

Michelle Trame

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three of my projects



streamlining
school lunch



addressing
inclusion in parks



rebuilding sponsor
relationships

streamlining school lunch

THE CHALLENGE

Parents are stressed out by planning and packing school lunches that are healthy and actually eaten by their kids.

With my team I **created a storyboard** to pitch a solution to this problem.

MY ROLE

I created the initial product concept and thumbnail storyboards for the concept based on conversations with parents and observations of children aged 4-9.

I worked with a team to scale up the illustrations and refine the initial concept.

I wrote and delivered the pitch presentation.

OUR SOLUTION

A **tablet app** paired with a **meal delivery service** and a unique **lunch container** that allows parents and children to collaborate on planning a week's worth of lunches with an emphasis on supporting diverse and **healthy choices** with **minimal waste**.

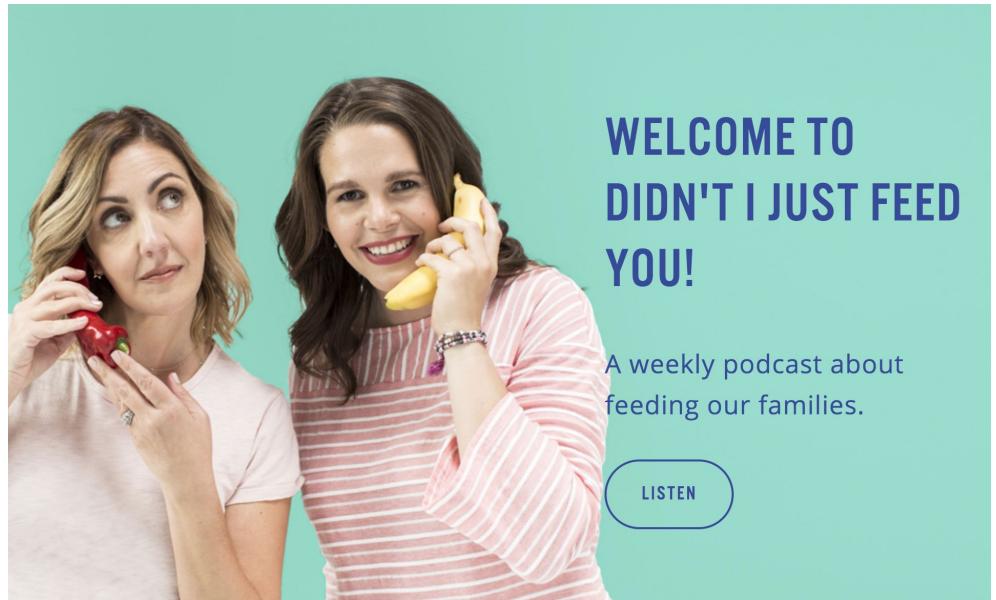
what's wrong with school lunch?

From conversations with parents

Providing kids with food that can power them through a long day and is healthy requires a ton of planning and energy.

Lunch packing often happens during the 'morning rush' as parents are trying to get to work and get the kids to school.

They are concerned that their kids are eating enough of the right foods and know first hand that not eating can tank their children's energy and focus.



WELCOME TO
DIDN'T I JUST FEED
YOU!

A weekly podcast about
feeding our families.

LISTEN

Parents are looking for guidance about feeding their kids. There's even an entire podcast devoted to the topic (via <https://didntijustfeedyou.com/>)

what's wrong with school lunch?

Notes from observing kids at lunch

Knowing how much effort parents were putting into preparing lunches, it was hard to see kids toss away so much food at school.

Rough treatment of the home-packed lunches resulted in damage to food. Castoff food may have been damaged in transit or just wasn't appealing to the students at the time.

Uneaten or barely eaten food is thrown away by the majority of students. School-provided lunches had an especially high rate of waste [1].



1. <https://grist.org/article/schools-waste-5-million-a-day-in-uneaten-food-heres-how-oakland-is-reinventing-the-cafeteria/>

what can we do?

We designed a solution that fulfilled these criteria

CRITERIA 1

Gives kids ownership and agency, while providing structure to support healthy choices.

