# ByTheirSide Redesign
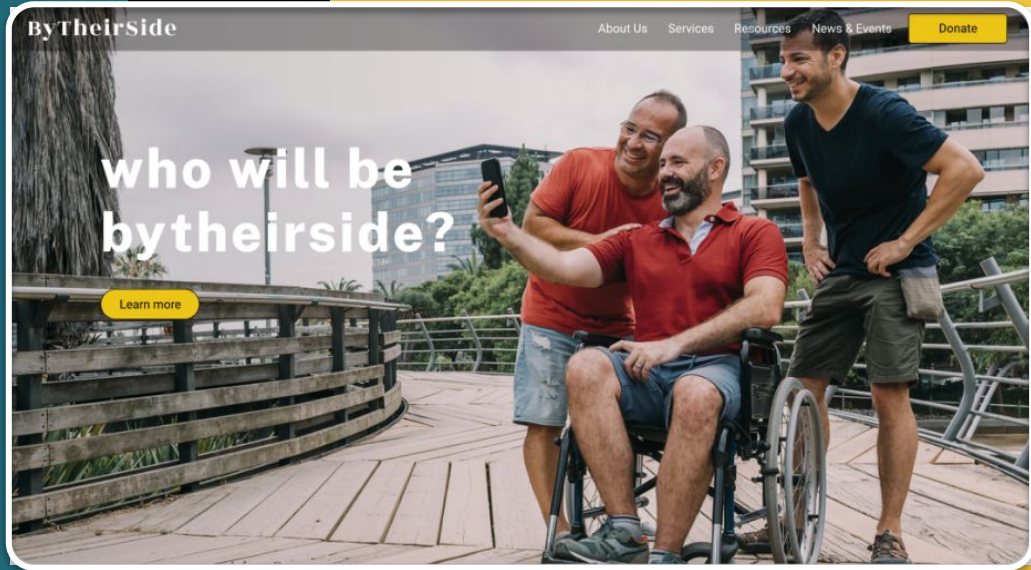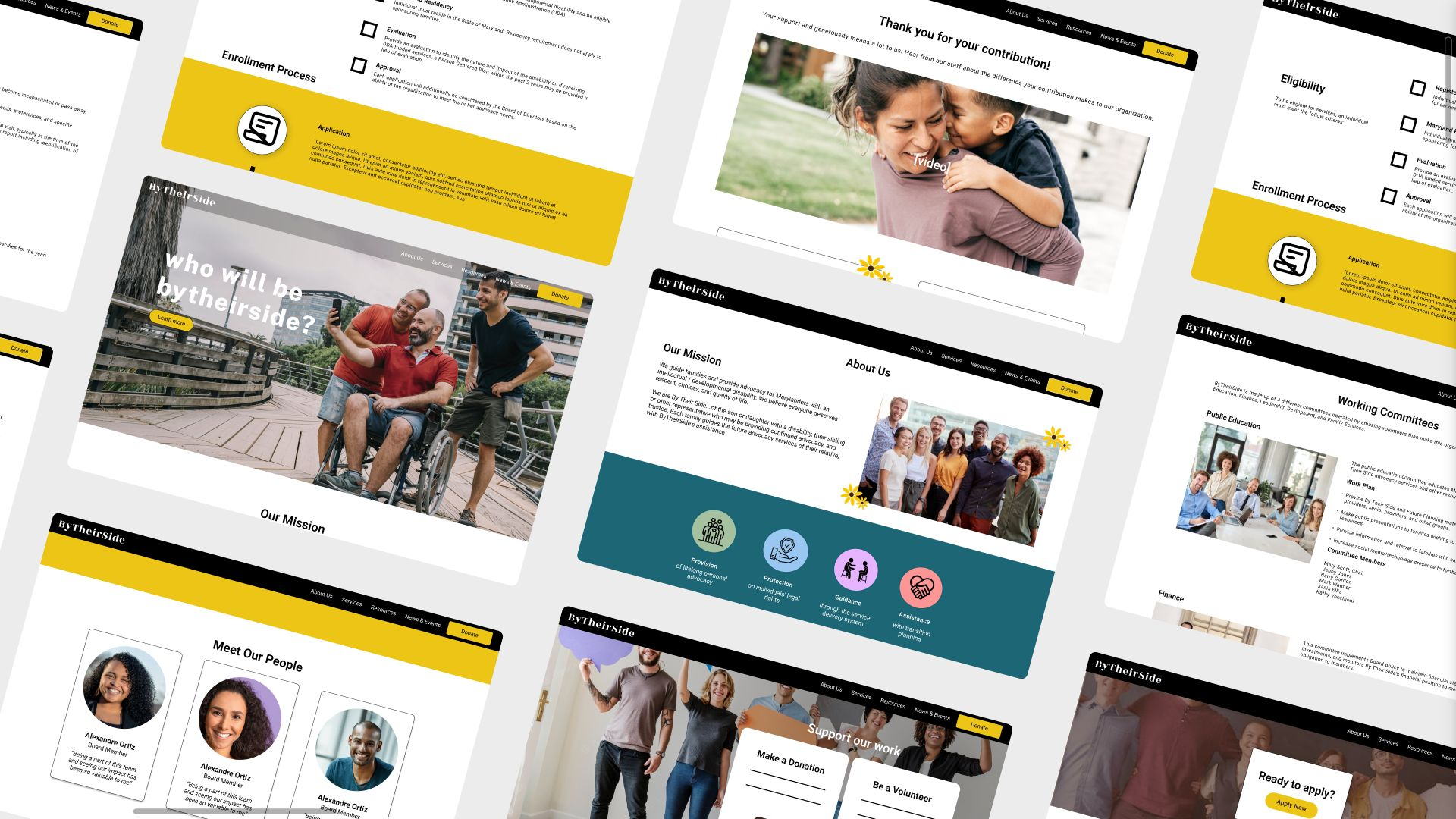
# *A disconnect between the organization & members*

