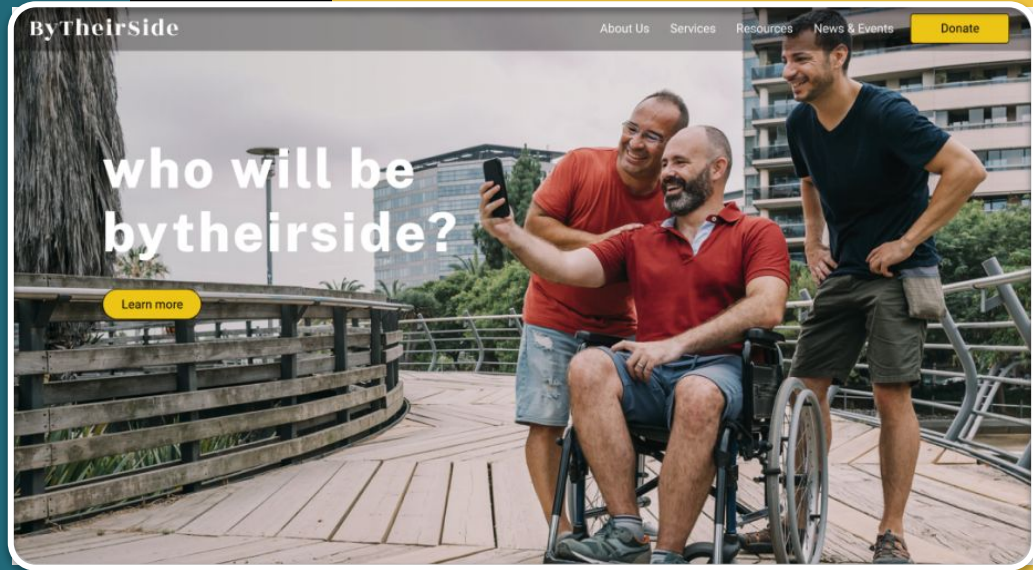
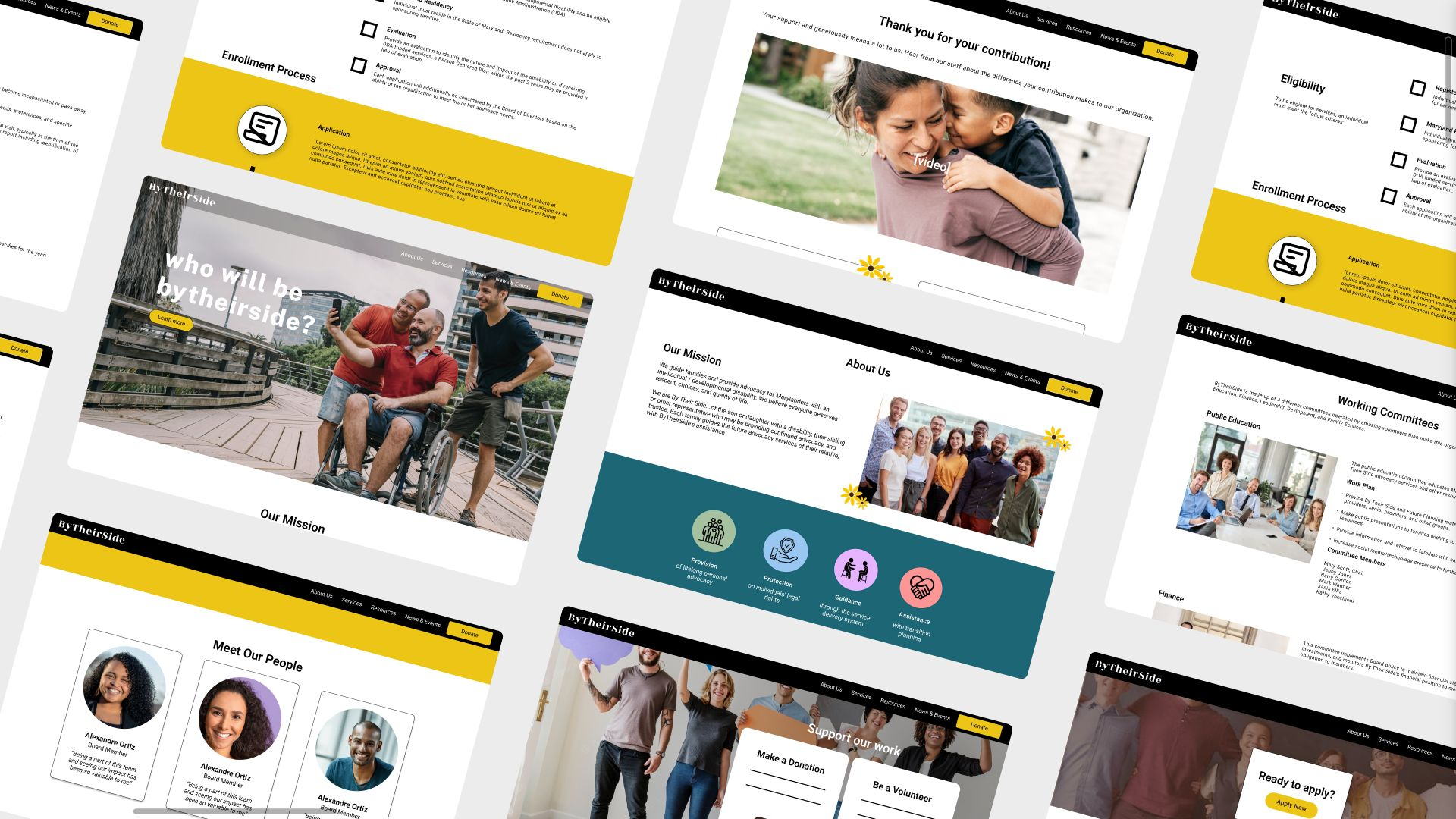


