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Building Recreational Programs 'Focusing on What Matters'

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ABSTRACT

Molloy's fourteen-week capstone program involves Molloy College students who learn professional skills and much more during the capstone experience. The students work with 'live' non-profits located on Long Island and their efforts serve these organizations to jointly move their missions forward toward social good. This semester's senior project was focused on the developmentally and physically disabled community as well as promoted admirable social responsibility via the collaboration of the assigned organization and the student consulting teams. This project not only was a success from an academic standpoint, but also personally for the students who transformed into well-rounded citizens. Their acquired skills in addition to their dispositions will make them the sought-out leaders of tomorrow when entering into today's workforce. This program not only supports our commitment to our local community but to humanity as a whole with this all-inclusive real-world project.

The students did a commendable job with putting together turnkey recommendations that would assist the assigned non-profit in reaching its aspirational goals, serving generations of this deserving population for years to come. This project has not only made its mark within the School of Business at Molloy, but also in the hearts and minds of its students which they will take with them upon entering into their chosen careers.

Keywords

non-profit, entrepreneurship, persons with special needs, social responsibility, marketing, non-profit collaboration.

1 PEDOGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

The idea behind the capstone program at Molloy is to prepare today's students to become tomorrow's chosen leaders. However, it is not just because of their developed skillsets, but because of their disposition toward civic engagement and social good. The School of Business provides our students with the opportunity to shape who they will become as professionals upon entering the workforce. Not only will they be sought out by industry, but they will be able to demonstrate admirable citizenship. These values become apparent through this hands-on transformative approach to learning. After completion of this course, the students communicate positively about their experience and they continue to search for truth through continuous learning throughout their careers.

The Spring 2021 Capstone Class started out with its challenges due to the pandemic. However, our students rose to the occasion and were eager to be productive. Their focus was on what could be during and/or post COVID, rather than the turbulence that was taking place within our society at that time. The students are to be commended for their research and perseverance during these difficult times.

They were divided into three consulting teams where they worked with a renowned non-profit located on Long Island focusing on their timely issues. This paper encapsulates their enthusiasm for the project and the hope for a better tomorrow by giving back to society at large.

The students worked as members of a consulting firm named "Solvare Consulting". The team used the Bloomberg Philanthropies, "Mayor's Challenge" application to guide the consulting experience.

2 THE CONSULTING PROBLEM

The client is *The Viscardi Center*. This organization is very prominent on Long Island and was looking to innovate and expand its services to this deserving population over the next several years.

Due to the pandemic, this population suffered greatly from the lack of social interaction among classmates and peers. The virtual world became real and the staff as well as the families of those who are being serviced at their facility needed to think of new ways to have this community interact with one another. The thought of creating revenue-generating recreational programs or building upon current programs to remain solvent during these uncertain times was critical.

Sustainability was key in moving this organization and its mission forward. The focus was creating various programs at their facility and perhaps others through sustainable third-party partnerships that were inclusive of this community. Members of The Viscardi Center senior leadership team were instrumental in this process. They guided the students through productive paths that will ultimately benefit the organization and those they serve over time. The Viscardi Center is now in the process of implementing their turnkey recommendations which are adding value to persons supported who were directly impacted by the pandemic. The students were grateful for this real-world opportunity to serve their community through spirit, study, community, and service.

In summary, *The Viscardi Center* is always looking to educate, employ, empower persons supported (youth and adults) so that we all can inclusively discover the love of learning, the power of work, the freedom to live independently, and the confidence to fulfill our aspirations.

In order to maintain sustainable growth, the organization looked to the Molloy School of Business and its students to address their top three issues, optimize their resources, and continue to build their recreational programs.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Outdoor Movie Screenings.**

The consulting team planned to implement their idea by investing in start-up equipment (movie screens and technology) to provide a memorable experience during and post COVID for local families. The Viscardi Center could employ members of their current program via Viscardi's Employment Placement Services which would ultimately elevate the experience for both the Center as well as the local community. This would be a seasonal recreational program (June - September) with the opportunity to grow the program during Phase II the following summer.