ByTheirSide is a local non-profit that focuses on supporting Marylanders with disabilities before and after their family has passed. They are primarily run by volunteers with only one IT personnel in charge of maintaining and updating the existing website.

However, the outdated website seems to be causing difficulties for both the staff and members visiting the site. The biggest issue being the organization **wants to expand their outreach** with the site, but visitors find the existing one to be **untrustworthy and unreliable**.

As part of a volunteer student project, I seek to answer—how can we solve this disconnect between the organization and new members?

**Timeline**:

    4 months  (03/2022 - 07/2022)

**Roles**:

    UX Research

    UI Design
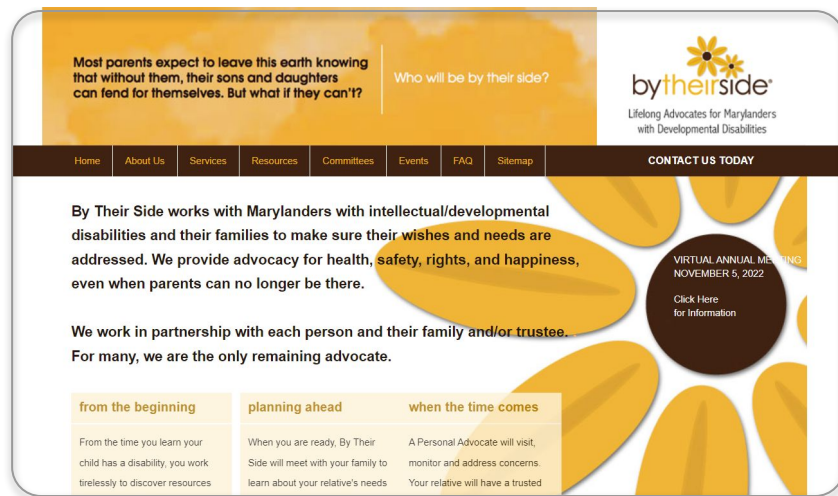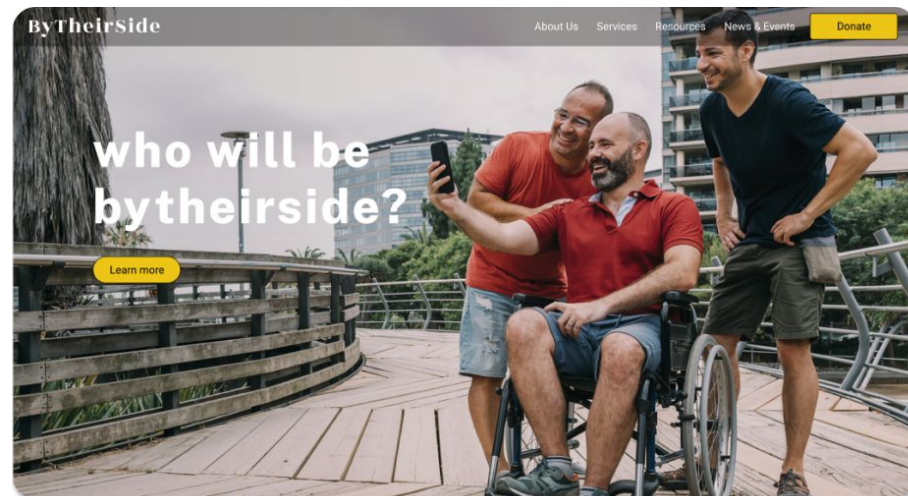
**Tools:**

    Miro

    Figma

SOLUTION

# *Establishing trust through a human-centric redesign*

I aimed to make the website feel more human with an aim to decrease the **cognitive load** of visitors on the site.

