South Hills Interfaith Movement

Executive Summary

Community Partner
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Background

South Hills Interfaith Movement works to serve the South Hills community, following their motto "Neighbors helping neighbors." The organization was founded by a priest, a rabbi, and a minister and works to combat suburban poverty. SHIM's vision is to create an inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Its mission is to mobilize community resources and implement sustainable programs that compassionately help SHIM's neighbors meet basic needs, achieve self-sufficiency and build community. There are five fields that SHIM provides support for in the neighborhood: Food and Clothes, Financial Wellness, Education, Family Support, and Community Building.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

The organization had been facing several challenges in recent years. One of the major challenges was how to possibly make the provided programs more accessible to families and individuals in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Food pantry programs became food drives, leading to a loss of sense of ownership and respect that came from being able to select the items. Another notable challenge was difficulty in communicating with their audience. As SHIM's vision is to support communities to self-thrive and prosper, consistent communication with the community is definitely their top priority. This is where additional technology such as a mobile application may solve some of the communication issues. Most people with cellphones will have an easier and faster route to access any SHIM updates.

Project Vision

Our team aimed to provide a platform that made SHIM's programs and events more accessible to both their audience. The organization's website contained a lot of information and the process of implementing a notification system would be very difficult. Instead, our team shifted our gears to building a mobile app that allowed volunteers and donors to easily see upcoming events and track their progress could keep them more engaged with SHIM's programs. With a mobile application, users would be able to see live information, which would not possible on a website or web portal. Web portals do not have the ability to send out real-time notifications. Our primary stakeholders for this project include SHIM staff and current and future volunteers and donors who are also the three user groups. This application

allowed for SHIM's current website to be more focused on expanding their reach. Although building a mobile application as a solution seemed difficult at first, given the frequency of updates desired by our community partner, our team decided that a mobile application suitable for both Android and iOS to be the best fit for SHIM's needs.

Project Outcomes

The main outcomes of this mobile application falls into the people, process, and technology categories. People outcomes include providing a personalized environment where volunteers and donors gain the ability to freely sign-up for events (or decline them). The main process outcome was a new system in which attendance for each event is tracked. The technology outcome is the mobile app itself in which now there is a way to send push notifications to all SHIM volunteers and donors.

Project Deliverables

The deliverables of this project include the executive summary, logo, final report, statement of project completion, GitHub repository, tutorials at community partner's request, Firebase credentials, and Google Playstore application.

Recommendations

Once our project team hands over the mobile applications, there are a few recommendations we would suggest as future steps. First, we recommend to fully integrate the application into the volunteering and engagement progress. The website should push the application to any users that come to the page and SHIM staff should be comfortable using it. Second, while the free plan of Firebase will suffice for the current number of volunteers and donors, SHIM may need to look into expanding Firebase or a new database if the organization is to grow past the current limitations. Lastly, we recommend coming back the next year to CMU and implement any of the other wants that our team and our community partner communicated. By then, the app would be well implemented into the volunteering and engagement process and adding new features would only bring positive feedback.

Student Consulting Team

Soo Young Kim served as the Quality Assurance Manager. He is a Junior majoring in Information Systems with pursuing Software Engineering minor. He will be interning at a company called Wayfair this summer and is looking toward a career in software engineering field.

Sung Tae (Sean) Kim was the Client Relationship Manager. He is Senior majoring in Information Systems with an additional major in Statistics. He will continue his search for a fulltime job this summer and is looking toward a career in Software Engineering or Data Analyst.

Tina Lin was the Project Manager. She is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems and Human-Computer Interaction. She will be working at re:Bloom as both the Director of Design and Project Manager this summer and is looking toward a career in UI/UX Design.