

SPRING | 09

THE CENTER FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN LEARNING CENTER

CFP OF OUR WEBSITE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ABOUT US

For over thirty years, The Center for Handicap Children's Learning Center or more commonly known in Western New York as CHC, has catered to the needs and requirements of students with multiple disabilities.

During that time hundreds of lives have been touched with an emphasis on improving the quality of life. It's our belief that everyone deserves to live with dignity irrespective of their disabilities. Here at CHC, we are committed to the belief that all children, regardless of the type of degree of disability, are valued individuals who grow, develop and learn.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Our online presence is the door that the world uses to discover our services, which stays ahead in dedication to a community of students with disabilities and their families.

Over the years we have felt the need of a quality website. Our current website lacks critical information about our programs for parents of prospective & current students need. We require a tool to provide information about our services to be outsourced to the parents, families and the faculty members, to make disabled children comfortable by sponsoring the services of our watchful protectors.

Though our priority here at CHC is our students, we believe our programs will benefit students with similar challengers from all over the world. Our vision is to make CHC a model for education of students with disabilities.

We hope this proposed website becomes a tool to collaborate and work toward the goal of improving the quality of the lives of the students at CHC and we expect this website upon completion to give credibility to our organization by fulfilling our vision.

If knowledge is power, the above proposed website would empower parents of children with disabilities. "Information is everything. Knowing where resources are..." helps parents pursue what's best for their children.

2. HISTORY

2.1 CURRENT WEBSITE

When our current website [1] was designed our objective was to provide information as to who we are and what we do. It reflects our humble beginning.

2.2 CONTENT AT PRESENT

Currently we have four pages, out of which two are inactive.

- Home: Introduction, mission statement and contact details.
- About us: Philosophy, programs and services – we only a brief description
- Calendar: Not active – Intended for upcoming events
- Links: Not active – URLs to various resources for parents and staff

2.3 SHORTCOMINGS

The deficiencies in the current solution:

- Lack of information – The website lacks in information about the institute, the various programs and services offered, staff, students, partners, sponsors
- Interface – It's not user friendly to update
- Careers – No information about careers, volunteer work etc.
- Interaction – Our website does not support any kind of interaction between parents and staff. The website requires a medium through which the parents and teachers can interact during anytime of the day
- Progress of each child – The website does not provide information about every child's day to day activities and progress
- Artwork and Photo Galleries
- Interaction between families – The website does not offer any mode for different families to interact with each other and share their experience

2.4 CURRENT SOLUTIONS

There are a large number of institutions in the country that offer programs and services to children with disabilities. The websites for some of them and the deficiencies in their websites are listed below:

1. North Center School for Handicapped Children at Chicago [2]: North Center has been providing quality services to the developmentally disabled of Chicago, since 1968. The interface of this website has been designed well and is quite informative but it has the following deficiencies:
 - Careers – No information about careers, volunteer work
 - Parent-instructor interactive tool
 - Personalized information system
 - Artwork and galleries
 - Interaction between families – The website does not offer a mode for different families to interact with each other and share experiences

2. Eden Centre for Disabled Children (ECDC) [3]: ECDC is a non-government, non-profit charity organization for physically and intellectually disabled children irrespective of race, religion and nationality. It was established by dedicated people in April 2000 at Yangon, Myanmar to meet the urgent and great needs in this specific field. The site has a good interface and is quite informative about the various programs and services that it offers. It provides all necessary features such as careers, donate etc. However it has the following deficiencies:
 - Parent-instructor interactive tool
 - Personalized information system
 - Artwork and galleries
 - Donate feature
 - Careers – No information about careers, volunteer work
 - Interaction between families – The website does not offer a mode for different families to interact with each other and share experiences

3. Turnstone Center for Disabled Children and Adults [4]: Turnstone is a very old organization which has been meeting the needs of children and adults with disabilities. The following are the deficiencies in the website:
 - Most links are not active
 - Information on programs and services
 - Personalized information system
 - Artwork and galleries
 - Interaction between families