ByTheirSide Redesign





PROJECT OVERVIEW

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However, the outdated website seems to be causing difficulties for both the staff and members visiting the site.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

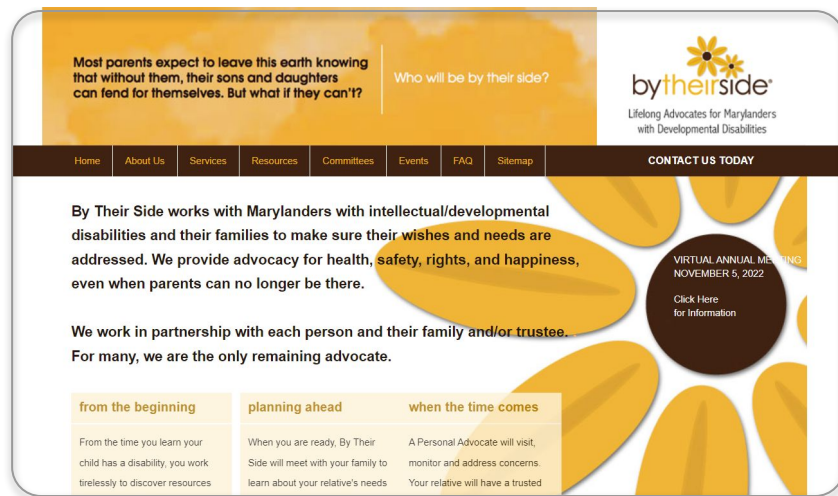
Figma

SOLUTION

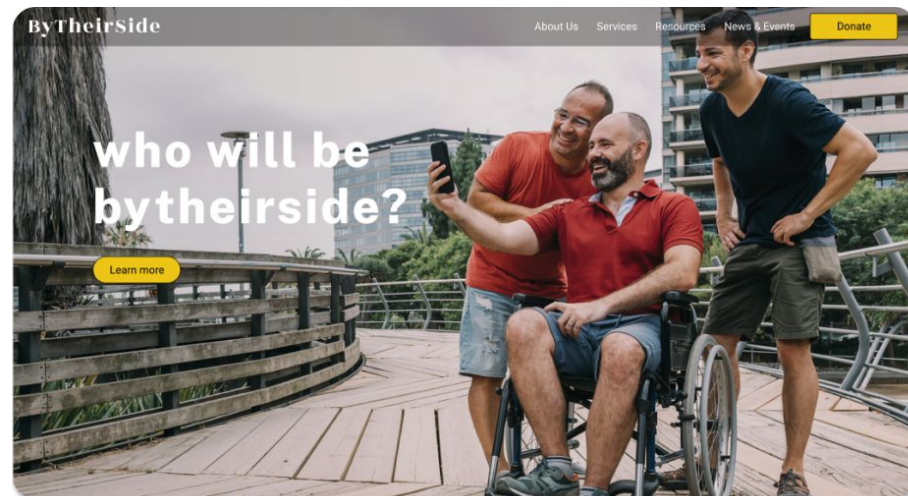
Establishing trust through a human-centric redesign

