Problem and Proposal

Hazelwood is a Pittsburgh neighborhood that flourished during the Industrial age. Once the steel industry declined, however, so did Hazelwood. Hazelwood has been working to improve the community they lost due to economic and social hardships at the end of the 20th century. They lost family support and community togetherness in general as the town fell into disrepair.

There has been a lack of schools in the Hazelwood area in the recent years. However, in 2014, Hazelwood Propel opened their doors to neighborhood students, kindergarten to fourth grade, and with sixty percent of Hazelwood community members without a high school diploma, supplemental educational programs, such as Center of Life, are essential to the community. Please see the attached document and charts for more details on Hazelwood education statistics. These much-needed after-school programs, such as those sponsored by the Center of Life, are trying to help make up for the deficit of educational opportunities and improve the lives of the children and families in the community.

Center of Life informed the Honors Social Justice Community and University class that their main concern is public awareness of their programs. They requested our help securing funds from donors and increasing participation from people in the community through a sustainable and modern public relations plan. They felt they were struggling to reach various key publics within Hazelwood and those in the greater Pittsburgh community. To address these needs, they commissioned the class to produce a public relations (PR) campaign to help them branch out into the community and make others aware of their mission to help Hazelwood's children.

The PR campaign was to include the following:

- A 12-month marketing calendar
- A video that features all of the programs and services the Center offers
- An audit of the Center's online presence (Facebook, YouTube, and organizational website) to make them more informative and navigable
- A list of media contacts to receive press releases and media updates
- Templates for event press releases and media alerts

Progress in Completing the Tasks

We have created a PR calendar for the Center of Life. A PR Calendar will serve as a tool for the Center of Life to know when and how to promote all of their programs, events, and work to both Hazelwood and the greater Pittsburgh Community. This, along with the media alerts that have been created, will be resources that can help the Center of Life for years to come.

We drafted press releases along with other documents with the purpose of informing media sources of upcoming events. They will be revised for the coming week.
We have written a PR calendar. The calendar drew from published PR calendars online. In order to make the calendar, we had to identify each event, its key public, the scope of advertising that currently exists, and how it could be reasonably expanded. Finally, the media alerts took each of the important events that exist in the calendar of events, and condensed the most important information so it could be uniformly sent to various media outlets or posted.

Filming and interviews have been completed for the promotional video and only a small amount of video footage is left to shoot. We plan to start editing the footage within the coming week and present a completed promotional video to the Center of Life for use on their website and social media outlets.

The filming process began by interviewing Rev. Tim Smith, the Center’s director. During this interview, he introduced the mission of the Center of Life and described how it has had an impact on the Hazelwood community. Following this interview, we proceeded to Fusion and recorded short clips of children working on their homework and interacting with staff members. At this time we talked briefly with some young students about why they enjoy coming to Fusion. Still images of artwork and other parts of the Center of Life were also taken. Another trip to Hazelwood featured taking snapshots of the outside of the Center of Life. These images serve as b-roll for the video.

Evaluations of the Center of Life's website and social media pages have also been drafted and will be compiled into a report.

Please see the attached GANTT chart for a complete breakdown of tasks, project managers and project team members.

Findings and Results

Our success will be evaluated by how well the video, media contacts, and website will work for the Center in the future when it comes to increasing awareness about the Center and securing more funds through outreach. It will also be determined by how much the Center of Life likes the work we complete for them. A satisfied client is one of our main goals for this project since the satisfaction of the Center of Life team could determine if they want to work with Duquesne again in the future and tell others about the accommodating work that Duquesne has to offer.

Center of Life's staff provided us with many resources for each part of the project. We were given stock footage in order to complement our own interviews and filming for the video we produced. We were also provided with information regarding the events that Center of Life holds on a regular basis in order to gain an understanding of timeframe, scale, and context.

In the end, no money was spent on this project. Our class used video equipment from Duquesne University to produce the video, and everything else was accomplished by work put in on the students’ own time. Due to the fact that no money was spent on the project, all money that Center of Life receives will be completely profited. The financial scope of this project was ideal, because we were able to make a significant difference with no budget.
Project Evaluation

The class was able to complete everything it set out to do. If our class were to undertake this project again, we would probably change the amount of work we wanted to take on. There were a lot of different ways in which we felt we could assist the Center of Life and we wanted to do them all, but it was difficult for us to remember the time constraint, so we may have tried to take on too many smaller projects within this large service project.

The budget worked out well since we were able to rent equipment from the school, and all the other resources were also cost-free. The only issues we had were getting resources from the Center of Life on time as they seemed to have hectic schedules. In order for future projects to better collect resources in a timely manner, it will be important to establish better communication and relationships with those at Center of Life early in the planning stage of the project.

If the class were to do it differently, we would have selected our project earlier so that we could have had more time to exceed our goals and do even more good for the Center of Life.

Significance of the Project

This project has broadened the class’s perspective of Pittsburgh neighborhoods and promoted a more diverse outlook on the needs of communities surrounding Duquesne. We have been able to develop relationship-building skills. Additionally, we have learned basic public relations techniques and strategies. We gained perspective on cooperative approaches to solving community problems by attending Hazelwood Initiative meetings, volunteering at Fishes and Loaves events, and meeting with community leaders.

It was helpful to learn about the community before serving it. We, as a class, gained knowledge about the community by going out to Hazelwood to see the area and speak to community leaders to become familiar with the neighborhood and its needs. We also completed ethnographies to immerse ourselves in the surroundings and to pay close attention to the small details about people. Class members attended the Hazelwood Initiative meetings to hear about current issues. As a class, we were assigned different areas of concern to research and share with the class before pitching project ideas. We also completed literary reviews on articles relevant to urban communities like Hazelwood.

For anyone at Duquesne who is interested in community involvement, the choice of project is important. Our class became very interested in the work that the Center of Life was doing in Hazelwood to help the children in their area become real attributes to society. We saw how passionate they were and that made it much easier for us to choose them as a community partner this semester. Also, there is only so much help you can give and you have to be willing to listen to what the needs of the people are that you are helping. It can be easy to get caught up in the idea of trying to fix everything or be a part of everything, but narrowing the project down to something manageable, yet still challenging, will allow you to best help your client.