CRITERIA 2

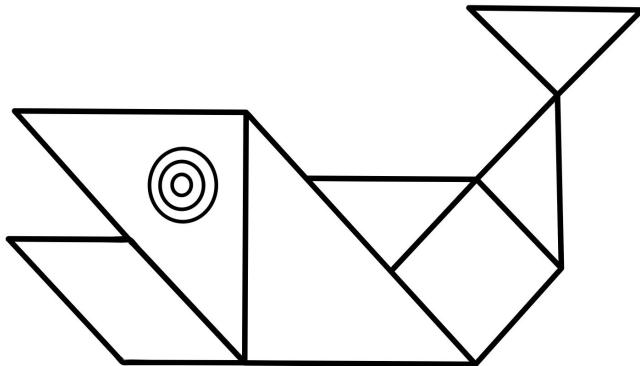
Gives parents a high level of confidence in their product without consuming a lot of time and energy.

CRITERIA 3

Reduces food waste by providing small portions and many options. No single-use packaging.

our solution

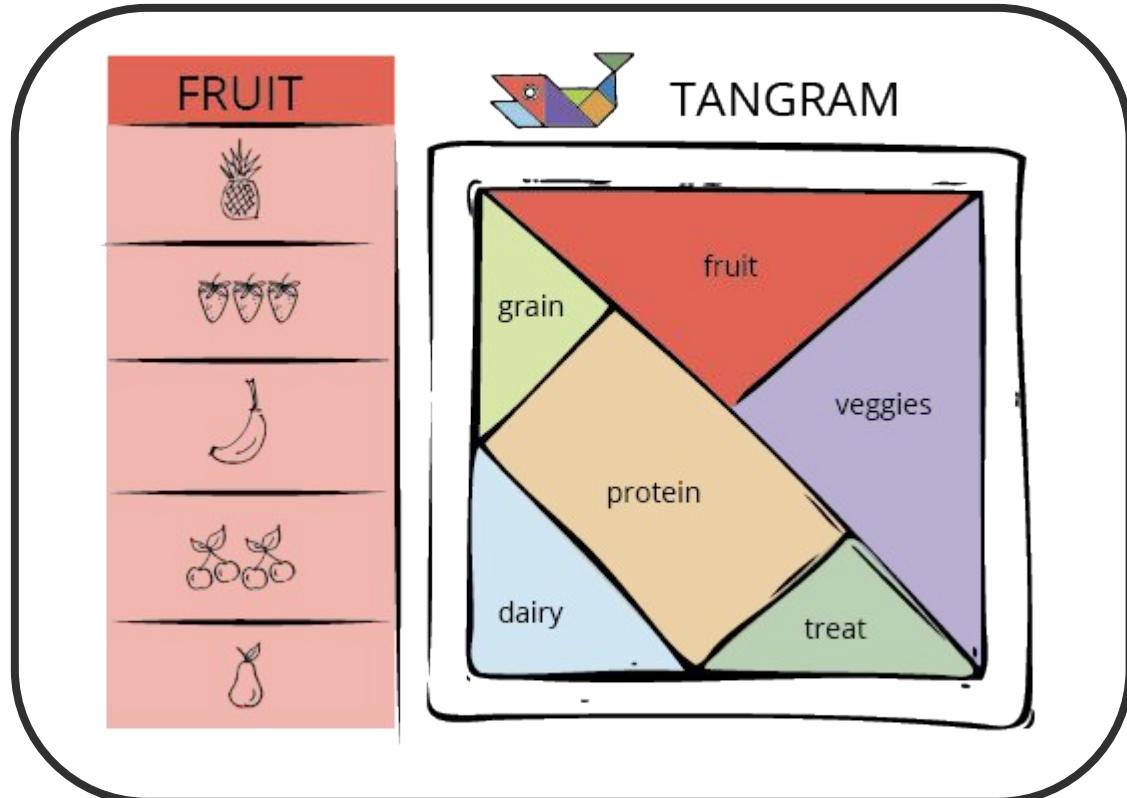
In a few minutes parents and children can pick a week's worth of lunches to be delivered in reusable and durable Tangram lunchboxes.