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



STAKEHOLDER MEETING

“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

USER INTERVIEWS

Many agreed that there were NO competitors for ByTheirSide

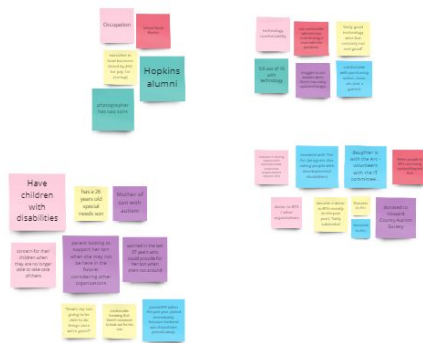
Through contacts from the stakeholder, I was able to meet with 6 different people from the different user types and explored their thoughts on the organization as well as the existing site.

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**

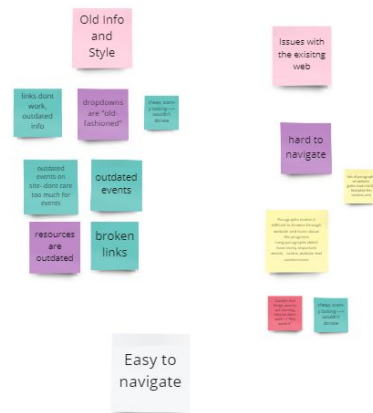
Who are they? (Demographic information)



What are their goals on the Website?



What are the barriers/pain points?



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

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

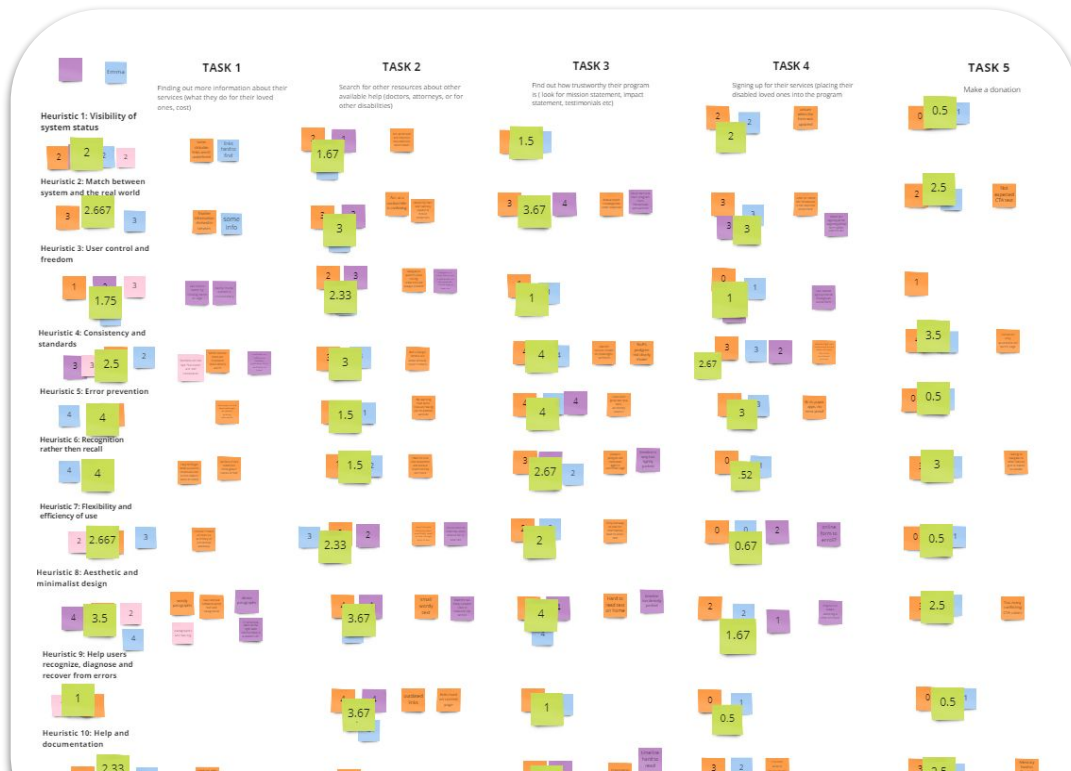
Pain points

- 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.

