

Whatcom Therapy Dogs

case study | Mia Ruger

Background

Client

Whatcom Therapy Dogs is an organization where certified therapy dogs go visit school and colleges to help relieve stress in students. They visit colleges where many people are able to visit with the dogs. They also visit children's literacy programs and listen to children practice reading. Whatcom Therapy Dogs services are free. They have a variety of dogs in sizes and breeds to help a variety of students.

Problem

The main issue with the website of WTD is that their website looks extremely old and outdated, this makes viewers think maybe this organization isn't still available. The website also has poor readability and distracting backgrounds. They lack hierarchy and need more navigation links. They also do not have a footer which would be useful to have. WTD has a logo that is outdated and is not repeated with in the website.

Solution

The current design of WTD is very crazy and distracts the viewer from important information. There is a lot going on visually in the current website that can be simplified to accomplish viewer goals more efficiently. My solution to redesigning WTD website was to make a simplified more visually appealing design. I also wanted a footer and redesigned main navigation bar for the website to feel more complete. I changed the logo to make it look less dated.

Process

Current Website

user flow: scheduling visit

The current website has a highlight behind the text that is distracting and distasteful. They also have a background wood texture that is does not relate to the website. They also do not have a footer. The logo is a little outdated.



Positive interaction with dogs can lower anxiety, stress, and help reduce blood pressure. This can also stimulate release of endorphins. Being around dogs makes one smile and improves human health and well-being.

Populations and Sites benefiting from our service:

- Hospital and Medical Facilities, Adult and Youth Programs, Behavioral and Mental Health Programs, Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facilities, Children's Reading, College Finals.

A photograph showing a person in a blue long-sleeved shirt petting a yellow Labrador Retriever. The dog is wearing a green service dog vest. In the background, there is a wooden structure and some furniture.



Meet Our Dogs!

This page has photos of all the current therapy dogs and their names below. The use a highlight behind the text again here which is distracting. There is no footer again.





Thank you for visiting our website...
How can we help?

Check out our Facebook page [f](#)

Send us an E-mail

Name * Email *
Subject
Message

Send

Whatcom Therapy Dogs is set up to visit in group settings. Examples are visits at colleges where multiple people have contact with our dogs. Another group visit example is a children's literacy program where the dogs listen to students practicing their reading skills. We are not set up to have one on one visits with individuals, such as visiting one student at a school classroom. A variety of dogs work thru WTD. Please feel free to contact us using our Whatcom Therapy Dog e-mail and one of the directors will get right back with you.


Chris Monroe

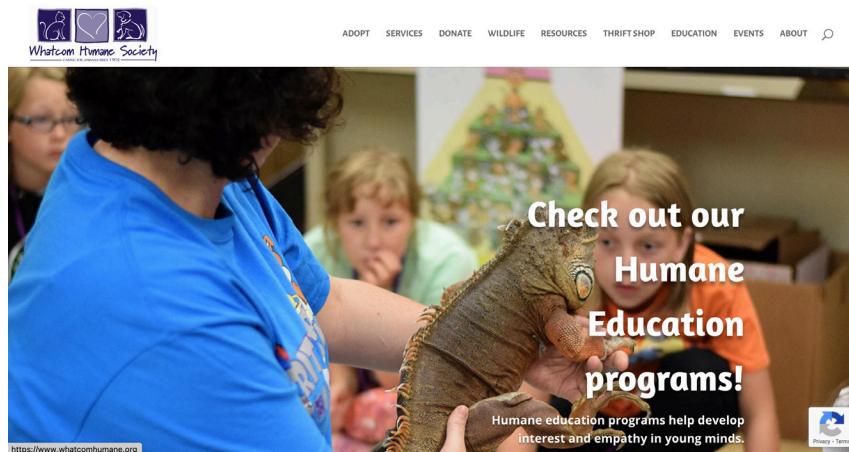

Kathleen Laughlin

This is the contact us page. They have a good embedded “send up an E-mail” option. The organization could be cleaned up a little bit and also could include the socials of the company better.

Competition

Whatcom therapy dogs don't have much competition because they are such a unique group. These dogs are only for visits and not up for adoption. Other dog websites have dogs up for adoption and they are not therapy dogs. Whatcom Therapy Dogs is local and has an established reputation in Bellingham.

Petpartners.org is an organization that allows you to search for therapy dogs in your area. Their website is a little bit easier to navigate and has better readability. They have less distractions in their website than Whatcom Therapy Dogs. There's not too many other competitors with Whatcom Therapy Dogs. An indirect competitor could be the Whatcom Humane society. They have a much better formatted website. They have dogs for adoption but aren't therapy dogs.



The screenshot shows a woman interacting with a child who is petting a yellow therapy dog. The website features a navigation bar with links for About, Act, Learn, Volunteer, Donate, and Log In. A search bar is also present. A sidebar on the left promotes the "Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals" with a "LEARN MORE" button. At the bottom, there are links for "Volunteer with Pet Partners", "Advocate with Pet Partners", and "Donate to Pet Partners".