**Original Home Page**

**Revised Home Page**

# *"I just want families who need our service to be able to find us"*

In order to gain a better understanding on the organization and the stakeholders' desires, I met with the founder and summarized their **goals and concerns** for the project.

Existing Issues:

- The structure is **too rigid** and only allows for text to be updated
- The current layout is **not intuitive** and makes content hard to find

Goals:

- A **refreshed**, modern look for the site
- **Expand outreach** to younger parents
- **Streamline** the donations process

# *Many agreed that there were NO competitors for ByTheirSide*

Through contacts from the stakeholder, I was able to meet with 6 different people from the different user types and explored their thoughts on the organization as well as the existing site.

Interestingly, members echoed the stakeholder's belief that ByTheirSide was the **only** organization of its kind, but was not very well-known. Curious to dive into this, I expanded my research goals.

I wanted to understand:

- The **process and emotions** people experience while using the website
- The **goals and roadblocks** they have
- The **motivation** behind signing up or donating
- What content needs to be cut from the website
- How to keep the users **engaged**
- Their preferred **design aesthetics**

**Who are they? (Demographic information)**

**What are their goals on the Website?**

**What are the barriers\pain points?**

Occupation

Hopkins alumni

Have children with disabilities

Mother of son with autism

Website did not show that payment plans were an option

Access to other resources

Info on other related services

Want Background Info

information on what donations do might be helpful

uses card to pay

Old Info and Style

Issues with the existing web

links dont work, outdated info

dropdowns are "old-fashioned"

hard to navigate

outdated events on site - does care too much for events

outdated events

resources are outdated

broken links

Easy to navigate

MAIN INSIGHTS

# however, interviewees reported that the existing website felt "cheap and scam-y"

My interviewees experienced a lot of difficulties trying to complete their tasks while using the site. These difficulties made them feel like they **could not trust** the site.

The specific points that were noted are:

- **Outdated** information and broken links

- **Typos** in words

- Felt that the website **lacked transparency**

**TASK 1**

Finding out more information about their services (what they do for their loved ones, cost)

**TASK 2**

Search for other resources about other available help (doctors, attorneys, or for other disabilities)

**TASK 3**

Find out how trustworthy their program is ( look for mission statement, impact statement, testimonials etc)

**TASK 4**

Signing up for their services (placing their disabled loved ones into the program

**TASK 5**

Make a donation

USER PERSONA + EMPATHY

While interviewing the parents, I found myself personally **touched by their stories** and the milestones of their children, It made me realize:

1. The **impact** of a personal story / testimony
2. Visitors of the site are coming from a **sensitive place**, and that should be kept in mind throughout this project



*"What will happen to my child after I die?"*

### Bio (Demographics)

- Age: 60
- Occupation: High School Counselor
- Has one children with autism
- Spouse passed away (single parent)
- Tech: Have exposure but not too skilled with navigation, computer
- Involved in other non-profits (ARCs) about similar disabilities

### Goals

- Learn about the different programs offered and any other resources
- Determining the organization is trustworthy or not ( aka find out about mission statement current members?)
- Signing up for their services

### Other Important traits

- Motivation: concern for their children when they are no longer able to take care of them
- Making sure that there is help available for children whenever a problem arises
- Want to trust that this organization will do what they say they'll do

### Pain points

- The website is outdated ( both aesthetically and functionally - broken links)  a bit clunky
- A lot of irrelevant content in long paragraphs
- Hard to navigate, people give up before finish navigating the website

# *the website was inhibiting credibility*

Using **Nielsen Norman's Usability Heuristic,** I worked with my peers to determine usability issues that currently existed.