Home	About Us	Services	Resources	Committees	Events	FAQ	Sitemap
------	----------	----------	-----------	------------	--------	-----	---------

Home	About Us	Services	Resources	Committees	Events	FAQ	Sitemap
	Mission	Eligibility and Access	Annual Reports	Outreach			
	History	Services and Rates	Newletters	Leadership Development			
	Board of Directors	Application Form	Future Planning Resources	Finance			
	Staff	Letter of Intent	Sibling Support	Family Services			
		Estates & Trusts	Resource Links				

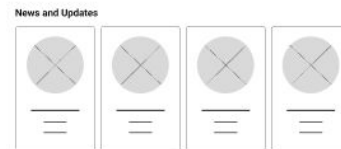
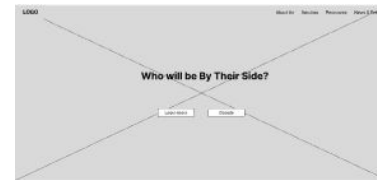


About Us	Services	Resources	News & Events	Donate
----------	----------	-----------	---------------	--------

About Us	Services	Resources	News and Events
Mission	Services and Rates	Annual Reports	Newsletters
History	Eligibility and Access	Future Planning Resources	Events
Board and Staff	Application Form	Sibling Support	
Committees	Letter of Intent	Other Resource Links	
Outreach		Estates & Trusts	
Leadership Development		FAQ	
Finance			
Family Services			

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.

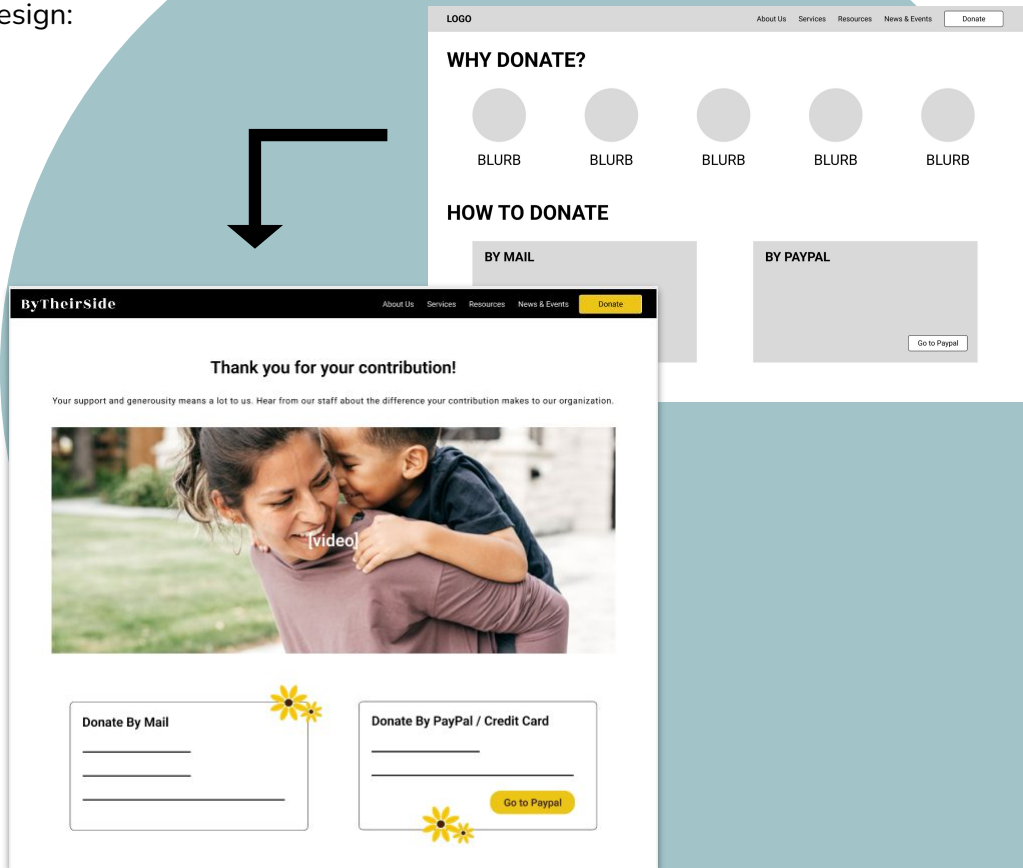


FINAL REVISIONS

There were 4 major improvements that lead to the final design:

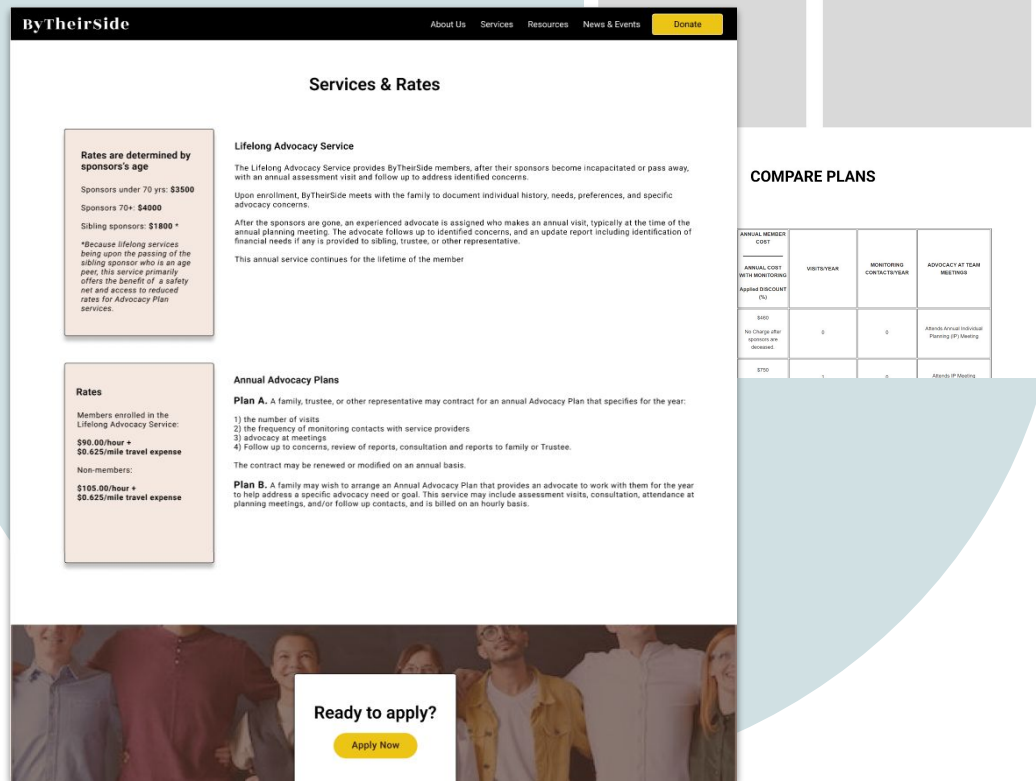
1. *impact-based language*

- 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 commercial-like
- An “Apply Now” button added to follow the natural flow of the user’s journey



ByTheirSide

About Us Services Resources News & Events Donate

Services & Rates

Rates are determined by sponsor'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.

Rates

Members enrolled in the Lifelong Advocacy Service:

\$90.00/hour + \$0.625/mile travel expense

Non-members:

\$105.00/hour + \$0.625/mile travel expense

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 identify 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.

Annual Advocacy Plans

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

- 1) the number of visits
- 2) the frequency of monitoring contacts with service providers
- 3) advocacy at meetings
- 4) follow up to concerns, review of reports, consultation and reports to family or Trustee.

The contract may be renewed or modified on an annual basis.

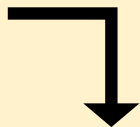
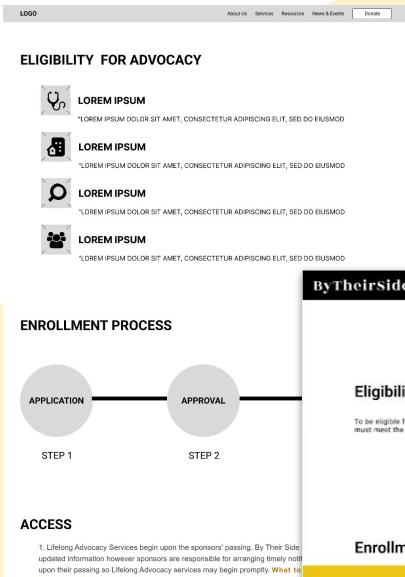
Plan B. A family may wish to arrange an Annual Advocacy Plan that provides an advocate to work with them for the year to help address a specific advocacy need or goal. This service may include assessment visits, consultation, attendance at planning meetings, and/or follow up contacts, and is billed on an hourly basis.