Personas

Sarah / 20

Job:

Student at WWU
Works part time in the library on campus

Hobbies:

Hanging out with friends
Going out to eat
Hiking

Family:

Mom, Dad, 17 year old sister
They live two hours away

Values:

Family and Friends
School
Nature

Site Goals:

Get good grades in college
Spend quality time with family and friends
Make good connections at college

Sarah is a Sophomore in college studying computer science. She spends a lot of time studying and doing homework. She occasionally gets overwhelmed with all of the classes shes taking and tries to do yoga to help with her stress. In her free time she enjoys hiking and hanging out with friends. She is always looking for new ways to help with stress and loves animals.



Personas

Jacob / 23

Job:

Student at BTC
Works full time at Woods

Values:

Sleeping
Paying rent
Finishing classes

Hobbies:

Video games
Sleeping
Hanging out with friends

Site Goals:

Finishing classes
Making enough money

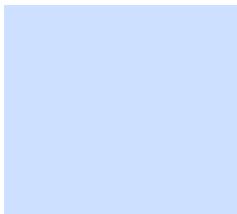
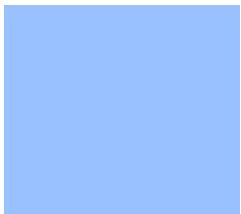
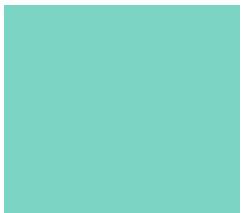
Family:

Mom, Dad, 3 younger siblings

Jacob is taking a few classes at BTC and works full time at Woods. He is always stressed out about managing his time between work and between school. He is always tired and feels like he doesn't have enough time to do everything. His goal is to finish taking classes so he can find a different job and have more free time.



Moodboard



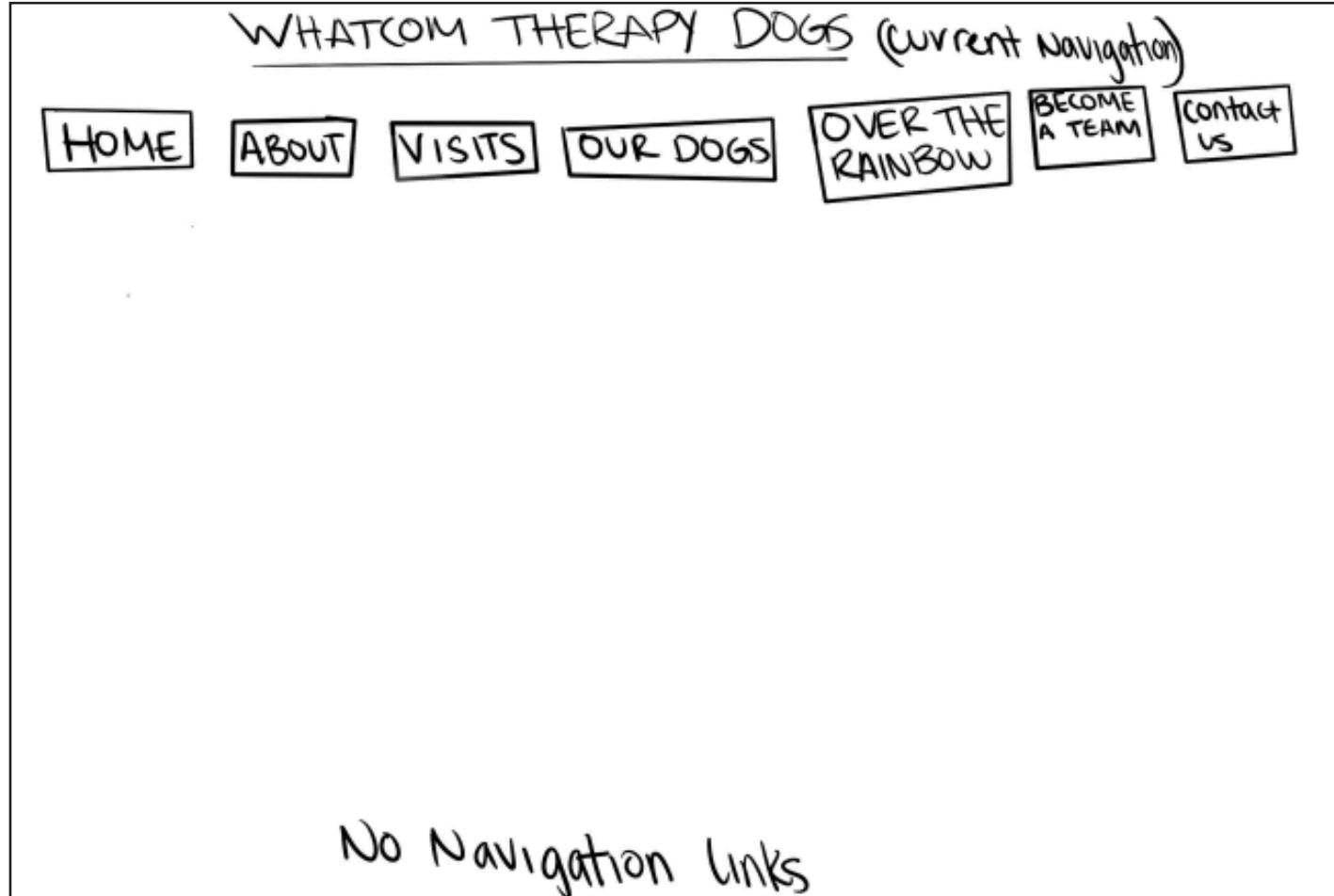
Anek Bangla (headings)

