



2014 – 15 Action Learning Project Abstracts

CHS - The Children's Home Society of North Carolina

"Strategic Community Awareness and Engagement Plan"

Project Synopsis

The Children's Home Society (CHS) of North Carolina, requested a strategic community awareness and engagement plan which includes strategies for differentiating the organization from the Children's Home on Reynolda Road in the Winston-Salem Market. Our team researched the industry, reviewed current marketing, and interviewed staff, partners and parents. We provided a snapshot of the current market; recommendations for increasing name recognition, differentiation and awareness within the market; and methods for leveraging the existing network to target their outreach, expand partnerships and engage potential foster/adoptive families, donors, and education clients.

Project Partner Statement

"Partnering with the Action Learning Team over the past several months has been extremely rewarding professionally and personally as well. To have a group of people to start from the ground learning about CHS and to end at a place that they were able to adopt the agency's mission and vision has been invaluable. Yet through our time together, they have fostered in me, a desire to follow in their footsteps. I'm so excited to have this group as ambassadors for CHS and look forward to working with them in the future. Their leadership and agency recommendations will certainly have a deep impact in the lives of children and families in the community for many years to come."

Alicia Bowles, MSW (Children's Home Society of NC)

Forsyth Humane Society

"Assessing Need & Opportunities for Educational/Community Programs"

Project Synopsis

As Forsyth Humane Society (FHS) prepares to transition into its new 7,000 square foot facility, it will face new challenges and opportunities for expansion of both services and revenue streams. Our Action Learning Team was asked to assist FHS in assessing local need and unmet demand for services, and to research free and fee-based education and community service programs provided by other humane societies and nonprofit organizations.

Project Partner Statement

"Leadership Winston-Salem's work researching programming successfully offered by other Humane Societies, and their work assessing the needs of our community, will help us shape needed programming as we move into our new and expanded facility."

Sarah Williamson, Executive Director – Forsyth Humane Society



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Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County

“Research & Recommend Best Practices for a Growing Organization”

Project Synopsis

Habitat of Forsyth County currently does not have the means to quantify detail such as how much downstream revenue they create in the community, how much voting rates or graduation rates increase in neighborhoods they target, or how subsequent generations fare financially if the ‘first generation’ grew up in a Habitat house. Habitat sent out surveys to their homeowners a few years ago, but was unable to fully digest or capitalize on the information gathered; nor were they able to identify the original respondents to be able to send a follow-up survey to the same original cohort.

Project Partner Statement

“This year’s Action Learning Team has helped us examine ways to gather and analyze our outcomes and successes in order to better inform our funders, engage others in our work and to help quantify the value of creating home ownership opportunities to the whole of our community beyond the families that we serve with our construction and educational products. We plan to learn from the research that the team has done to create additional opportunities for students and interns to help us input and analyze our results and report out on what we intuitively know has had a major impact on the residents of Forsyth County. Habitat applauds the work of the team and the help of the program.”

Kelly Mitter, Habitat for Humanity Forsyth County

New Winston Museum

“Engaging Millennials: Roadmap & Recommendations”

Project Synopsis

New Winston Museum (NWM) opened its doors in May 2012 as a community museum whose mission is to preserve, promote and present the dynamic history and diverse stories of the Winston-Salem and Forsyth County community through education and collaboration. Their challenge is how to attract and create a more meaningful connection with those age 25-45 years of age. Our Action Learning Team (ALT) was engaged to conduct national and local research and create recommendations for the future implementation of a program focused on engaging millennials.

Project Partner Statement

“From Day 1 of our introduction, working with the energetic A-Team was an enriching. They have provided NWM a toolkit for engagement of not only millennials, but a variety of future museum



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supporters who are energized by the concept of creating community. We plan to utilize the key concepts of Inviting, Immersion and Impact into our overall marketing strategy. To say we are pleased with the project results would be an understatement. Thank you, A-Team!”

Katherine Foster, Executive Director, New Winston Museum

The Ronald McDonald House of Winston-Salem, Inc.

“Developing a marketing/recruitment plan”

Project Synopsis

Our Action Learning Team was tasked to develop a marketing plan focused on recruitment, conversion and retention of volunteers for the Ronald McDonald House Family Rooms at Forsyth Medical Center – NICU and Wake Forest Baptist Hospital’s Brenner Children’s Hospital. Our team provided the Ronald McDonald House of Winston-Salem (RMH) with a strategic plan that outlined our suggestions to recruit, convert and retain volunteers. In addition to the strategic plan, we developed a video for RMH to use at presentations and on social media sites to recruit more volunteers.

Project Partner Statement

“The detailed 5 page report we received will be a great overview tool for both our newly hired Director of Volunteer Services and Family Room Manager positions. The awesome 3 minute video created for us will be immediately put to use as part of our Family Room volunteer recruitment process.”

Chuck Kraft – Ronald McDonald House

The Adaptables, Inc

“Feasibility Study for the Development of Volunteers”

Project Synopsis

We evaluated the proposed volunteer program and The Adaptables’ existing structure and determined that The Adaptables would benefit from a clearer strategic vision. In order to better serve our community partner, we suggested an Action Research Project that focused on identifying strategic priorities and recommended action items. We recommended four key action areas for the organization to focus: program/mission, fundraising, marketing and outreach, and board governance.

Project Partner Statement



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“The Action Learning Team assigned to The Adaptables’ was wonderful team to work with. They were eager to absorb as much information about our organization as possible and then used that knowledge to identify strategic priorities and recommend action items. At the teams’ recommendation, our initial proposal was changed and I feel our organization will be better for it. We plan to incorporate the team’s plan of action into our strategic plan. Thank you for this opportunity. This has been an invaluable experience.”

Mark Steele, Executive Director, The Adaptables, Inc.

YWCA Hawley House

“Re-zoning research and plan development”

Project Synopsis

What started as a rezoning project turned into a solution to match the true need expressed by Hawley House’s director Kristin O’Leary: to serve more women in Forsyth County’s only state-licensed women’s substance abuse recovery facility. Through iterations of fact-gathering, reflecting, debating, pivoting and discussions with Kristin and the YWCA, the sponsor of Hawley House, our Action Learning Team was able to deliver near-term solutions that will have long-term benefit for Hawley House and the women it serves. These solutions include offering non-resident services for women who have completed the residency program, partnering with other organizations to enhance the quality of services provided by Hawley House, and establishing an engaged advisory board to allow Kristin’s passion to be balanced with planning for operational needs.

Project Partner Statement

“The information provided to us by our Leadership Winston-Salem team was profound. They put together an amazing plan of action that beautifully outlined how our program can successfully implement the desired expansion plan that will allow us to impact lives on a much larger scale. The recommendations included a focus on the infrastructure necessary for expansion of services. Working with this team was a blessing to me.”

Kristin O’Leary, YWCA Hawley House