Christopher's Kitchen

Executive Summary

Community Partner
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Background

Christopher's Kitchen is a 501c3 nonprofit organization based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, focused on providing free food to caregivers of children in hospitals and extended care facilities.

"Our mission is to ensure that caregivers of hospitalized children have access to free meals, reducing financial burden and eliminating the need to leave the hospital for food."

Founded in 2017 by Joni D'Allesandro, Christopher's Kitchen is a volunteer-based organization that operates with a core team of 10 to 14 people, based at 7218 Church Ave, Pittsburgh, PA. They provide pantries for several different hospitals such as the UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, and they serve caregivers and families by maintaining and stocking these food pantries.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

Christopher's Kitchen faced significant challenges with their current food donation tracking system. Volunteers manually tallied food items on paper before transferring data to Excel spreadsheets, creating inefficiencies and potential errors. Additionally, their previous method for assigning monetary values to donations was outdated and confusing. These manual processes created an administrative burden that diverted volunteer time from their core mission and complicated financial reporting required for tax purposes and donor acknowledgment.

Project Vision

We decided to implement an automated barcode scanning solution that streamlines the donation tracking and valuation processes. By leveraging OrcaScan to scan items, and Google Sheets to track them, we aim to eliminate manual tallying and data entry. Our solution automates much of the previous process, significantly reducing volunteer workload,

increasing data accuracy, and creates a more sustainable system that can scale with Christopher's Kitchen's growth.

Project Outcomes

The implementation of our OrcaScan + Google sheets solution led to an immense reduction in manual labor, bringing down total time to track and process a donation by over 70%. Many of the tedious tasks from before have been semi-automated, and they can now focus more on their core mission. Our system provides greater accuracy in financial valuation since the UPC database is kept up-to-date, and the user-friendly solution enables volunteers to easily learn how to scan and total donation values. With some documentation and training, we are able to bring the team on board our solution so that they can quickly track their donations.

Project Deliverables

The project deliverables were our solution, consisting of a heavily customized Google Sheet + the business plan OrcaScan subscription (which we were able to secure for free for the community partner), and documentation.

Recommendations

If the organization grows much larger in the future and the donations begin to grow as well, we advise Christopher's Kitchen to enlist a volunteer, or hire someone, to be a technological lead. This way, they can maintain the solution, and even improve it or ask for help if the need arises.

Student Consulting Team

Gabriel Sha served as the technical and quality assurance lead. He is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with an additional major in Computer Science. This summer he will be interning at Capital One as a software engineer.

Nita Thaveesittikullarp served as testing and transition coordinator. She is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with additional minors in Human Computer Interactions and Computer Science. This summer, she will be interning at Apple as a software engineer.

Jacob Franze served as the client liaison and project coordinator. He is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Business Administration. This summer he will be interning at Marsh McLennan Agency.