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Horse Rescue Fundraiser

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Author Note:

The content of this paper is done so in affiliation with Boise State University, specifically within the Department of Multidisciplinary Studies

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Abstract

For my capstone project, I worked with a non-profit organization in Mountain Home Idaho named Chasing Chances Rescue. This organization gives a loving home to horses when their prior owners can no longer take care of them. Through a short informal survey, I confirmed what I already suspected, very few people in the community are aware of the nonprofit's presence in the community. Because of this donations are few and far between. This was a wonderful experience because I was able to help raise some funds for an organization that shares my passion for animal care as well as bring to light their mission in the community.

Section 1: Introduction to Capstone Project

The task given to the class was to look for a way to make an impact. Three options were given for the class to choose from a research paper, Service-Learning, or Action. For this author, the choice was made to do a Service-Learning project for my capstone project. The Service-Learning option allowed me to combine forces with a non-profit organization of my choosing and offer a service of some kind.

When I first looked at the options for completing the project, I honestly wasn't sure exactly what was meant by a Service-Learning option. But it is as simple as it sounds. A person provides a service of some kind to a nonprofit organization while being guided through the process by the professors and learning along the way. The learning process may come in different forms. For myself, the information that I obtained was to give myself a little more credit.

Section 2: Elements Coming Together

Innovative Approach

After dissecting the lack of donations Chasing Chances receives I came to the conclusion people were unaware of the organization and what they were accomplishing there. The traits I will be leaning on the most to help make this project a success will be my leadership and communication skills. My leadership comes from my time in the military. While I was in the military, I was also given a solid foundation in clear communication, however, the BAS program enhanced them.

Through my research I learned "Make sure your donation page is easy to find on the organization's website." (Raviraj, 2023) I helped the Chasing Chances operator upgrade her

social media profile as well as her PayPal account. We developed a QR code (see Appendix A) to help prospective donors donate more easily. Additionally, I created a poster (see Appendix B) and placed them around town locally, and printed the QR code on the posters. (Jones, 2021) This helped donors easily.

Emotional Intelligence

The work I'm doing with the NPO is not the first fundraiser I've been a part of. Because of my experience, I felt my time would be best served working with an NPO and then writing a paper. And then when I met with my main stakeholder, Alex, she was dealing with many personal health issues and felt relieved for any help she could get. She is invested in the rescue mentally but emotionally she is exhausted and hasn't been able to dedicate the time needed to properly raise funds. After I spoke with her and got to know her, I was more dedicated to helping her.

I hoped to use the emotions of my audience to get them as involved as possible. My strategy was to focus on letting people in the local community know the rescue is here. This hopefully reminded them to keep their donation dollars local. Additionally, when I turned to the social media platform, I reached like-minded people who wanted to help where they could. If I can reach them on an emotional level, then maybe they will feel the need to donate or at least spread the information as much as possible.

Creative Thinking

I've done fundraisers before but the approach to this one needed to be different. Before, when I was in the service, I would stand in front of a group of people and give a small talk to the collective about the cause and how to give. But without having a collective of people to talk to I needed to be in multiple places all at once to spread the word to the greatest number of people.

And standing on the street or in front of a store and asking people for money seemed small and not very effective. I put my knowledge of Power Point to good use and created a fundraising poster.

After printing a few copies out, I passed them out to a few people at work that had no idea what I was doing and asked for feedback. One person mentioned that they understood it was a fundraiser, but for what? I went back and altered my poster. Then another asked if there were different ways to donate if they didn't have a PayPal account. More revisions were made. I understood I was going to have very few and time-limited opportunities for collecting funds, so I wanted to put my best foot forward.

In addition to fundraising, my thought was to try to help the NPO become a little more self-sufficient. I reached out to someone I knew that was intimate with water rights in Idaho to find out the possibilities of planting horse pasture grass to help supplement the need to purchase hay. To obtain water rights it would have to be purchased from someone that already had it, like a farmer. Unfortunately, without purchasing water rights we found it would be neither cost-effective nor possible to obtain water rights. (Allen, 2023)

Innovative Solution

To truly get the root of what was driving the lack of donations I took a kind of a scientific approach to it. My Hypothesis statement was: If people were aware of Chasing Chances Rescue, then they would be willing to help make the organization a success. **First**, I took a small survey of the people in the local community and asked 20 people informally if they were aware of Chasing Chances. Of all the people only 2, or 10%, were aware the organization was in Mountain Home, what they did, how long they operated, or any of their needs.

Second, researching how to raise funds for NPOs gave me some ideas. The one big statement that stood out was to make it easy for people to donate. Don't give donors a website, then go to a section, then another link, and multiple links later people can give to an organization. If people must go through multiple steps, they will lose interest and will fail to donate. and people will lose interest, so make it easy. (Raviraj, 2023) Also create multiple ways to donate via PayPal, Facebook, Venmo, cash, etc. (NPSS, unknown) So, working with the organizer we created a QR code that was connected to the NPO's PayPal account.