4. Children's Center for the physically disabled [5]: This website has all the necessary features that an institution such as ourselves require. It has information about its staff, programs and services, events, information on the management and useful links. The following are the deficiencies in the website:
 - Certain links such as parents and students are not active
 - Donate feature
 - Personalized information system
 - Art gallery
 - Careers – No information about careers, volunteer work

5. Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) [6]: This website is provide a lot of useful information about their work. It also has a page dedicated to various other useful websites for interested parties. It looks very professional and all the links are active. The following are the deficiencies in the website:
 - Parent-instructor interactive tool
 - Personalized information system

6. Contact a family [7]: This site helps families get in contact with each other. It is very informative and provides services and support to the families of the disabled. It allows a family to securely make contact with another family and share their experiences. The site is very well designed and is structured quite well.

3. FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 PERSONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

To strengthen the communication channels between parents and our center.

- Must provide secure access to instructors, therapists and parents of the students to keep records up to date and keep track of their current progress
- Privileged user access using online authentication:
 - Access to modify and update students' medical records to the therapist of students under their care
 - Access to modify and update academic and non-academic records of students' progress report, schedule and artwork to the respective students' instructor only
 - Access to parents to view records of their children
 - To enable parents to view '*Dream*' (*See 3.2*)
- Must enable parent, therapist and instructors to contact each other
- Contact a family:
 - Parents can contact each other's securely to share information and their experiences
 - Search criteria should be based on the type of disability

3.2 DREAM

Dream is the name of our new proposed feature that allows parents to view the children via video stream on the web.

- Allow parents access live video stream of the children's activity at our center in a particular scheduled time
- Should be available for a limited amount of time due to privacy policy followed at our center
- Should be recorded to be securely stored in video gallery of their children in the parents' account, to make available to view whenever they wanted
- This recorded video of their children should not be displayed in the home page's video gallery

3.3 USEFUL LINKS

- Specialized Web sites that offer in-depth information on various issues important parents of students with disabilities
- Publications and webinars

3.4 PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND RESOURCES

To provide information about programs and services offered by our center for interested parties.

- Provide information about home based and center based services provided to our students
- Provide medical information on disabilities, therapies including our support and volunteer services
- Provide information on workshops offered to parents of both register and non-register students and professionals and volunteers working with them
- Provide information on the type of disabilities and how our programs benefit our students'
- Provide information on the educational needs of a particular disability of students and how to get an assessment
- Provide information on family worker around the region to offer one to one help to families with children with disabilities

3.5 ABOUT US

To provide information to the general public.

- Provide general information to guest about our vision, mission and video about the work we do at our center
- Provide information about the people involved with our non-profit organization's community as follows:
 - Management people, who serves the disabled children at our center
 - Sponsors, who provides their financial support to our center
 - Faculty ,who teach the disabled children in educating them in our center
- Provide information about facilities available at our service center
- Provide a brief history of our organization

3.6 NEWS

To keep parents, guest and volunteers informed on current and future events in the form of a magazine and an event and activity feature.

- Magazine
 - Provide information regarding resources and stories on families with disable children
 - Provide insight of the progress of our center's work and achievements of our students
 - Provide available global information related to several disabilities and their procurement
- Events calendar
 - Provide information regarding the upcoming events and activities

3.7 FORUM

This enable faculty, parents, registered guest to communicate among themselves.

- To discuss various type of disabilities
- To find people who are interested in sharing information on various disabilities and the latest developments on tackling problem and proactively finding social support

3.8 DONATIONS

To obtain funds for the purchase of equipment needed such as wheelchairs and hearing aids to provide a more accessible environment for our students.

- Art work
 - Provide online auction facility for patrons
 - Allow guests and parents make an online purchase or bid on artwork done by students
- Donation
 - School development fund: funds for the building and facility developments
 - Research fund : fund for various project conducted by research institutions for our center

3.9 MEDIA GALLERY

- Pictures
 - Pictures of events held by our center in chronological order
- Videos
 - Video documentaries created by our therapist
 - Instructional and educational videos
 - Videos of events

3.10 CONTACT US

- Map
 - Directions to reach our center.
- Contact us

To get in touch with our center.