TANGRAM

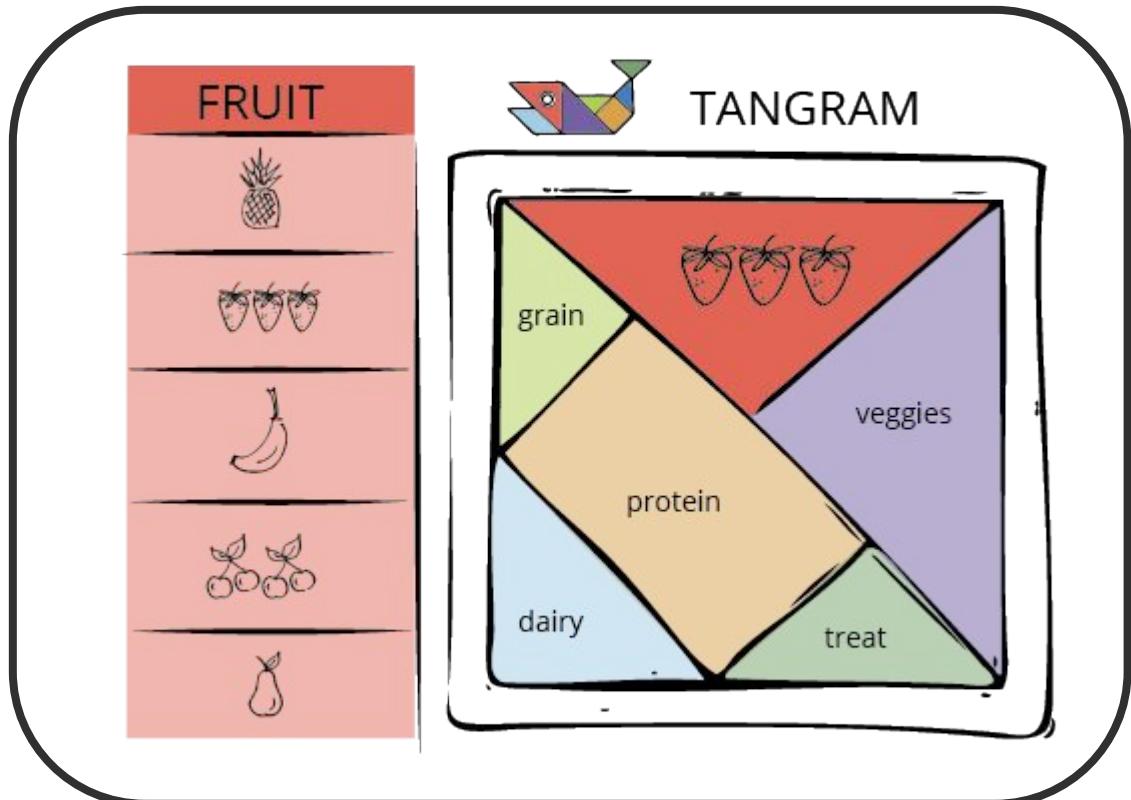
the app

We've used images in places where child choice is most important because greater involvement in planning is correlated with eating more and wasting less.