COMPARE PLANS

ANNUAL MEMBER COST	VISITS/YEAR	MONITORING CONTACTS/YEAR	ADVOCACY AT TEAM MEETINGS
ANNUAL COST WITH MONITORING Applied ENDOUSSET (%)			
\$400	0	0	Attends Annual Individual Planning (IP) Meeting
\$750	1	0	Months IP Meeting

Ready to apply?

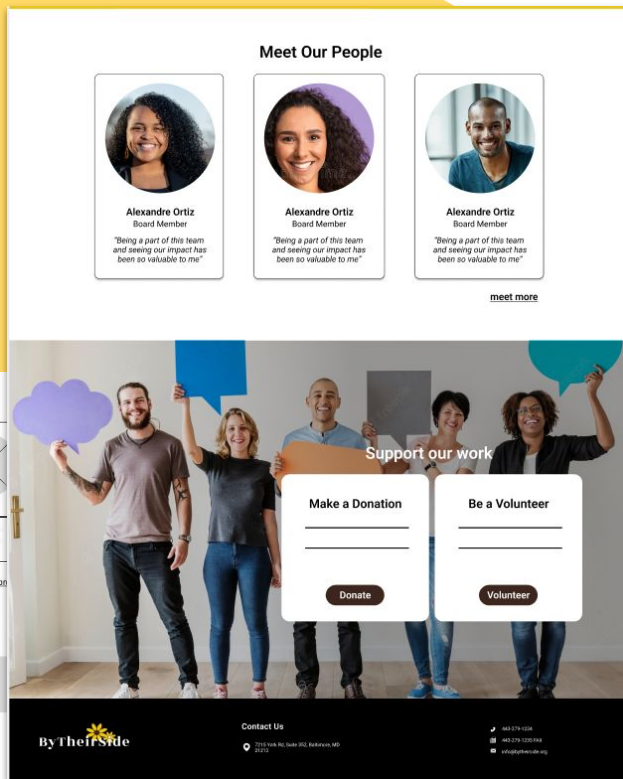
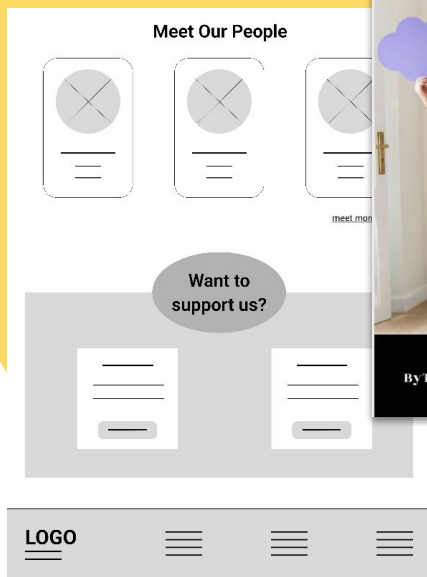
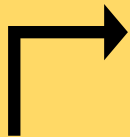
Apply Now



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

"At some point, your child will need help, and if you're not there, By Their Side will be."

Mike Harris, Parent and By Their Side Member

bytheirsideside
Lifelong Advocates for Marylanders with Developmental Disabilities

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Mission Statement

By Their Side guides families and provides advocacy for Marylanders with an intellectual/developmental disability. By Their Side believes everyone deserves respect, choices, and quality of life. We support our mission by:

- Providing lifelong personal advocacy for those we serve;
- Protecting individuals' legal rights;
- Guiding individuals and families through the maze of the service delivery system;
- Assisting families with transition planning.

Formed by Families, Guided by Families

Started in 1985 by parents to assure their sons and daughters would continue to have an advocate after the parents were gone, the organization has remained in focus on providing the advocacy service arranged by each family. The interests of families continue to be well represented in the governance of the organization, with parents and siblings serving on the Board of Directors and its working committees.

And each family guides the future advocacy services of their relative, with By Their Side's assistance.

• Each family identifies the frequency of their Personal Advocate's visits and monitoring contacts.

This information was last updated on September 15, 2010. All information is subject to change.

Meet Linda

Her parents planned ahead.

Linda Harris and her wife, Deborah, moved their daughter Linda from their home to a residential facility "almost 20 years ago, while we were making plans." The transition was nearly seamless. Now that Mr. Harris and his wife are approaching 80, they are making another planned transition, introducing Linda to her Personal Advocate from By Their Side.