Livvic Bold

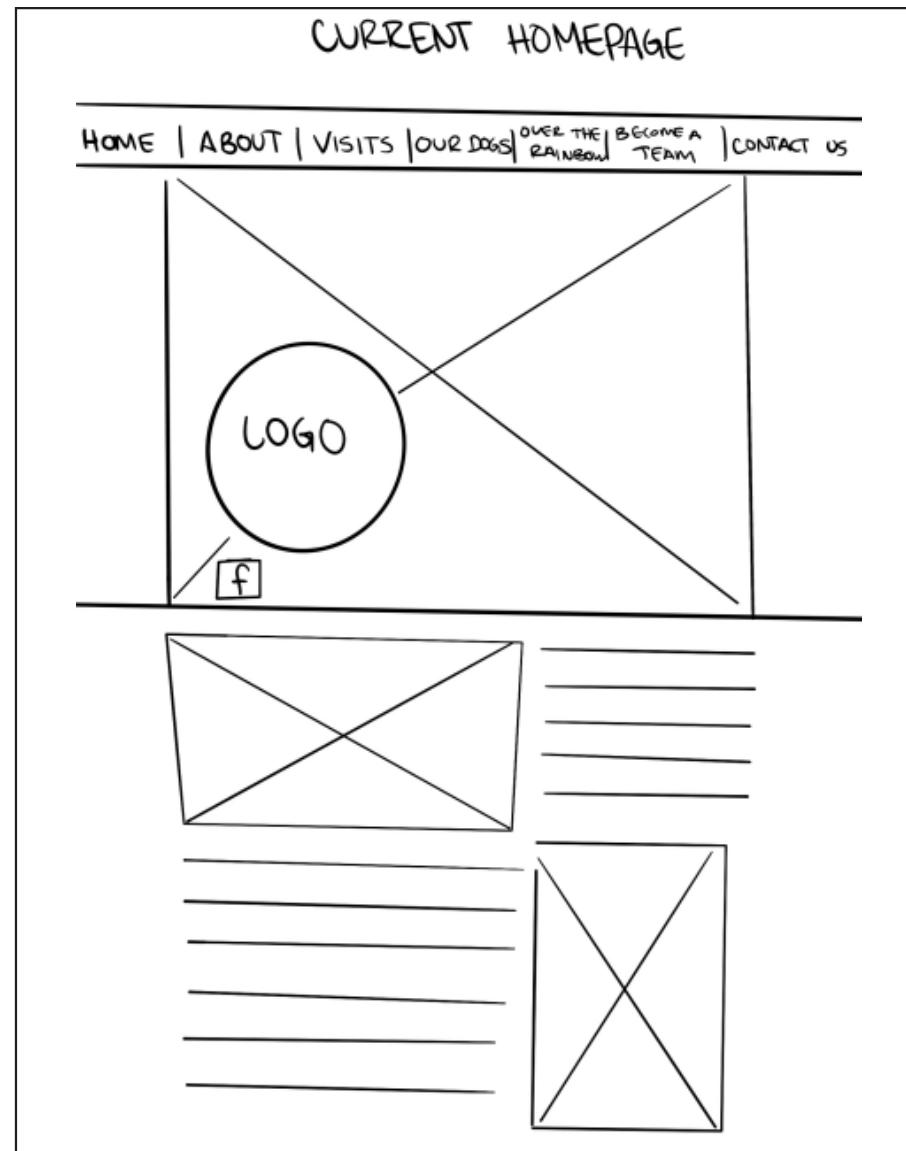
Livvic Regular (body copy)