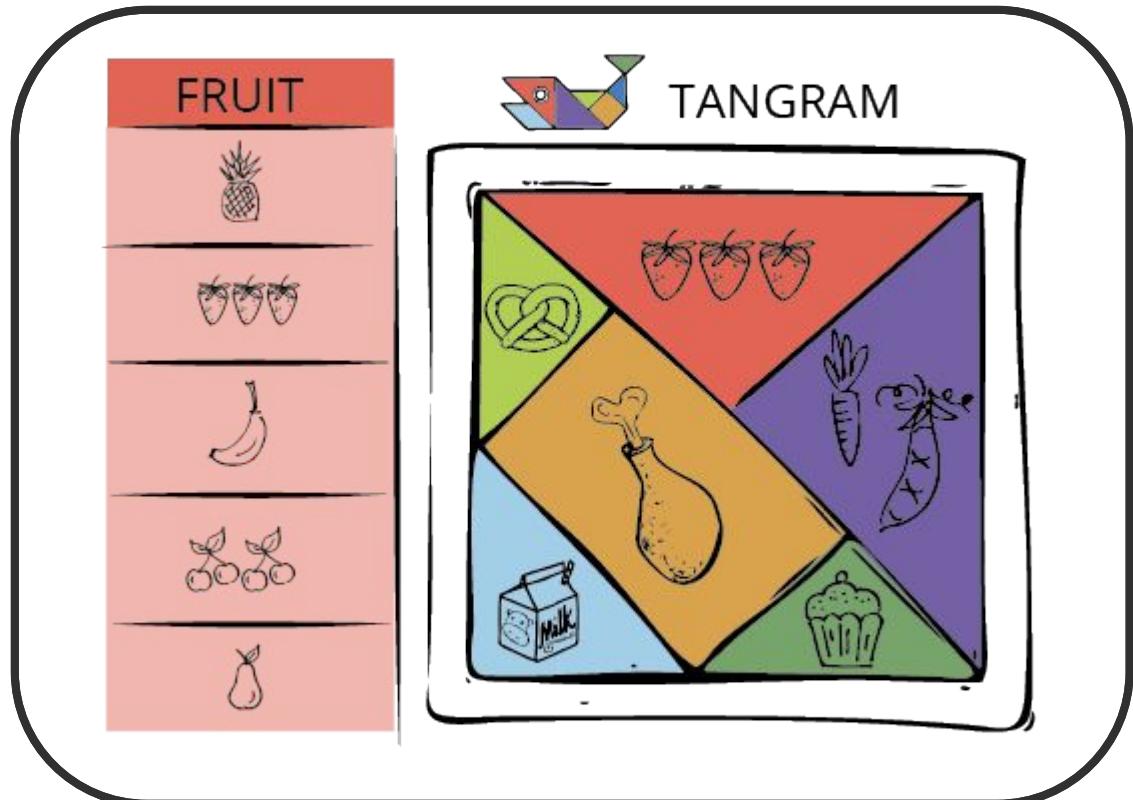
the app

Each food group has a unique shape that only fits one spot in a child's Tangram box, so kids can't fill their Tangram with only cupcakes!



the app

Once the parent and child have built their first Tangram they can decide to repeat it during the week or craft a new one for each day.



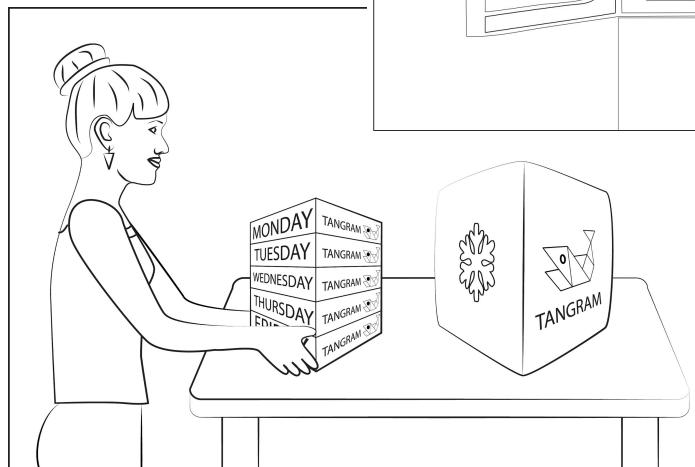
the service

Meals are delivered
to the family's home
one week at a time.



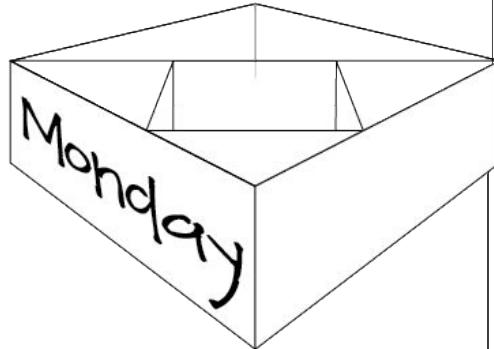
the service

Insulated, reusable outer packaging keeps the ingredients fresh. Stackable Tangrams fit easily in the refrigerator.



the service

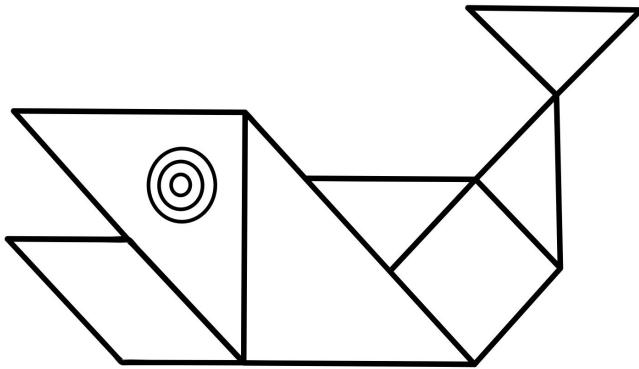
Durable, reusable
Tangram boxes fit
easily into backpacks
and are prepared to
tolerate action-
packed school days.



the service

Small portions of interesting foods chosen by picky eaters maximize the odds that all the foods get eaten.