"I gave Linda a chance to know them, and I gave them a chance to know Linda when we all arrived at the same time of day, so everyone could get to know her as a person, not just as a disability. Linda was so smart, she was able to tell us what she needed. It was just by the time we did, that's how it was."

Most parents expect to leave this earth knowing that without them, their sons and daughters can fend for themselves. But what if they can't?

Who will be by their side?

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Outreach | Leadership and Development | Finance | Family Services |

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 willing 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:

May Scott, Chair
Jenny Jones
Betsy Gordon
Mark Wagner
Jana Ellis
Kathy Vachon

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"Parents founded the organization and they are reflected in the Board. Their dedication is very evident. To them, it's not just a job, it's a mission."

Louise Michaux Gonzales, Estates and Trusts Attorney

bytheirsideside
Lifelong Advocates for Marylanders with Developmental Disabilities

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Services and Rates

Services Overview

By Their Side is a family-focused 501(c)(3) charitable organization guided by a volunteer Board of Directors who are responsible for setting fees that ensure By Their Side remains in a position to be committed to providing lifelong advocacy for its members. The Board ensures conservative stewardship of membership fees to grant and enhance superior individualized services to individual clients.

1. Lifelong Advocacy Service

The pre-funded Lifelong Advocacy Service provided by By Their Side members with an annual assessment visit for their relative beginning upon the passing of sponsoring parents or the sponsor. Upon enrollment, By Their Side meets with the family and their relative to gather information to guide future advocacy: history, needs, preferences, and specific advocacy concerns. Their services range from general advocacy to support who choose an annual visit, quarterly at the time of the annual planning meeting, follow-up to address identified concerns, and provision of update report to sibling or trustee. The annual service continues to the lifetime of the member.

In 1985, John's parents enrolled him in By Their Side, and each year since his parents passed away, John's advocate has attended his annual planning meeting or called him at home. His representative gathered from John's parents his history, goals, John's interests and interests in the life. She also kept up to date on health issues and supported emotional support and vocational retraining. John's interests. When his residential and financial planning needs were addressed to support John's independence and vocational retraining, and plan for his continued care after the opportunity to play tennis had, a family activity. The provision continues to John's brother, and is available for questions or to increase membership visits through an additional fee when requested.

The one-time fee to pay for the first year is \$200 annual fee is additionally required unless the sponsor is living.

Rates as of July 1, 2022:

\$1600 for sponsors under 70 years of age.
\$400 for sponsors 70+.

\$1600 for living services. Because living services begin upon the passing of the sibling sponsor who is an age parent, this service provides the benefit of a safety net and access to individualized care by lifetime fee services.

2. Annual Advocacy Plans

Meet Henry

We go beyond the basics.

Henry lives in a home owned by a Trust created by his grandfather. He is a member of By Their Side. His advocate works to ensure Henry's needs are met, and that he is able to live a life of dignity and respect. Henry's advocate works to ensure Henry's needs are met, and that he is able to live a life of dignity and respect. Henry's advocate works to ensure Henry's needs are met, and that he is able to live a life of dignity and respect.

"Parents founded the organization and they are reflected in the Board. Their dedication is very evident. To them, it's not just a job, it's a mission."

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Eligibility and Access | Services and Rates | Application Form | Letter of Intent | Estates & Trusts | Eligibility

To be eligible for By Their Side Advocacy Services, the person to be served must:

1. Have a diagnosis of intellectual/developmental disability and be eligible for services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)
2. Reside in the State of Maryland. Residency requirement does not apply to sponsoring families.
3. 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 (or be provided a Plan of Evaluation).
4. 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.

By Their Side, Inc., complies with all federal and state laws and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, or physical disability.

Enrollment Process

1. Print and mail/receive completed Application Form and evaluation or other verification of a developmental disability such as Person-Centered Plan.
2. Upon notification of the Board of Directors' approval, complete payment of sponsorship fee. This may be completed in full or in quarterly payments each year within two years of approval.

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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.



Eligibility

To be eligible for services, an individual must meet the following criteria:

- ☐ **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 sponsor's age

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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.*

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This annual service continues for the lifetime of the member

Annual Advocacy Plans

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

Rates

Members enrolled in the Lifelong Advocacy Service:

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 Development, 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



ABOUT US



SERVICES



RESOURCES



NEWS AND EVENTS



DONATE



LOOKING AHEAD

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.

CONCLUSIONS + LESSON LEARNED

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.