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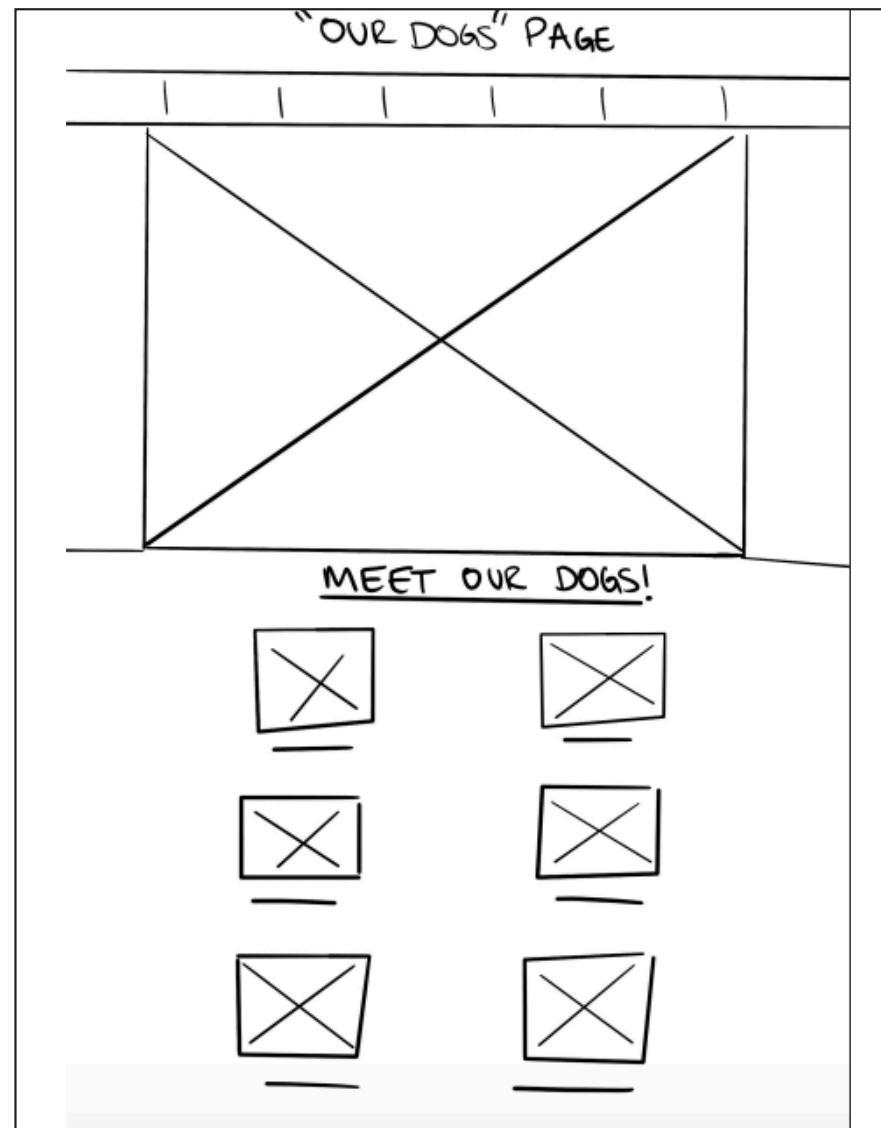
current website/navigation