TANGRAM

addressing inclusion in parks

THE CHALLENGE

Austin Parks Foundation was seeking to elevate their impact by **improving brand recognition** and **engagement among park users.**

MY ROLE

My teammates and I were equally involved in the initial design research, the analysis and synthesis of the data, and the development of presentations of our work to the client throughout the process.

OUR SOLUTION

My team delivered **design criteria** for further program development in support of APF's goals. In particular, we focused on **volunteerism, park identities and equity and inclusion.**

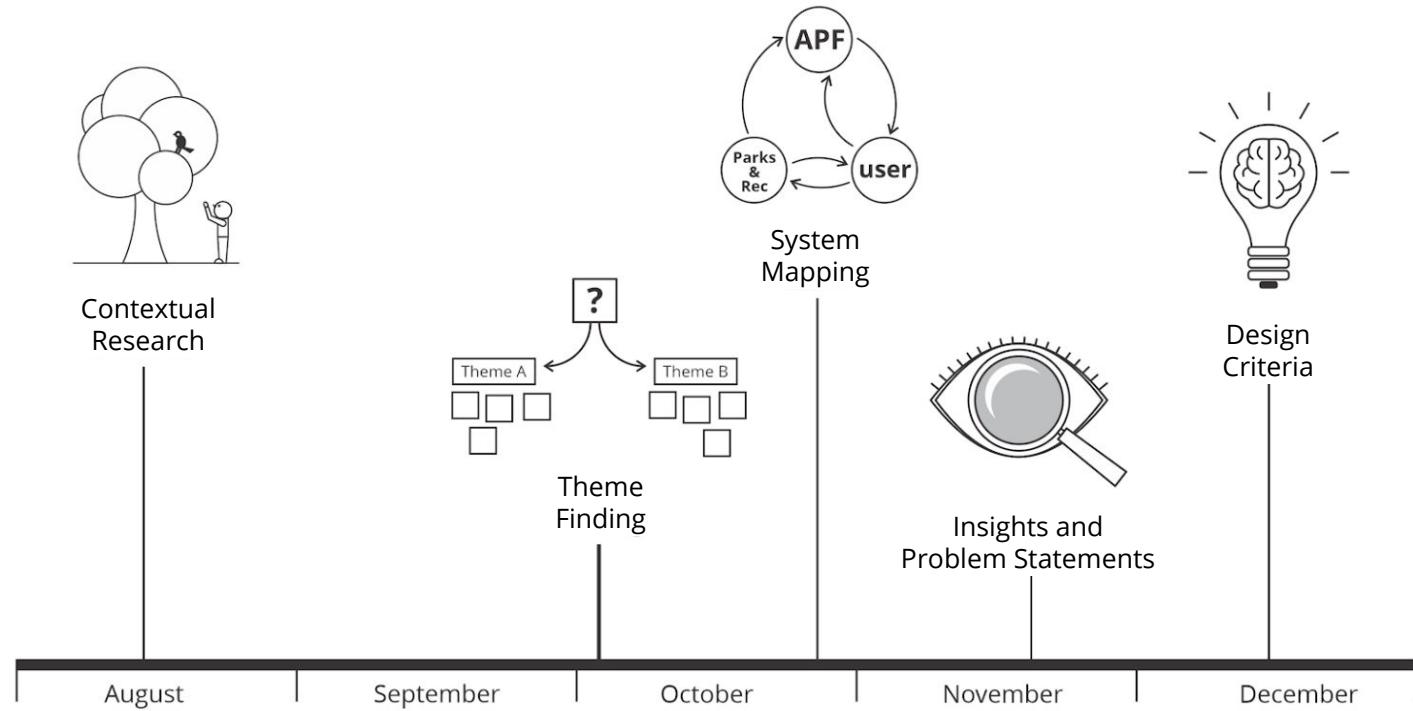
who are parks for?

Upon partnering with Austin Parks Foundation, we read their strategic plan and noted a range of stakeholders from the City of Austin to donors to vendors to the media. In total, their current strategic plan has 13 stakeholders. However, **we noticed one main group was missing: park users.**

The general public was absent from the strategic plan. This notable absence helped guide the focus of our research to include **typical park users and Park Adopters**, highly committed volunteers who we thought of as “super users.” We sought to understand their relationship to parks through the lens of people’s feelings of ownership.



