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Maria Bovina

mbivona@lions.molloy.edu

Matt Carcione

mcarcione@lions.molloy.edu

Greg Goeller

ggoeller@lions.molloy.edu

Ed Ryan

eryan1@lions.molloy.edu

Dawn DiStefano MBA, PhD

Molloy College, ddistefano@molloy.edu

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MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH 'THE STRENGTH OF PARTNERSHIPS'

Maria Bivona

Molloy College
1000 Hempstead Avenue
Rockville Centre, NY 11571 USA
(917) 885-0076
mbivona@lions.molloy.edu

Matt Carcione

Molloy College
1000 Hempstead Avenue
Rockville Centre, NY 11571 USA
(516) 603-4904
mcarcione@lions.molloy.edu

Greg Goeller

Molloy College
1000 Hempstead Avenue
Rockville Centre, NY 11571 USA
(516) 655-4520
ggoeller@lions.molloy.edu

Ed Ryan

Molloy College
1000 Hempstead Avenue
Rockville Centre, NY 11571 USA
(917) 363-5434
eryan1@lions.molloy.edu

Dr. Dawn DiStefano

Molloy College
1000 Hempstead Avenue
Rockville Centre, NY 11571 USA
(631) 365-6529
ddistefano@molloy.edu

ABSTRACT

The impact of fruitful partnerships can go a long way to improve society and better the communities in which we live in. Student consulting teams have taken the initiative to conduct field research and establish a wide range of partnerships in order to raise awareness of a local non-profit and continue its mission toward sustainable growth.

This past semester has brought about additional challenges that normally would not be present in order to complete their charge assigned by their client (e.g. non-profit) and do it with finesse. The capstone course is transformational in nature due to the students working with a live non-profit and completing real-world research. If we add to the current learning environment the uncertainties of the global pandemic, we see this transformation of our students amplified due to their unwavering commitment to their client, but also society at large.

This one consulting team's turnkey recommendations really speaks to their perseverance throughout this process and in our current environment. They were able to solidify solid partnerships for this non-profit and push through adversity by coming together as a community for the greater good.

Keywords

Non-profit, partnerships, sustainable partnerships, social responsibility, building community, marketing

1 PEDOGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

As consulting teams working for a live non-profit, the students have a chance to conduct field research while learning how to collaborate with one another in a civil and productive environment. This process is transformational in it of itself, but when coupled with environmental uncertainty, the students are able to learn even more and to test their limits in a capstone course such as this one. They not only needed to pivot their ideas in support of their assigned non-profit, but pivot the way they collaborate to successfully complete the course and have peace within themselves and one another throughout this entire process. Their efforts were extraordinary and they will become the new model of success among our student body at Molloy College.

The Spring 2020 semester Capstone Class was truly a unique one in that the students kept their poise, tenacity, and their faith to get them through this invaluable course. This paper captures the essence of this semester's triumph while sharing measurable results toward future success. The partnerships that were formed were strategic in that they are not one-time partners for a specific initiative. These new partners can continue to grow with one another to display their social responsibility to their local communities and yet foster relationships surrounded by a local non-profit that speaking to the 'inner good' among people as a whole and bettering society for it. "Goal Consulting, Inc." used the Bloomberg Philanthropies, "Mayor's Challenge" application to guide the consulting experience.

2 THE CONSULTING PROBLEM

The client is the *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation*. This non-profit was created in memory of Ryan Mullen. He was an energetic and caring individual that made a real impact on those that surrounded him in such a short period of time. The organization's primary goal is to spread kindness 'because nice matters'. Ryan had many attributes that made him a very

special youth in his local community. Our students were successful telling his story to nearby potential partners to garner long-term relationships while continuing his legacy to reshape the culture of our youth. The Founder of the organization served as the direct client for this fourteen-week capstone project.

The *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation* spoke of the need to build and maintain partnerships in order to achieve sustainable growth. This consulting team was able to successfully streamline numerous partnerships while marketing one consistent message, 'because nice matters'. It is not perhaps your usual non-profit where the ask is clear that funding is a necessity to move the organization forward and partnering with donors and promoting volunteerism would help support the organization. The hope of this Foundation is simply to spread kindness and understand that the youth of today as well as tomorrow have their unique issues and if properly addressed, it could positively impact future generations and save lives. This concept is one that the students at Molloy at this stage in their lives can resonate with and it really hit home for the entire class. They feel so fortunate to have had a hand in the immediate growth on the Foundation and are committed toward the future growth of this reputable organization with love, empathy, and kindness at the forefront of their collective efforts.