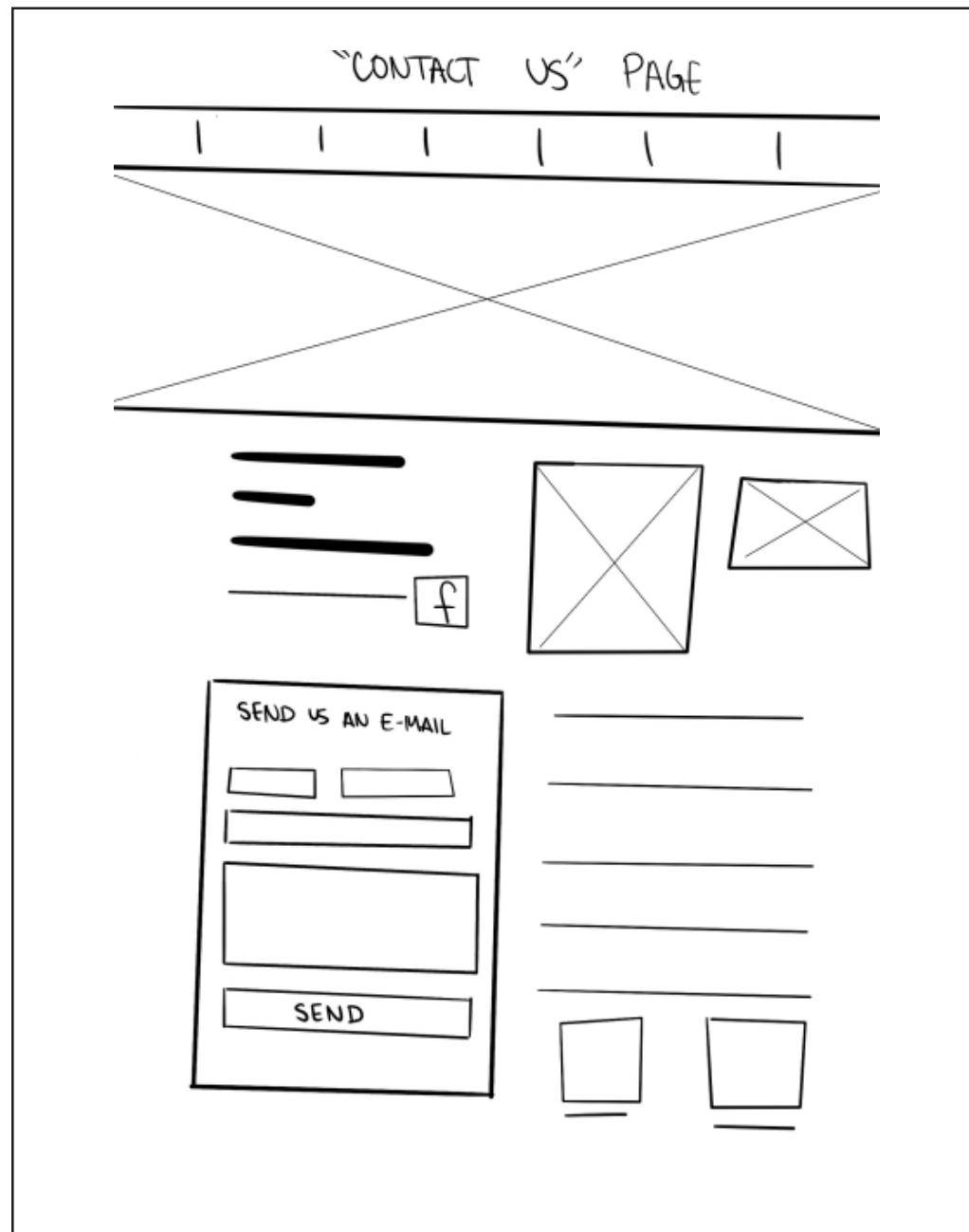
current website/home page



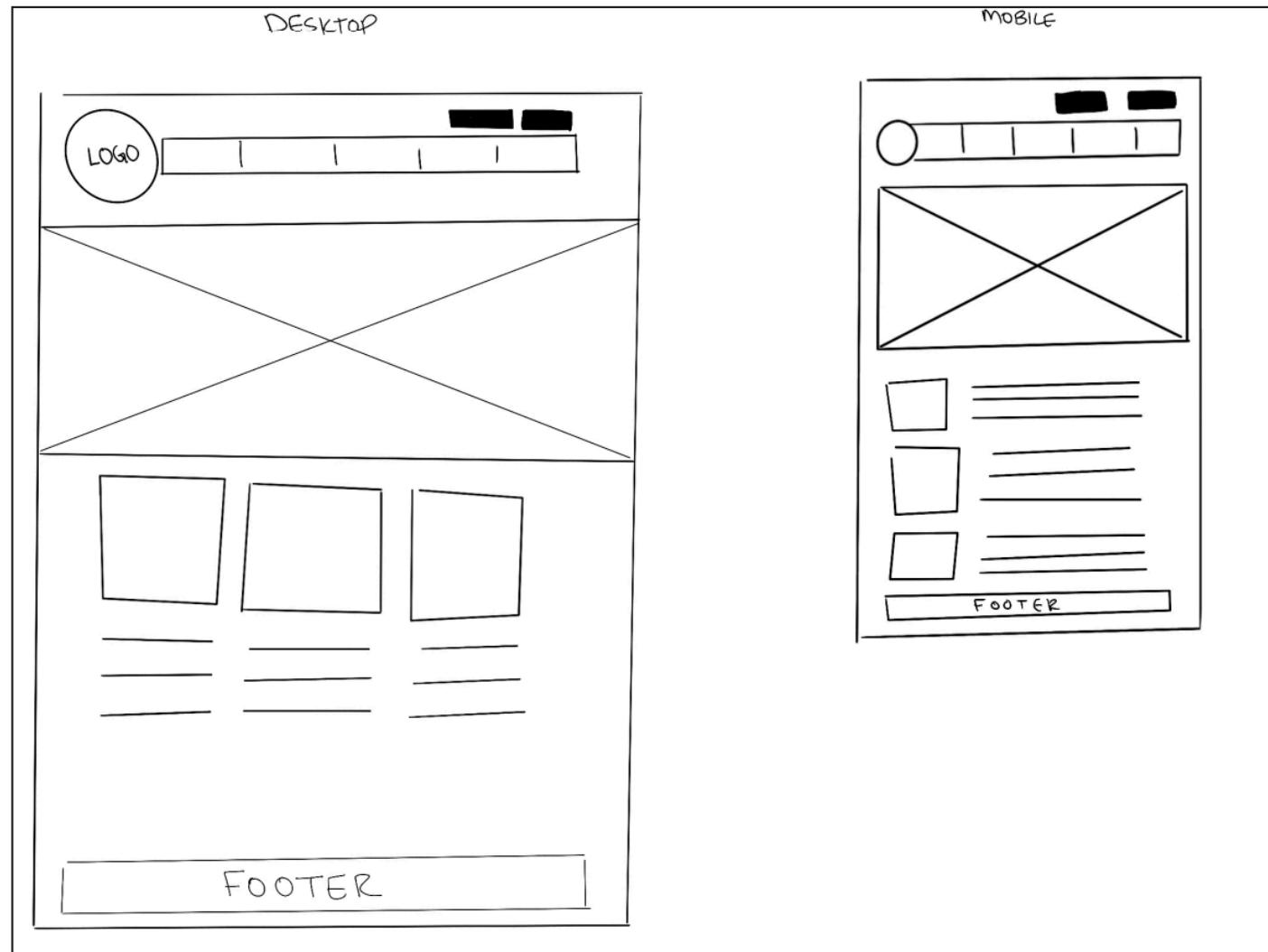
Our dogs page



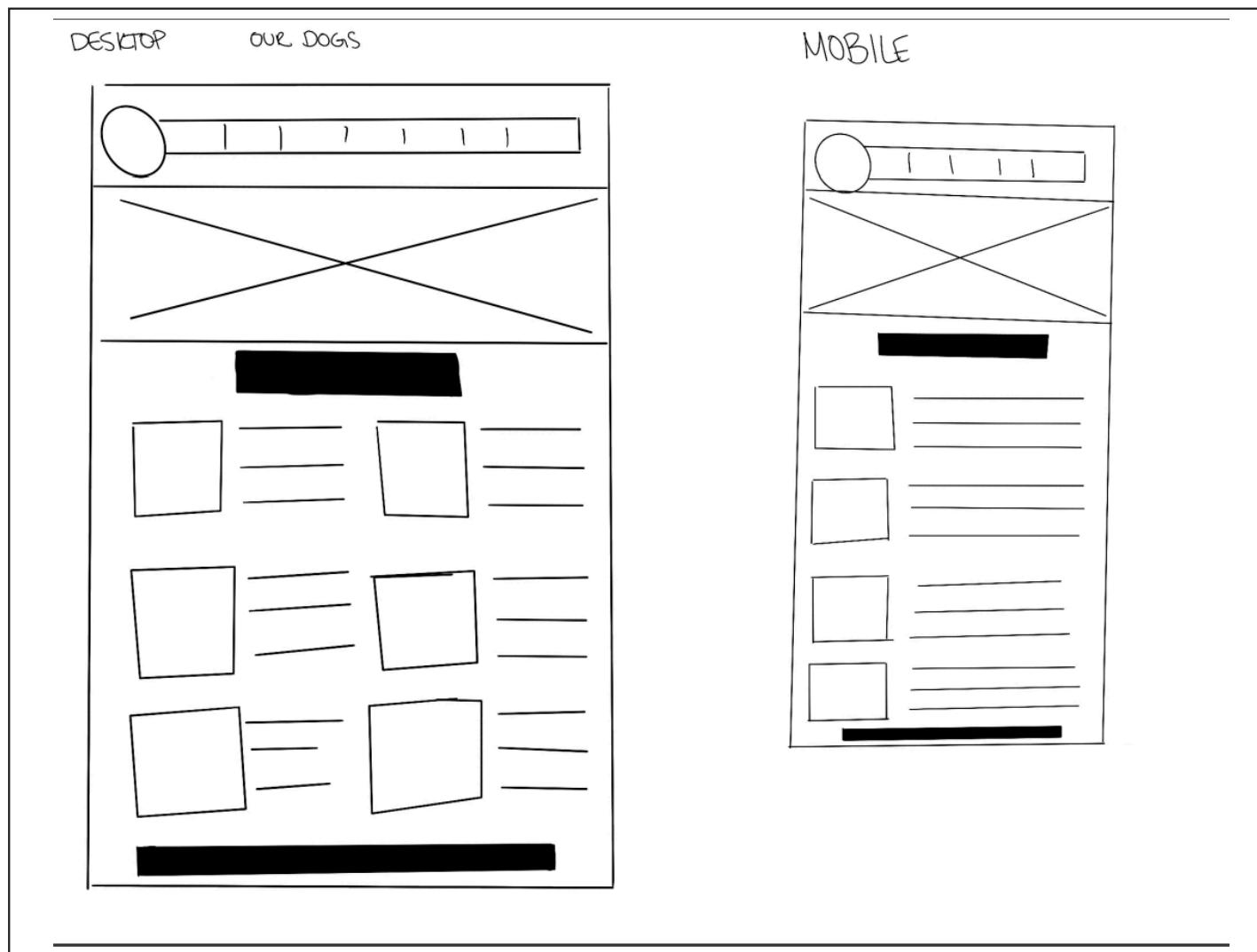
Contact us page



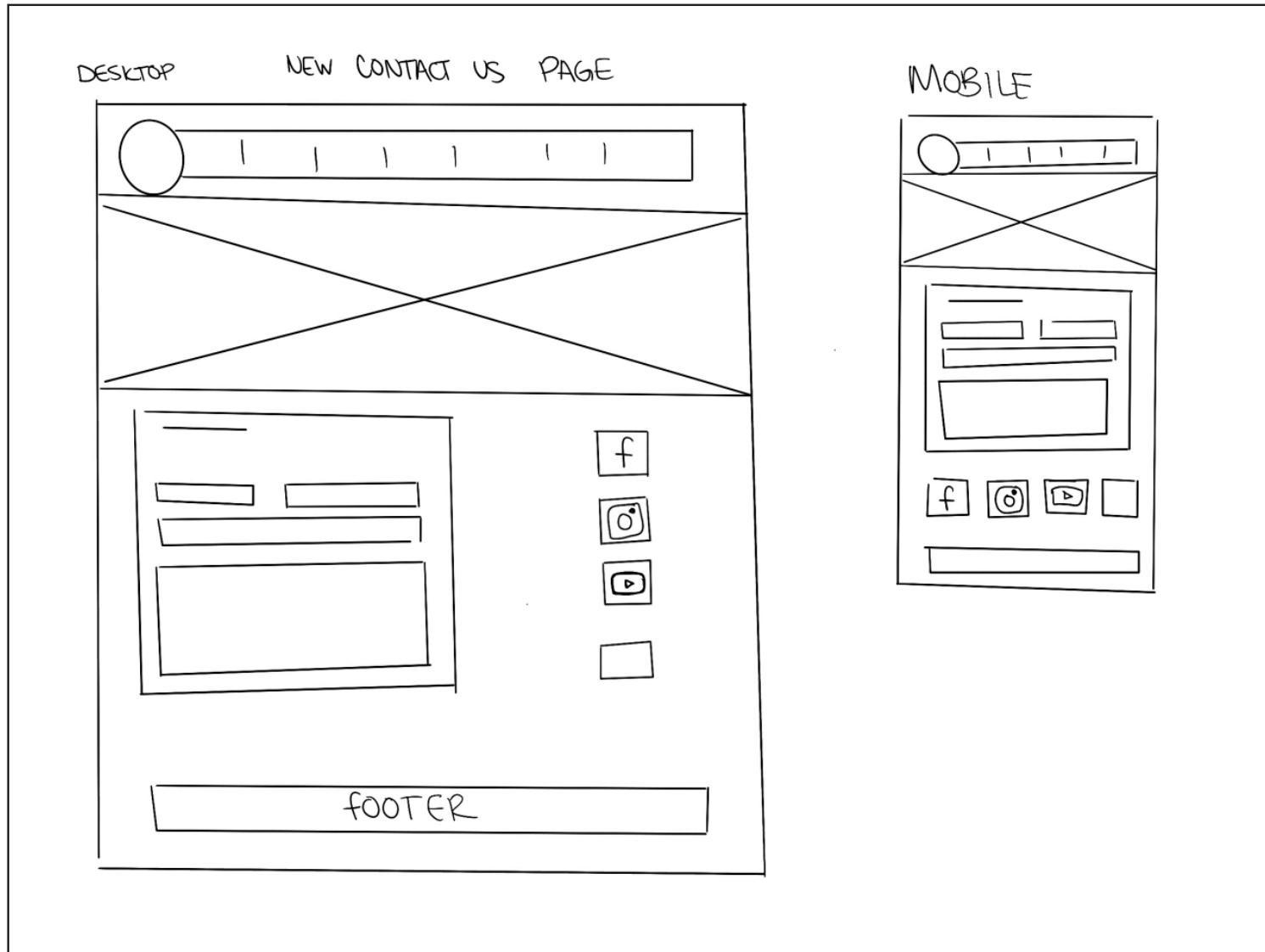
new website/home page



our dogs page



schedule a visit page



New Website

user flow: scheduling visit

This is the new “HOME” page. The website redesign has calming colors and higher quality pictures. It also contains a simplified less distractive logo. It is simpler and easier for users to accomplish tasks.

Whatcom Therapy Dogs

whatcomtdogs@gmail.com

360.123.4560

Positive interaction with dogs can lower anxiety, stress, and help reduce blood pressure. This can also stimulate release of endorphins. Being around dogs makes one smile and improves human health and well-being.

Populations and Sites benefiting from our service:
Hospital and Medical Facilities, Adult and Youth Programs, Behavioral and Mental Health Programs, Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facilities, Children's Reading, College Finals.

We represent volunteer Therapy dogs and their handlers. The teams are insured through their registered organizations. We help connect them with settings that could use a friendly canine visit for play or just hugs. WTD services are free, but dog biscuits are welcome!