A park user walking her dog in a popular Austin park.



observing behavior



The 20 park users we observed in context.

We met with 20 people in 16 different Austin parks to observe their routines in their local park. We asked them to choose our meeting location and only ended up visiting the same park twice.

Our focus was observing what people do to better understand their values and the motivations for their actions. We also led them through exercises such as drawing a mental map of parks in Austin.



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FOUNDATION

theme finding

We **affinitized the hours of transcription** to find patterns in values, beliefs, motivations and behavior. Several themes emerged from our interactions with park users.

A sense of ownership is driving irrational behaviors.

Recent growth and gentrification has resulted in battles between old Austin and new Austin.

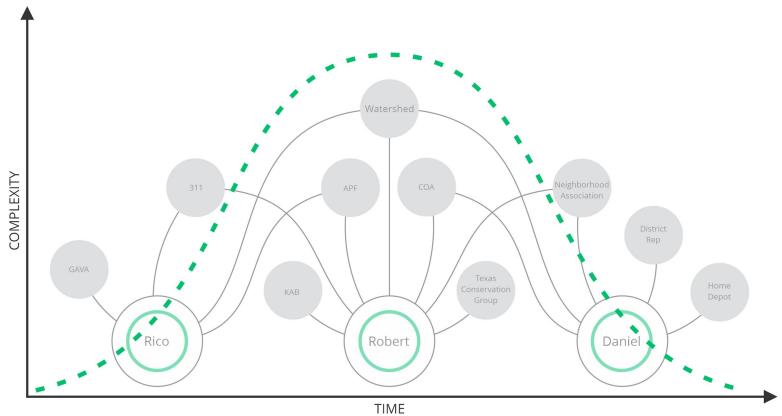
The avenues for affecting change in parks are cumbersome, slow and opaque, even for insiders.

People make strong judgments about who belongs in their park spaces.



Robert explains the sense of conflict between old Austin and new Austin, “**We’re in the thick of new development in Austin. Just trying to make sure developers don’t run rampant over the neighbors.**”

sensemaking



We developed this complexity curve diagram as we mapped systems of power within the parks.

As we digested the data, we developed visual artifacts to help us arrive at new understandings about the underlying systems, both designed and innate, driving the behaviors of people in parks.

When we first mapped power relationships amongst park adopters we saw that highly experienced and inexperienced park adopters had fewer points of leverage for affecting change. But those in the 2-5 year range were experiencing peak complexity. They had developed avenues of access to help, but hadn't yet culled them to only the most effective resources like the experienced volunteers had.

We created the diagram at left to illustrate this concept for our client and to emphasize the overwhelm that the semi-experienced adopters were facing.

what can we do?

We developed **three primary insights** through our synthesis process.

INSIGHT 1

General users want to express feelings of ownership, but feel limited by the prescriptive opportunities for volunteering.

INSIGHT 2

Park users are making assumptions about who belongs in parks because the parks lack cues to signify their values of inclusiveness.

INSIGHT 3

Social capital dictates the allocation of park resources, perpetuating historical inequities.

We then developed **nine design criteria** that address the insights.



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Jim removing invasive species in a park.

diversify volunteerism

Highly engaged park users are deeply invested in APF's mission of connecting people and parks. However, few users were aware of the various **avenues for getting involved beyond physical labor** in parks that are highlighted by their flagship day of volunteerism, It's My Park Day.

The park-goers we talked with shared many ideas about how they could **use their skills and talents to give back to the parks community**, yet the pathway to engagement with APF beyond manual labor was unknown to all of them.

APF should expand volunteer opportunities that...

Prioritize user autonomy. Volunteer opportunities that are open-ended and non-prescriptive encourage engagement from users with unique interests and talents.

Leverage self-interest. Allow users to participate in projects that both fulfills the needs of the user (i.e. establishing a portfolio, meeting new neighbors, etc.) and the needs of APF (i.e. free specialized labor).

Consider physical abilities. Create visible programs that are inclusive of different abilities to counteract misconceptions that volunteering is only physical.