Originally, I was going to post it on social media and ask everyone to share it and hoped that along the way people would connect with the cause and donate. However, my husband's fundraising skills said I was missing out on reaching a lot of people. I needed business owners to display it in their businesses for the most exposure. I started by asking a business owner in town that is a friend of mine if I could post my finished poster and she not only said yes but directed to me another business that would display it as well. I had to truly step outside my comfort zone and ask people to display my request for money. That was not an easy task for me.

Third, I used the PowerPoint skills I learned at work to bring this all together. I took all the different ways to donate and put them on one poster. This gave potential donation givers different options to give. I included the QR code, making it easy, Venmo address, and we added an account to the organizer's account. Put the name of the organization, what they did, where they were, what help they needed, and finally a nice picture of a horse for an attention-getter.

Finally, I posted the poster on my social media (see Appendix C) page so all my friends and family could see it. I asked them to donate or at least share so we could spread the word globally. And then I went to different business owners and posted print out in their facilities.

Currently, I have 5 different businesses around Mountain Home with posters displayed where their customers can see them.

Section 3: Results

Benefits that have been seen with the NPO I was working with are a type of rebranding. Not 100% of everything that has been planned has been able to be put into action due to the weather, however, my primary stakeholder and I took a good look at her social media presence. Then we compared it to other similar NPOs and found she was missing a lot of content on her media pages. For example, she posted messages on her pages asking for donations. We felt that there needed to be more content about the animals and their stories of how they came to be at the rescue. This would give people the opportunity to know where their money was going. Additionally, giving people the opportunity to have easier ways to give made the rescue seem more legitimate and established.

The initial Outcome would be money to purchase food for the animals that live at the rescue. As well as the stress relief from getting help with her animal's needs. The intermediate outcome would be the NPO's new outlook on the benefits of being more active on social media. While our overall goal of \$880 was not met we reached approximately half of that, mainly through social media. With the help of six different donors, we raised a total of \$240.00 in cash (see Appendix C) and donated one ton of hay valued at \$220.00 for a total contribution of \$460.00.

The long-term impact will be more exposure for the NPO. My poster which was placed on social media has been shared 30 times. The more people are aware of the great work she's doing to provide a good home for horses that are no longer wanted the more people will be compelled to give donations. After counting the number of friends of each person that shared the

post, the total number of people that potentially saw the donation request was 5803. (Unknown, 2023) Additionally, our poster has been posted at 6 different establishments throughout the community for 20 days. If approximately 5 people a day saw the poster in the 6 different locations, approximately 600 people saw the poster.

The people that were surveyed and additional people I talked to about my project were a little disappointed that they were just now hearing about the good work Chasing Chances was doing. Of every person I spoke directly to, 75 people, said they wish they would have known sooner. Everyone mentioned how they preferred to keep their money locally and would have rather donated to a local rescue rather than send donations out of town.

Section 4: Conclusion

The Service-Learning option was the most appealing of the class's three options. The opportunity to help a non-profit organization while learning seemed like the best of both worlds and truly embraced the spirit of the Applied Science program. The love for my community made me look local first and found the perfect organization to collaborate with, Chasing Chances Rescue. This nonprofit has existed in my town for close to eleven years and every person I spoke to had never heard of it. I felt that was somewhere I could have the most impact. My effort helped someone who has dedicated their time, home, and money to provide a safe home to animals in need. A passion I share with Alex, the operator of Chasing Chances.

But this project wasn't just me giving my time and getting nothing in return, I also walked away as a more enriched person. I learned techniques to encourage donations, how to create online ways to make donating easier, and how to interact with business owners in the community. A community may not have raised our goal regarding funds during the time of my

project, however, promises of future donations and help have been made. And this is why my community, Mountain Home Idaho, is a great place to live.

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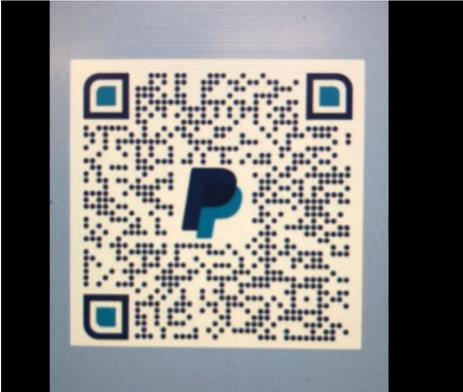
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Appendix A



Appendix B

Fundraising Poster created using PowerPoint



Did you know?