<https://www.figma.com/proto/cJFvYI3Blu2fLU3STAPGom/WHATCOMTHERAPYDOGS?node-id=1%3A2&scaling=scale-down&page-id=0%3A1&starting-point-node-id=1%3A2&show-proto-sidebar=1>

This is the new “OUR DOGS” page. There are consistent, high quality pictures of the dogs. They also have a description paragraph to go with the dog that the original website did not have. There is also two ways to navigate to the end goal of scheduling a visit. It is straight forward and easy to navigate for users.

The screenshot shows the 'Our Dogs' page of the Whatcom Therapy Dogs website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for HOME, ABOUT, VISITS, OUR DOGS (which is the active page), VOLUNTEER, and CONTACT US. To the left of the navigation is the organization's logo, which is a blue circle containing a black paw print and the text 'Whatcom Therapy Dogs Bellingham WA'. Below the navigation is a large, vibrant photograph of five dogs looking over a concrete ledge against a clear blue sky. Underneath this image is the heading 'Our Dogs' in a bold, dark font.

Mason

This is Mason, he is 3 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 8 months. He attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find him in the library Fridays at 1:30.

Honey

This is Honey, she is 1 year old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 3 months. She attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find her in the library Fridays at 1:30.

Maple

This is Maple, she is 2 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 5 months. She attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find her in the library Fridays at 1:30.

Daisy

This is Daisy, she is 5 months old and is currently training with Whatcom Therapy Dogs. She will be certified in 4 months and she will then be able to join on visits to WWU's campus. We can't wait for you to meet her!

Ocean

This is Ocean, he is 1.5 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 4 months. He attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find him in the library Fridays at 1:30.

Sophie

This is Sophie, she is 2 years old and has been with Whatcom Therapy Dogs for 7 months. She attends visits to WWU every Friday! You can find her in the library Fridays at 1:30.

Schedule a Visit

Whatcom Therapy Dogs | whatcomdogs@gmail.com | 360.123.4560

This is the new “VISITS” page. Here viewers are able to submit an email about a visitation after they view all the dogs and see if there is a specific dog they want to have an appointment with. This is an embedded message that is super easy for viewers to use. It also has all the socials of the company that viewers can easily use.