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A park art piece that Sally shared with us.

inclusion via identity

High-use parks have **strong identities that use cues to suggest the values and boundaries** of the space to park users. A public green space that we visited that had a strong identity had a large light display with the word 'LOVE,' that began to lend an identity to the larger neighborhood. A disc golf course, mini libraries built by Eagle Scouts, access to a food pantry and a community garden all communicated an invitation to the space for a variety of users.

APF can take the opportunity to **provide a more inclusive definition of park space** to counter the exclusion that some populations are experiencing in parks.

APF should create vibrant park identities that...

Communicate purpose. Use physical cues in parks to communicate the purpose of green spaces and the associated values and boundaries that are expected.

Support activities. Facilitate experiences that encourage people from different areas of the city to cross into parks outside their neighborhoods.

Grant acceptance. Convey a strong stance on the rights of people experiencing homelessness to use green spaces.



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Rico showed us a graffiti-covered spillway in his park.

deconcentrate capital

While APF has a considerable focus on equity, the history of unequal investment in Austin's neighborhoods continues to have an **impact on park quality and access**. To better address this legacy, APF can seek to counteract potential bias built into the current state of their organization.

In particular we think **democratizing funding distribution, rebalancing the accumulation of social capital in small groups, and finding new ways to collect more representative input** will go a long way to address inequality and the perception of inequality.

APF should ensure equal access to support by...

Collecting use-based donations. Rather than collecting personal donations for specific parks, offer users the ability to contribute based on interests and use.

Balancing voices. Neighborhood associations and political squeaky wheels are overrepresented in privileged neighborhoods. Gather feedback directly from citizens to balance this inequity.

Distribute Social Capital. Create park adopter teams that represent a demographically diverse park portfolio, rather than a single park adopter.



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what success might look like

Build mini libraries
Make a website about an aspect of the park you're passionate about, Lead a social media campaign, Photography, Create art installations, Lead a hike, Host a sporting event, Organize an electro circus, Build park furniture, Local government park advocacy, Homeless outreach, Fitness instruction, Lead donation-based yoga, Teach primitive skills, Start a bee colony, Plant flowers, Design a poster to promote your park, Hold a canned food drive, Spearhead a dog training program, Build a dock

Hammock stands, Outdoor jukeboxes, Cooking classes in parks, Parent and child rotating splash pad meetups, Crafting events, Showers, Infant-oriented infrastructure, Farmer's market days, Bike repair stations, Activity-specific hashtags, Meditation areas, Signs encouraging tree climbing, Dynamic construction, Car shows, Family photoshoot, Bandstands and amphitheaters, campfire rings, Whiteboards for communicating pickup game times, Community herb garden, Solar energy educational program, Park Activator program

Brews and Views, Chalkboard selfies to collect input, Donation matching for a 'sister' park, Park adopter small group pizza parties, It's Our Park Day, Cross-demography mentor matching for adopters, Ongoing volunteer program for advocacy, Ongoing volunteer program for event hosting, High school advisory council, On-site digital feedback collection, Children's park imagination workshops, Park adopter specialized training classes, Rotate hosting monthly park adopter get togethers, Park adopter "best practice" online forum, Reimagined park adopter incentives



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for more information:
www.ac4dxapf.org

rebuilding sponsor relationships

THE CHALLENGE

Backcountry Babes was **losing sponsors and underutilizing current sponsor relationships.** We needed to better articulate who we were to stoke excitement with sponsors to reap the benefits of those relationships.

MY ROLE

This was a solo project that I created with input from my co-founder.

OUR SOLUTION

We created a **small printed portfolio** to share with sponsors during in-person meetings at the Outdoor Retailer conference.



why do we need sponsors?

After my company, Constellation Outdoor Education, acquired Backcountry Babes we overhauled the brand, website and social accounts. This change resulted in a **significant increase in enrollment and community engagement**, but at the same time we saw partnerships decline.

For a small outdoor experience company, relationships with sponsors are vital to extending the advertising capabilities of a small budget.



Current Backcountry Babes sponsors.



why were we losing sponsors?

We developed **three primary insights** about the sponsor drop-off.

INSIGHT 1

Geographically remote sponsors didn't have first-hand access to what we were doing and didn't understand the mightiness of our client base.

INSIGHT 2

We weren't having conversations about the two-way value promise of partnering that were uniquely tailored to each sponsor's goals and needs.