We found that Task 3, determining trustworthiness, was **most hindered** by the current state of the website.
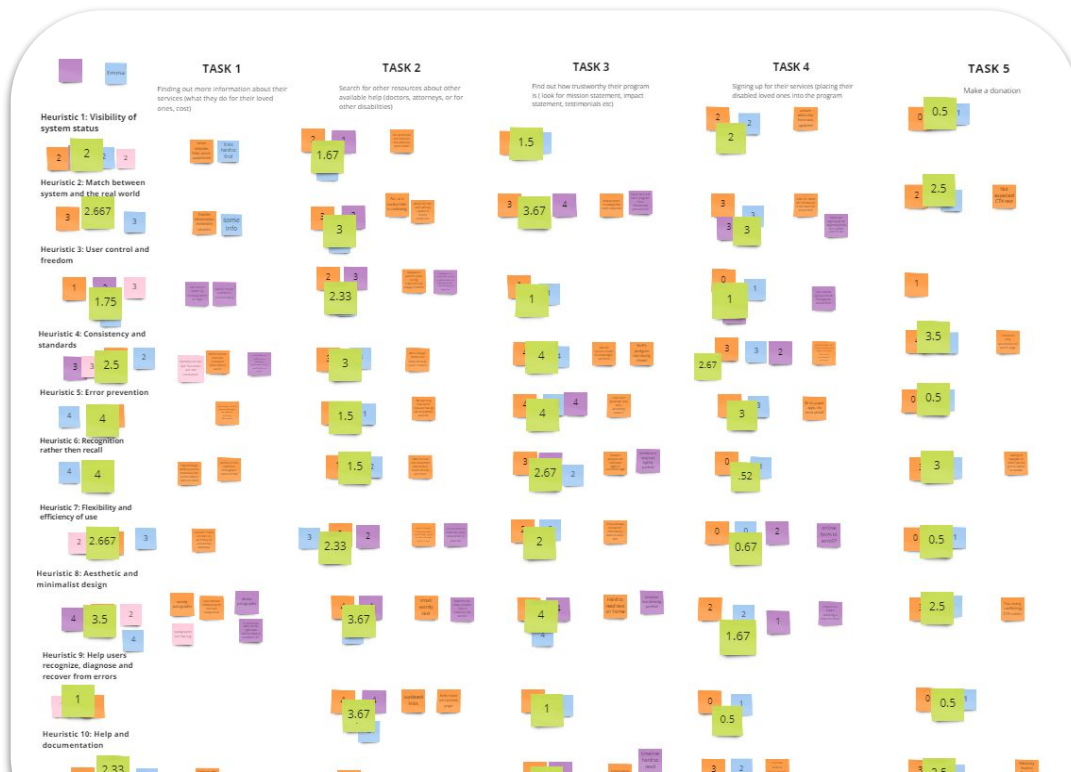
# *how might we re-establish credibility?*

- HMW... be more transparent with the process?
- HMW... show the impact of BTS staff?
- HMW... remove the need for text?
- HMW... help applicants compare prices?

To these question, I brainstormed some ways to improve on the existing design based on both the heuristics evaluation and answers to the How Might We's. Some main points include:

- Increasing font size and icon usages to support older users
- Show the people behind the organization to build trust
- Break up blocks of text into something more digestible
- Restructuring the information architecture so users can better find resources

# *improving information architecture*

Given that users reported difficulties navigating the site, the main navigation bar was also reorganized and **simplified** into 4 main categories.