The screenshot shows the 'VISITS' page of the Whatcom Therapy Dogs website. The page includes a logo in the top left corner, a navigation bar with links to HOME, ABOUT, VISITS, OUR DOGS, VOLUNTEER, and CONTACT US, and a newsletter sign-up button in the top right. The main content area features a large photo of a woman petting a dog, followed by a 'Schedule a Visit' button. Below this is a large blue contact form with fields for Name, Email, Subject, and Message, each with its own input box. A blue 'SUBMIT' button is at the bottom of the form. At the bottom of the page, there are social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, along with the company's name, email address (whatcomtdogs@gmail.com), and phone number (360.123.4560).

Mobile Version

home

The image shows a mobile version of a website for "Whatcom Therapy Dogs". The header features a circular logo with a paw print and the text "Whatcom Therapy Dogs" and "Bellingham WA". A navigation bar with links for HOME, ABOUT, VISITS, OUR DOGS, VOLUNTEER, and CONTACT US is visible. The main content area includes several photographs: a close-up of a brown dog's face, a boy reading a book to a black dog, two dogs being petted by people in a room, and a person petting a yellow dog. Text on the site discusses the benefits of dog interaction, the populations served, and information about the therapy dogs.

<https://www.figma.com/proto/AVYxFt0BQvHHlvMgNtDL0r/WTDs-mobile-version?node-id=3%3A4&scaling=scale-down&page-id=0%3A1&starting-point-node-id=3%3A4>

sign up for our newsletter

HOME ABOUT VISITS OUR DOGS VOLUNTEER CONTACT US

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whatcomtdogs@gmail.com 360.123.4560

our dogs



Our Dogs



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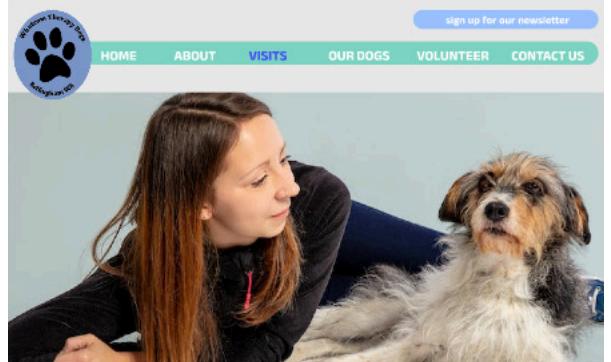


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[Schedule a Visit](#)

whatcomtdogs@gmail.com 360.123.0560

schedule a visit



HOME ABOUT VISITS OUR DOGS VOLUNTEER CONTACT US

sign up for our newsletter

NAME EMAIL

SUBJECT

MESSAGE

SUBMIT

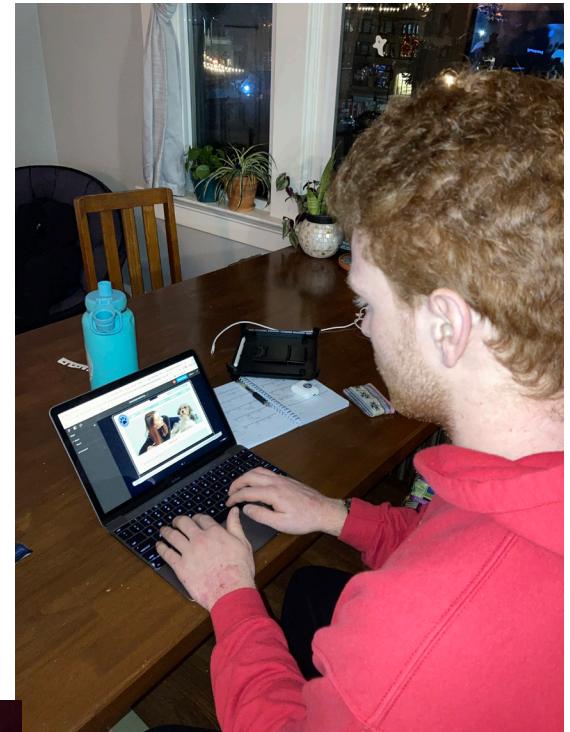


whatcomdogs@gmail.com

360.123.4560

User testing

During user testing I was able to make small changes. At first the “OUR DOGS” page had a drop down menu including “over the rainbow dogs”. They also said that since there isn’t much information on the current website the drop downs are not necessary and keeping it simple would be easiest and best. These are dogs that have passed with the company. Users said that this page was unessesary and could potentially make viewers sad. They also said that having multiple areas where you can select to schedule a visit were helpful in directing the viewer.



Outcome Challenges

Some challenges I faced while creating the redesigned website were creating drop down menus in figma. This was a challenging part of the project for me, but I was able to figure it out after watching videos and practicing. I ended up not using the drop down menu I created, but it was still good practice.

Reflection

I learned that wireframes are super important. It is best to make detailed wireframes and map out specifically what you want your website to look like. This works great before starting to digitally make your website. Spending more time on the beginning stages really helps in the final stage.