Mountain Home has a horse rescue named Chasing Chances Equine Rescue

Check us out on Facebook

Registered Non-Profit 501 c3 Organization
Tax deductible donations

We are in need of donations to aid in support of our animals

Hay Grain Fence materials

WAYS TO DONATE

Search Chasing Chances Rescue on PayPal or Scan QR code

Donate through Facebook
Alex Yewcic

Venmo @ayewic 2013



Appendix C

Facebook Post showing shares

Jennifer Hickey-Fiscus is with **Alex Yewcic**.
March 27 at 12:32 PM · 🌐

UPDATE:
Some people are having problems with the QR code. So...
PayPal account is @ChasingChancesRescue
Venmo account is @ayewcic2013

Dear Facebook friends, and family,
If you don't know, I am in my senior year at Boise State University.
For my senior project I chose to pair up with a nonprofit organization locally here in Mountain Home, ID called Chasing Chances Horse Rescue.
I am raising funds to help feed their horses. My hope is to provide some relief to the owner/operator Alex Yewcic.
This organization is a registered 501 c3 registered nonprofit, meaning any donation can be a tax deduction.
If you are unable to donate I ask that you please share this post so we can get the word out and let people know about the good work Alex is doing.
So when you're trying to figure out what to do with your annual donation dollars, we would like for you to consider chasing chances rescue.



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Alex Yewcic
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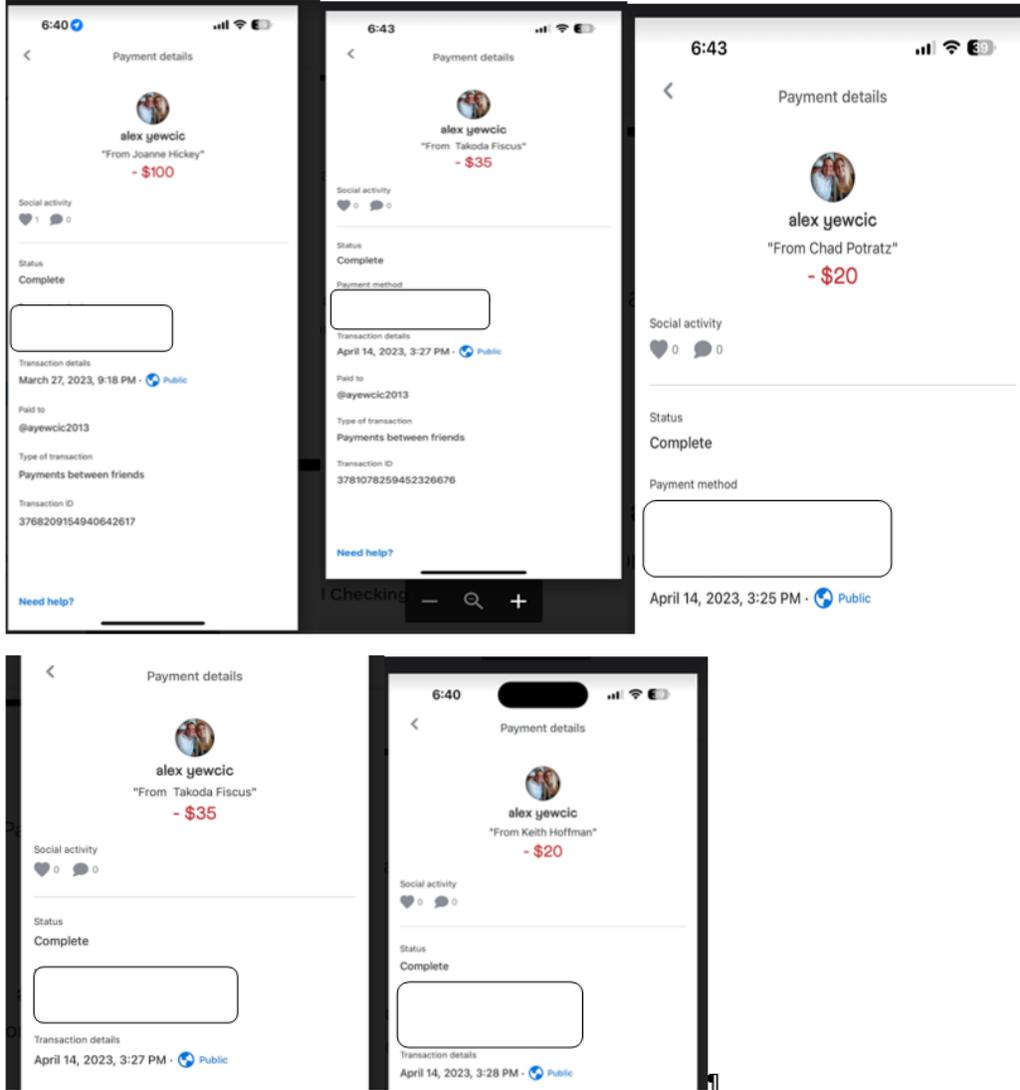
Jenn Bupp-Little, Andrea Porter and 7 others 13 comments **30 shares**

Like Comment Share

Jennifer Hickey-Fiscus

Appendix C

Examples of cash donations using Venmo.



Of note, account numbers have been removed for security and privacy purposes.