- **Paint Night.**

Upon investing in this recreational event and the varying packages that were available locally on Long Island, the team was able to come up with a reasonable package that would sustain a bi-monthly recreational activity all year round.

- **Aqua Zumba.**

This would be a great way to exercise for all who choose to attend these scheduled classes with the assistance of The Viscardi Center's recently renovated pool located at one of their nearby facilities. Since the pool is heated and indoors, it is ideal to run this recreational program all year round.

- **Swim Lessons/Mommy and Me.**

Here we would be able to utilize the heated indoor pool for other local recreational programs such as swim lessons and perhaps mommy and me programs. The Viscardi Center would need to invest in certified personnel (with Lifeguard Certifications, Water Safety Instructor Certifications, First Aid, and CPR) and equipment initially, but once the word gets out within the local community, classes can be ramped up to a weekly basis.

- **Open Swim Time.**

This would be a great way to expand on the Swim Lessons and Mommy and Me program. Having open swim time provides the opportunity for new and casual guests who enjoy swimming to benefit from exercising in a heated pool. Expenses will be kept at a minimum since this program will build off existing programs.

- **Chair Yoga Sessions.**

This program is very beneficial for students with disabilities as it allow them to engage in physical activity while also engaging in social activities with other individuals. In addition, chair yoga classes allow students to work on their physical attributes while helping to work on locomotive exercises.

- **Esports.**

This recreational program speaks to what a number of individuals (both traditional and persons supported) were doing to pass time during the pandemic. Why not make it into an interactive virtual program where gamers can engage with one another across the Long Island and perhaps nationally with the aid of specialized controllers that may be granted by industry via a socially responsible partnership.

4 FACTORS THAT COULD DERAIL THE PLAN

We are certainly aware that there are many inherent risks that will become prevalent when trying to launch these innovative programs.

To mention a few, among others, the initial investment in the movie screens was investigated and financial analysis of the risk vs. reward took place. Secondly, employing certified and willing instructors for said classes would be a challenge, not to mention expensive. Sustaining the programs and in-house operations costs will certainly aid to recurring expenses that will need to be surpassed with the proper enrollment in these recreational programs. Lastly, the Esports program is relative and timely, but The Viscardi Center will need to collaborate with its Development personnel and third-party grantors to invest in the specialized controllers and gaming systems. Again, a full financial analysis was completed for The Viscardi Center's review and approval for all recreational programs presented herein.

We at Solvere Consulting believe that the risks are worth the reward because our recommendations are sound and we pride ourselves on these ideas being revenue-generating to assist future generations within this deserving community.

5 SUMMARY OF DESIRED OUTCOMES

The main objective as a consulting team was to create innovative recreational programs for The Viscardi Center while building on existing programs. We were conscious to recommend all-inclusive ideas that speak to the values of today's society that will remain sustainable for years to come.

Our hope was to create these programs to not only serve as additional revenue streams for the organization, but to serve as a shining example of inclusive community outreach.

Each team member improved their organizational skills and learned how to work within a group setting with this real-world experience. We were able to hone our management skills, creative skills, communication and analytical skills toward the greater good.

6 IMPACT ON SOCIETY

There is such a focus on diversity and inclusion in today's society. This project and our proposed recreational programs speak to these values.

Solvere Consulting wishes to impact the world in a constructive and meaningful way. We have grown proud of our efforts and believe that The Viscardi Center will benefit from our recommendations over the long-term. Our consulting team has provided sustainable ideas for this incredible organization and we truly appreciated having the opportunity to elaborate on our ideas, which will ultimately benefit The Viscardi community and society as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to thank our partners at *The Viscardi Center* for allowing us to grow our abilities and share our market research with confidence and care toward a better tomorrow.

7 REFERENCES

Will be supplied upon request.