# *brainstorming and lofi*

We each made a mockup of how each page might be structured, and then had a critique and voting
period in order to iterate through the design as an internal group before moving to a more hi-fi variant.
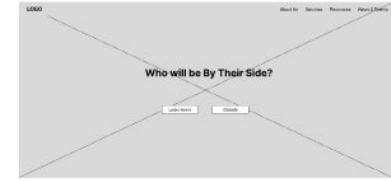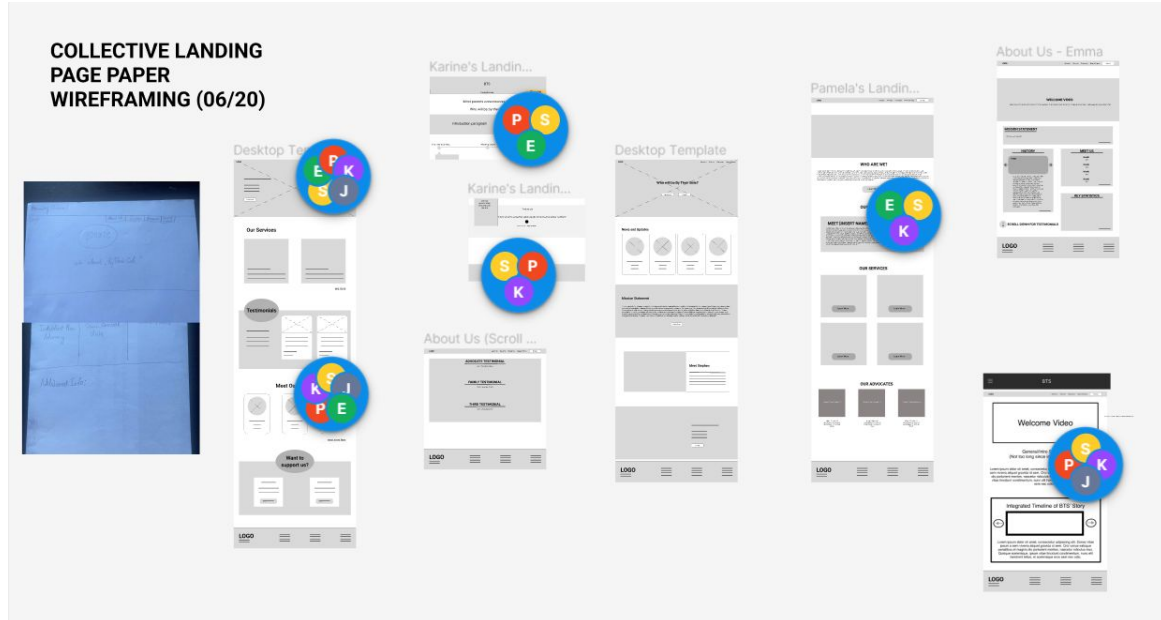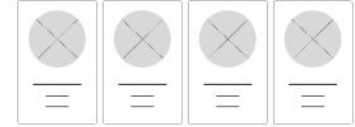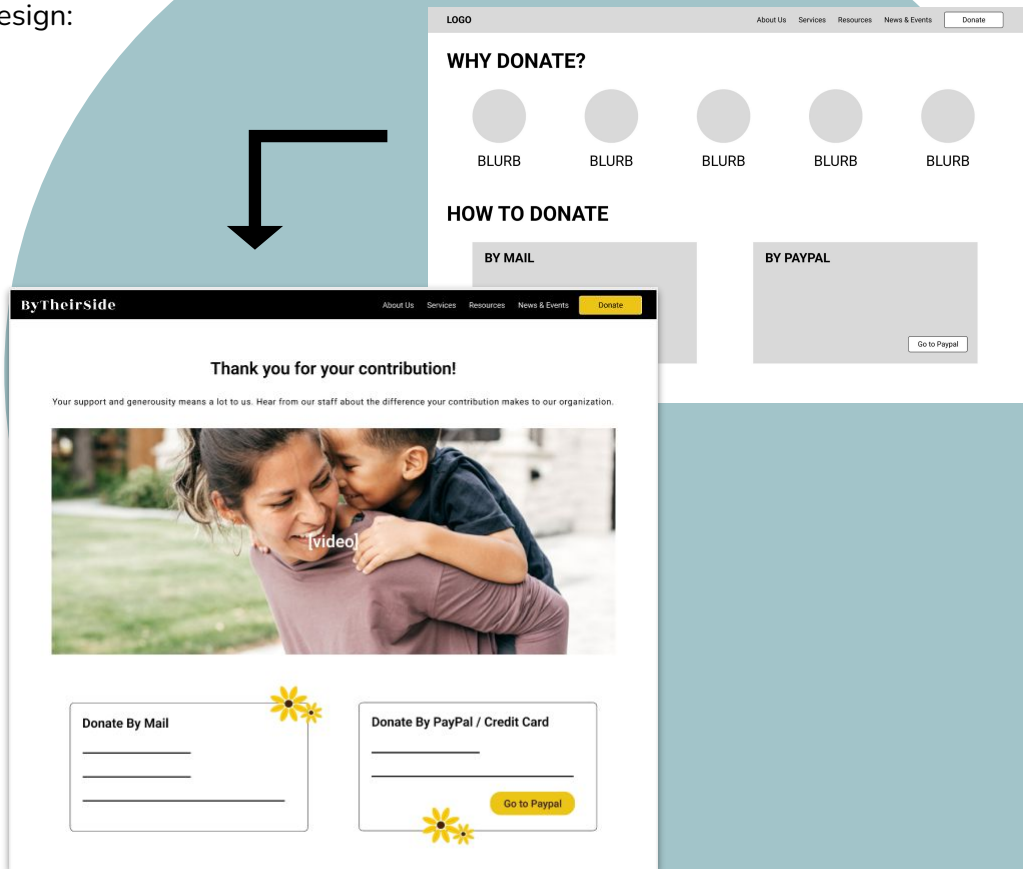
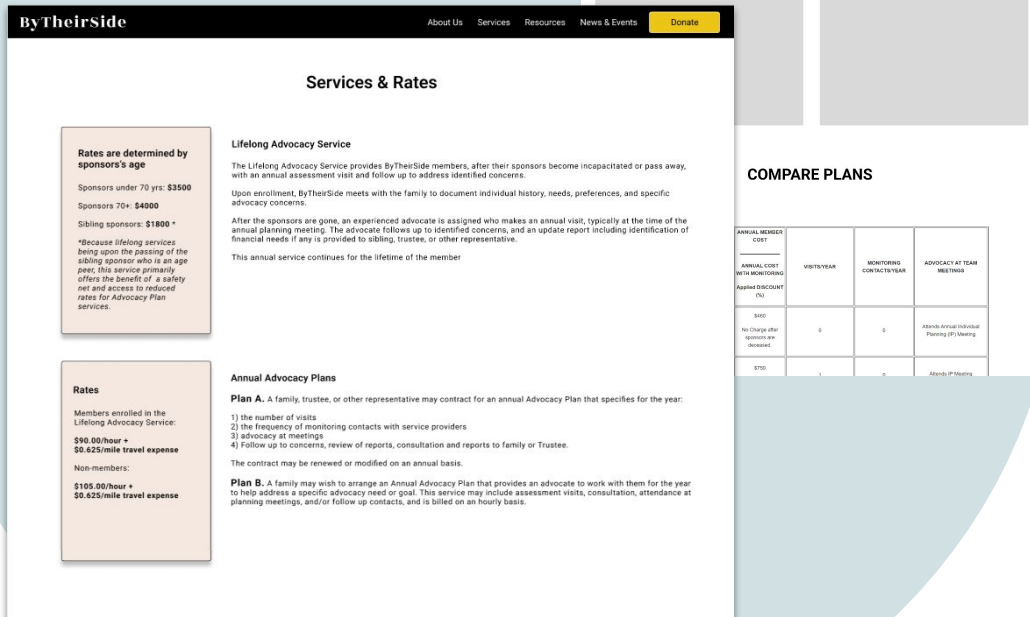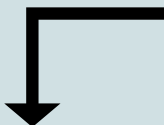There were 4 major improvements that lead to the final design:

