) [HEADING6](#)
[HEADING7](#) [HEADING8](#)

HEADING 1
Content Content Content Content Content
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LOOK!

WOODLAND HILLS
Art Show May 11-20

RANKIN BRIDGE
Gateway Planting
May 18

The TriBoro Development Forum (TBDF) is an alliance representing the boroughs of Braddock, North Braddock, Rankin, and Swissvale to work together on issues common to all four communities. Residents and representatives from local organizations meet regularly to collaborate on activities that strengthen the constituent communities and the entire TBDF area. Residents, government, social service, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and business sectors are all represented in TBDF. Most people involved in TBDF either live or work in one of its communities, or have in the past, but anyone who feels they have a stake in the communities is welcome to join in.

TBDF Meetings are held the third Wednesday, January through June, at 5:30 at:

TBDF is sponsored by the Heritage Health Foundation, Inc.
445 Fourth Street | Braddock, PA 15104 | 412-351-0535 | info@hhfi.org

Past Community Partners

4 Kids Early Learning Centers
Addison Behavioral Care, Inc.
Alafia Cultural Services
Alcoa Collaborative
Allegheny County Housing Authority
Allegheny General Hospital Pastoral Staff
American Association of University Women
Animal Friends, Inc.
Animal Rescue League
ASSET, Inc.
ASTEP-Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church
Auberle
Bedford Hope Center
Bedford Initiatives
Bethany House Ministry
Bethlehem Haven
Bishop Boyle Center
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation
Borough of Crafton
Boys & Girls Club of Duquesne-West Mifflin
Boys & Girls of Wilkensburg
Braddock Carnegie Library & Community Center
Braddock Redux
Brashear Association, Inc.
Breachmenders
BTC Center
Calliope: The Folk Music Society
Career and Workforce Development Center East
Carnegie Library of Homestead
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Carnegie Science Center
Center Avenue YMCA
Center for Creative Play
Center for Hearing and Deaf Services, Inc.
Center of Life
Central Academy
Central New Development Corporation
Child Watch of Pittsburgh
Children Youth Ministry
Children's Museum
Christian Life Skills
Citizens to Abolish Domestic Apartheid
Community Day School
Community House
Community Human Services Corporation
Community Technical Assistance Center
Competitive Employment Opportunities
Conflict Resolution Center International
Consumer Action Response Team
CONTACT Pittsburgh
Creative Nonfiction Foundation
Dance Alloy
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
Family Tyes
First Charities/First United Methodist Church
Friendship Development Association
Garfield Jubilee Association, Inc.
Gateway to the Arts
Girl Scouts - Trillium Council
Glen Hazel Family Reading Center
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
Greenfield Senior Center
Guide Runners
Gwen's Girls
Hazelwood Senior Center
Hazelwood YMCA
Heritage Health Foundation
Hill House Association
Hill/Oakland Workforce Collaborative
Himalayan Institute of Pittsburgh
Hope Academy of Music and the Arts
Hosanna House
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
HUB Downtown Street Outreach Center
Hunger Services Network
Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers
Jane Holmes Residence
Jewish Family & Children's Service
Jewish Residential Services
Joy-Full-Gospel Fellowship After School Program
Just Harvest
KidsVoice
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
Mental Health Association of Allegheny County
Message Carriers
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
National Alliance of the Mentally Ill
National Association of Minority Contractors /
Black Contractors Association
Negro Educational Emergency Drive
New Beginnings Learning Center
New Penley Place

Past Community Partners (continued)

Northside Coalition for Fair Housing
Northside Institutional Children Youth Ministry
Northside Leadership Conference
OASIS Senior Center
Opera Theater of Pittsburgh
Operation Better Block
Orr Compassionate Care Center
Outreach Teen & Family Services
Parental Stress Center
Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership
Pennsylvania Low Income Housing Coalition
Peoples Oakland
Phase 4 Learning Centers, Inc.
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape
Pittsburgh Citizens' Police Review Board
Pittsburgh Foundation
Pittsburgh Health Corps
Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network
Pittsburgh Mediation Center
Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners
Pittsburgh Toy Lending Library
Pittsburgh Vision Services
Pittsburgh Voyager
Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra
POISE Foundation
Program for Health Care to Underserved
Populations
Project Educate
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
Sacred Heart Elementary School
Rx Council of Western PA
Salvation Army Family Crisis Center
Sarah Heinz House
Schenley Heights Community Development
Center
Second East Hills Social Services Center
Sharry Everett Scholarship Fund
Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church
Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health
St. James School
St. Stephen Elementary School
Sustainable Pittsburgh
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
Univ. of Pittsburgh - Division of Applied Research
and Evaluation
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 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.)

(continued inside back cover)