INSIGHT 3

Sponsors were unaware of our recent brand redesign and our newly super-charged social media presence.

what did we do?

We designed a solution that fulfilled these criteria

CRITERIA 1

Makes space to co-create future partnerships. Seeks input about sponsor needs and articulate what we offer.

CRITERIA 2

Paints a vivid picture of our two client types and suggests the value of building a relationship with each type.

CRITERIA 3

Creates a physical artifact that can be referenced at yearly in-person meetings.

creating personas

We created two personas based on intimate knowledge of our clients.

One persona describes a **new client who is getting into the sport** who needed guidance on buying new gear. The other is a **long-time skier** who loves having the best gear.

GETTING STOKED



Savannah is a 25-year old resident of Truckee, California. She moved to Truckee three years ago after graduating from Santa Clara University.

She has been snowboarding since she was ten, but only regularly since moving to Tahoe. Her friends splitboard and she would really like to get into the backcountry with them but wants to take a class first to feel safer.

A snippet of one of our personas.



two new dashboards

We developed a social media dashboard and participation dashboard to show off our high levels of organic engagement online and the reach of our high-touch in-person events.

These resonated with brand reps who live and die by similar metrics.



Thumbnails of our social media and community engagement dashboards



driving the conversation

We realized that busy brand partners didn't often take the lead in defining the terms of partnerships. **We had to be the ones in the driver's seat**, both through articulating what we wanted from them and showing off what we could offer.

Based on preliminary feedback we visually showcased existing sponsor relationships on social media and articulated a list of what we could offer to brands in affinitized lists. **We used these as a jumping off point to understand their specific values.**

HOW WE COLLABORATE

A JUMPING OFF POINT FOR COLLABORATION

The collage includes:

- SOCIAL MEDIA POST SHARING:** A screenshot of a Facebook post from "Backcountry Babes" sharing a photo by "Smith's photos". The photo shows a person snowboarding down a snowy slope. Below the image is a caption: "Skiing November 30, 2016. Tal grabbing with Emma Dahlstrom #PursueYourThell".
- SPONSOR MENTION:** A screenshot of a Facebook post from "Backcountry Babes" mentioning "Oggi Snow Pits with our avalanche shovels in an AMIE Level 1 class with Backcountry Babes. Thorne C3 Generic Guide Gear for our demo shovels".
- SPONSOR FEATURE:** A screenshot of a Facebook post from "Backcountry Babes" featuring "Dovey Hargrave with our avalanche shovels in an AMIE Level 1 class with Backcountry Babes. Thorne C3 Generic Guide Gear for our demo shovels".
- COURSE SPONSOR:** A screenshot of the "COURSE SPONSOR" section of the Backcountry Babes website, featuring a banner for "SheJumps" and "BCA".
- SHARING CONTENT:** A screenshot of the "SHARING CONTENT" section of the website, which includes fields for users to enter hashtags, email addresses, and product information.

IN-PERSON OPPORTUNITIES

- Logo on course offering posters (ski towns in Alaska, California and Colorado)
- Logo on film festival flyers and sponsor mention at events
- Logo (magnet) on Backcountry Babes van (seen at all the best ski destination in North America)
- Logo in educational videos
- Access to certain trips or courses for your photographer
- Opportunity to partner on video content projects
- Trackable coupon codes distributed in trips and courses for use at local retailer or online
- Your promotional items distributed in trips and courses (stickers, pencils, keychains, chapstick, ski straps, etc.)
- Demo fleet of equipment at our course hubs (Alaska, California and Colorado).
- Hosting demo days with local retailers

YOU CAN SUPPORT US

- Product demos for instructors/guides to use while teaching and guiding
- Product demos for student/client use
- Participation in film festival raffles/silent auctions
- Sharing our events, courses and trips on your social media channels
- Provide space for a course, film festival or educational event in one of our course hub areas
- VIP pricing for instructor/guides/owners



our results

After developing a specific strategy for partnerships we saw a major turnaround in trends with our partnerships.

Renewed inspiration and collaboration with existing sponsors -shoring up rocky relationships and ensuring future support.

Expanded sponsor relationships with DPS and G3 including a fleet of demo skis and featuring us in an educational video series on social media.

New sponsors like Patagonia and Zeal who have a social justice mission aligned with our mission to end the gender gap in outdoor leadership.



to see more:

www.backcountrybabes.com