# 1. *impact-based language*

- Based on user feedback, I removed the "Why Donate?" as people on this page would already have the intention to donate

- I replaced the blurbs with a video so visitors can directly see the impact of their donation

# 2. *highlighted prices*

- The prices are highlighted separately on the side to increase transparency without seeming too comercial-like

- An "Apply Now" button added to follow the natural flow of the user's journey

# 3. *intuitive flow*

- Based on user feedback, I simplified the eligibility requirements into a checklist and updated the wording to be less vague

- Enrollment Process switched to a vertical format so more information can be paired with each step
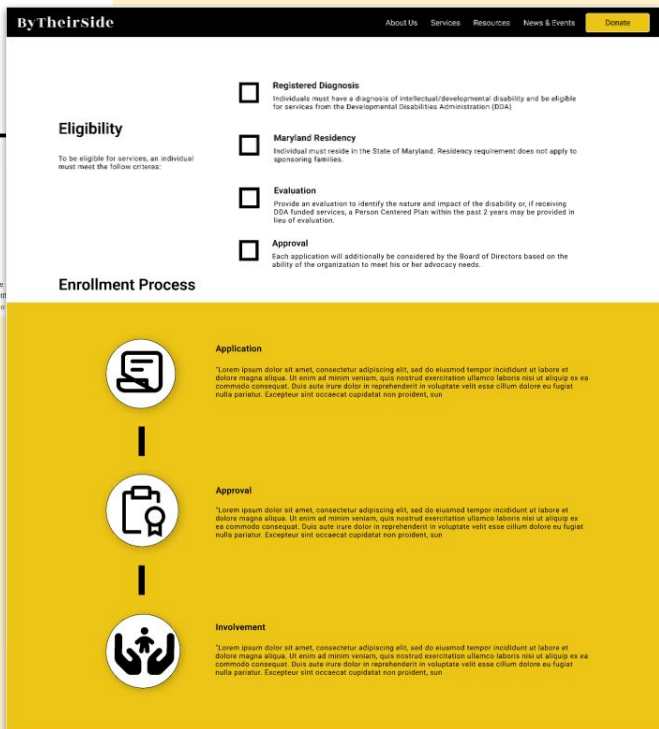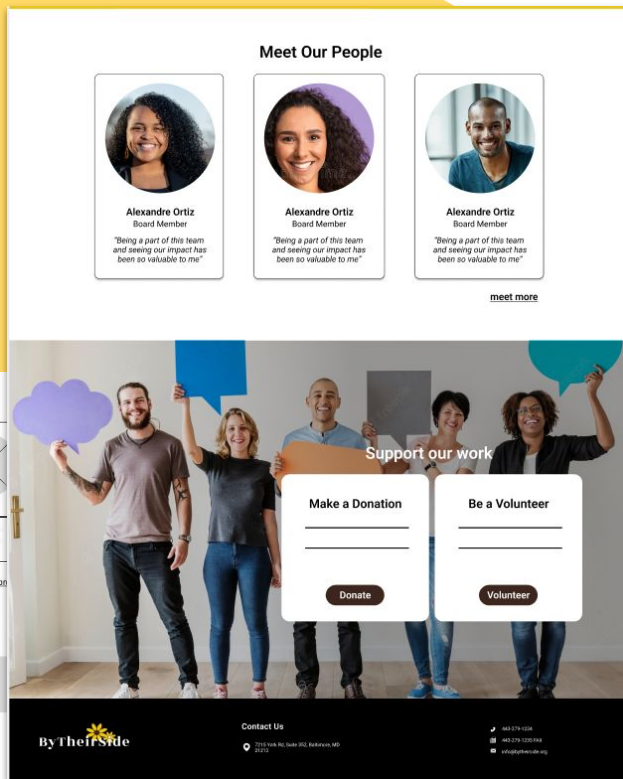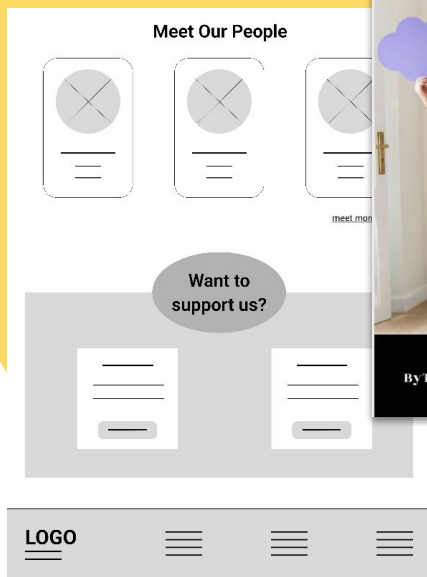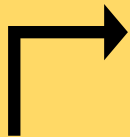
# 4. *personal touches*

- Included more photos in order to highlight the people behind the organization and to be more personal

final product

*the before*

*the after*
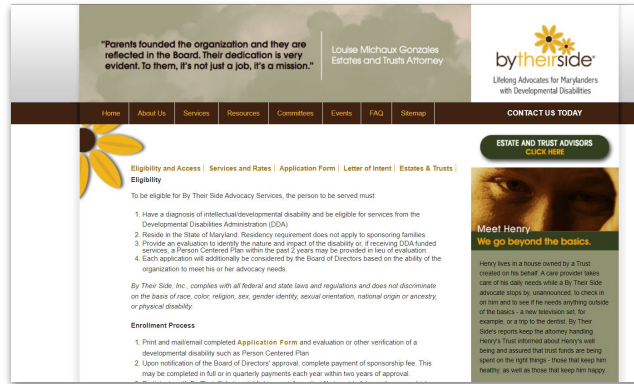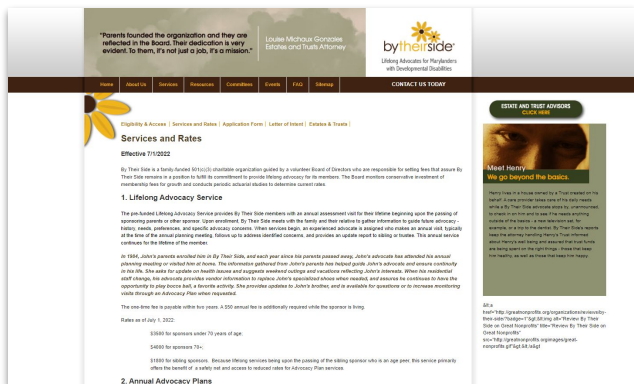
# About Us

## Our Mission

We guide families and provide advocacy for Marylanders with an intellectual / developmental disability. We believe everyone deserves respect, choices, and quality of life.

We are By Their Side...of the son or daughter with a disability, their sibling or other representative who may be providing continued advocacy, and trustee. Each family guides the future advocacy services of their relative, with ByTheirSide's assistance.

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## Eligibility

To be eligible for services, an individual must meet the follow criteras:

☐ **Registered Diagnosis**
Individuals must have a diagnosis of intellectual/developmental disability and be eligible for services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)

☐ **Maryland Residency**
Individual must reside in the State of Maryland. Residency requirement does not apply to sponsoring families.