In order to maintain sustainable growth, the partnerships that were solicited had everything to do with Ryan's life in his local community and then the consulting team thought to expand their reach outside the local community spanning the surrounding boroughs. Imagine this taking place during a global pandemic. It was extraordinary to watch the students persevere and strategically form partnerships with the Massapequa Soccer Shop, where Ryan spent a lot of his time playing soccer since he was a young boy. Having had a relationship with Ryan before he passed, they agreed to a magnificent partnership that would certainly continue his legacy and provide ongoing revenue to the organization.

The second partnership was with Mario's Pizzeria in Melville. This was Ryan and his classmates venue to gather during the day in between classes and in the evenings with close family and friends. The exclusive partnership created here will enable the Foundation to utilize their services when creating future charitable events. This partnership can take shape in many ways by providing raffle baskets, catered food at the charitable event, and by promoting donations on premise to a fallen youth in their own neighborhood.

Another partnership that came out of a prior capstone partner now returning to aid another local non-profit is Spectrum Designs. Spectrum formed their partnership with the Foundation to provide a discount toward the non-profit's merchandise sales. The *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation* expressed interest in partnering with a local vendor to provide quality custom merchandise at a reasonable cost.

The fourth partnership was with Angie's Market. Angie's Market is a family-owned market that has agreed to participate in a 'pink bread day' which plays a significant role with the overall branding of the organization. For the next several years, the baker at Angie's Market has committed to baking pink bread and fifty percent of the proceeds will benefit the Foundation. Angie's has also agreed to set up a donation box at their location in memory of Ryan.

The fifth and final partnership was made with Super Foodtown in the Bronx. Super Foodtown has made arrangements to set up a donation box in their Bronx location with flyers describing the Foundation and its mission. This would help increase revenue and raise awareness beyond local lines.

With the primary focus of expanding partnerships, Ryan's legacy will surely live on. His message is especially important today as our society is going through a lot of change and it would be very helpful for adolescent teens and young adults to embrace his message and be the example for future generations.

3 THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Massapequa Soccer Shop.**
The partnership with the soccer shop speaks to one of Ryan's most sacred hobbies. He played locally and abroad. The creation of student scholarships is already being supported by the Foundation and marketing this as well as other aspects of the Foundation in this venue will surely promote additional scholarships to be awarded over time.
- **Mario's Pizzeria.**
Once Mario's heard of the untimely death of Ryan, they were more than happy to promote the work of the Foundation. This partnership will go a long way for the organization in that it will provide raffle basket items for charitable events, cater the food for future events, and even promote Ryan's legacy at its venue where friends and family hold Ryan dear to their hearts. This is surely a win-win scenario.

- **Angie’s Market.**
This family-owned gourmet grocer caters to their clientele who have enough of discretionary income to make a difference in future years for the Foundation. Angie’s understands the need for social responsibility and is making efforts to participate in a ‘pink bread day’ program to increase brand awareness of this Foundation’s cause. Within a week’s time frame during the global pandemic, the donation box was able to raise approximately \$50 from recurring patrons.
- **Super Foodtown.**
The foot traffic in this location is heavy and is considered an essential business during the pandemic. Having donation boxes throughout the venue will certainly help with incremental donations over time. This also helps the Foundation to expand its brand in the metro region.
- **Spectrum Designs.**
The partnership between two non-profits that are local on Long Island coming together to support individuals with developmental disabilities and to spread kindness as well as generosity among our community fits like a glove. The employees of Spectrum Designs are now invested in the Foundation with the creation of merchandise for a reasonable price while the *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation* supports employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. This is yet another wonderful partnership that we expect to receive increased recognition in the near future due to their noble efforts.

4 SUMMARY OF DESIRED OUTCOMES

The objective of creating this partnerships is to have these organizations collaborate and help sustain one another not just through this global pandemic, but for the long term with prudent goals in mind. Because these partnerships are strategic in nature, they can ultimately help the Foundation operate more efficiently, therefore, sustaining organizational growth and creating a sense of community for those that resonate with the organization’s mission, celebrating Ryan’s life.

5 IMPACT ON SOCIETY

There is a need for this solution within our local areas and to help heal our community during these uncertain times. However, our efforts do not stop here.

Goal Consulting, Inc. wishes to make a positive impact across the entire metro area if not further in future years. We see this as just the beginning to a world-wide cultural shift within our society. What excites us most about our ideas and our recommended solutions is continuing Ryan’s legacy. We are also helping to shape future generations with a more well-rounded view of how the world could operate. In addition, these new partnerships are targeting heavily populated areas to gain the most recognition for the Foundation. To be a part of something as special as this and to be working with a live non-profit with such an incredible mission is truly rewarding both professionally and personally.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to thank our partners at the *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation*. This idea of spreading kindness and ‘because nice matters’ is so relevant in today’s society. This idea is universal in that spreading kindness is to receive kindness and the reciprocation during these uncertain times provides a great model for those that wish to become ambassadors of change in our society moving toward a better tomorrow.

7 REFERENCES

Will be supplied upon request.