☐ **Evaluation**
Provide an evaluation to identify the nature and impact of the disability or, if receiving DDA funded services, a Person Centered Plan within the past 2 years may be provided in lieu of evaluation.

☐ **Approval**
Each application will additionally be considered by the Board of Directors based on the ability of the organization to meet his or her advocacy needs.

## Enrollment Process

**Application**

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# Services & Rates

**Rates are determined by sponsors's age**

Sponsors under 70 yrs: **$3500**

Sponsors 70+: **$4000**

Sibling sponsors: **$1800 ***

*Because lifelong services being upon the passing of the sibling sponsor who is an age peer, this service primarily offers the benefit of a safety net and access to reduced rates for Advocacy Plan services.

### Lifelong Advocacy Service

The Lifelong Advocacy Service provides ByTheirSide members, after their sponsors become incapacitated or pass away, with an annual assessment visit and follow up to address identified concerns.

Upon enrollment, ByTheirSide meets with the family to document individual history, needs, preferences, and specific advocacy concerns.

After the sponsors are gone, an experienced advocate is assigned who makes an annual visit, typically at the time of the annual planning meeting. The advocate follows up to identified concerns, and an update report including identification of financial needs if any is provided to sibling, trustee, or other representative.

This annual service continues for the lifetime of the member

**Rates**

Members enrolled in the Lifelong Advocacy Service:

### Annual Advocacy Plans

**Plan A.** A family, trustee, or other representative may contract for an annual Advocacy Plan that specifies for the year:

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# Working Committees

ByTheirSide is made up of 4 different committees operated by amazing volunteers than make this organization possible. The 4 committees are Public Education, Finance, Leadership Devlopment, and Family Services.

## Public Education

The public education committee educates Maryland families and professionals about By Their Side advocacy services and other resources available for estate and future planning.

**Work Plan**

- Provide By Their Side and Future Planning material to families, estate planners, service providers, senior providers, and other groups.
- Make public presentations to families wishing to discuss future planning needs and resources.
- Provide information and referral to families who call.
- Increase social media/technology presence to further connect with families.

**Committee Members**

Mary Scott, Chair
Jenny Jones
Barry Gordon
Mark Wagner
Janis Ellis
Kathy Vecchioni

# LANDING PAGE

## Landing Page


# ABOUT US

## About Us (Missio...


## History


## Working Commit...


# SERVICES

## Services & Rates


## Eligibility


## FAQ


# RESOURCES

## Future Planning ...


## Sibling Support


## Estates & Trusts


# NEWS AND EVENTS

## Newsletters


## Events


# DONATE

## Donate

# *the next steps...*

### Improve Readability

When conducting the user-tests, there were a significant focus on the specific wording of the placeholder text. Usability comes not just in the design but also in readability, including choosing the right language for the intended audience.

As well as updating existing texts, it'll be important to create a writing style-guide to ensure that future content remain readable and consistent.

### Finding the Right Images

While completing the designs, the images provided by the organization were not yet ready. However, the design and message is dependent on the images displayed.

Therefore, some careful attention would be needed in substituting the stock photos for genuine pictures before the final release of the product.

### More Feedback

In order to ensure regular maintenance and performance of the website, implementing a feedback form would be ideal to measure how visitors feel about the new design and if they are able to find the resources that they are looking for.

# *learning to adapt*

Throughout this project, I was at times left with more questions than answers.  Luckily, this has given me plenty of opportunities to reflect on how I can improve as a UX designer, and hopefully guide my future learnings. Some of my key takeaways are:

1. **Be more insight-oriented.** During the ideation and iteration phase, I realized that we were not making full usage of the information acquired from our research. Rather than just focusing on the aesthetics of the redesign, a more efficient method would've been to constantly check that my design choices answered the user problems and research questions.
2. **Language is key in empathy-building.** Given the audience of this project, I felt a bit more conscious of my word choices throughout the project. I wanted to make sure that we had the right intentions, especially while designing the How Might We questions. Did we want to "convince" users to donate, or did we want to just highlight the option?
3. **It's okay to go off-script.** Although I did some research on how to build trust after the interviews, I regret not spending more time talking to my interviewees after realizing the main issue at hand. Rather than strictly following the prepared script, I could've delve deeper alongside the users into what exactly would make the site and organization seem more credible.
4. **Navigating teamwork.** Working in a team of passionate UX personals had the benefit of new perspectives that I could learn from and bounce ideas off of, but unfortunately also means more chances to butt heads with our goals and focuses. Speaking to a mentor, I learned a new strategy to regroup and tackle our assumptions within the project. I'm excited to learn about more strategies as I continue my career and hopefully meet people from even more diverse walks of life.