- Provide contact details of our staff and faculty members
- Provide an appointment feature to schedule a visit to our center
- Request for an regular user account

3.11 CAREERS

To provide information regarding employment and volunteer opportunities

- Provided information on current openings and their relevant qualifications
- Provide online application form for career seekers

4. PROPOSED SOLUTION

4.1 CURRENT VS. PROPOSED

The current website looks very amateur, lack critical information and functionalities. It is largely ineffective and serves very little purpose.

The following information provides a comparison between the current and the projected versions of our websites.

FEATURES	CURRENT WEBSITE	FUTURE WEBSITE
Personal information system	Not available	Proposed
Dream	Not available	Proposed
Programs and services	Minimal information available	To be strengthened
About us	Minimal information available	To be strengthened
News	Not available	Proposed
Forum	Not available	Proposed
Donations	Not available	Proposed
Media gallery	Not available	Proposed
Contact us	Available only through email and phone	To be strengthened
Careers	Not available	Proposed
Resources	Not available	Proposed
Useful links	Not updated	To be strengthened
Calendar	Not updated	To be strengthened

5. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Our objective is to create an interactive web application to strengthen the means of communication between our institution and the parents, in order to enhance their proactive participation in their children's education.

5.1 BUILD AWARENESS

Increase general public's awareness of who we are and what services we provide. We aim to create a future where person with disabilities can live to their highest potential in the community and society.

5.2 BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

We strive to communicate and collaborate the families of our students to lead a ordinary life using our website's contact a family & forum features.

5.3 DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION

We provide the medical information needs of different disabilities and news releases plus searchable webinars, links to important websites through our resources.

6. USERS AND ENVIRONMENT

6.1 ADMINISTRATORS

System administrators will be the head of our system. However, administrator does not get access to certain student records. The administrator's responsibilities include maintaining the following information:

- Students schedule records
- News & upcoming events
- User Accounts management
- Password Recovery
- Management of Image and video galleries
- Contact information of our center
- Career & volunteer opportunities
- New programs , services & resources
- Moderate the forum

The administrator is also responsible for maintaining communication with the development team to perform future upgrades and add new functionalities to the system.

6.2 INSTRUCTORS, THERAPISTS AND STAFF

Therapists, instructors and staff will be given access to maintain the following information with privilege:

- Students medical progress, reports of treatment and medications by respective therapist
- Students academic records by the respective instructors
- Students non-academic records by any staff member
- Access to the forum

6.3 PARENTS

Parents will be given relatively low levels of access. They can use the ‘contact a family’ feature to communicate with other students’ families. They will be able to view any record of their children. However, they will not be given the privilege to modify the records. They can also access the forum and participate in discussions. Parents will also be able to view the following information of their children to access the current progress:

- Students schedule of day program
- Students medical treatment and medications
- Students academic records and non-academic records
- Students’ activity at our center in a particular scheduled time using our live video stream

6.4 REGULAR VISITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Regular visitors and contributors are guests and are given privileged access to participate in forum discussions and bid or purchase artwork.

6.5 GUESTS

Guests are defined as anyone visiting the website. They can only view general information about our programs and facilities. Guest can also set a temporary user account to participate in the online auction or purchase artwork.

6.6 DEPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT

The interface should be simple and extremely user friendly. It also should run on all major internet browsers. The response time should be reasonable. It should be hosted with a suitable ISP provider with sufficient amounts of web space at a reasonable cost. However, the current domain name should be continued.

7. CONSTRAINTS, BUDGET AND SCHEDULE

7.1 CONSTRAINTS

When this project was first proposed, our major concern was the cost of maintenance. Our priority here at CHC is our students. It is our belief that an effective use of our financial resources would be if it's utilized for the betterment of these children. Therefore it was decided against hiring a web master or administrator. We are looking to entrust the responsibilities of the administrator to one of our current staff members.

Our staff consists of professionals and volunteers that pioneer in various social fields such as physiologist and sociologist. They are engaged throughout the day with their respective students. Their technical expertise ranges from basic computer proficiency to nil. Therefore we expect this system to be extremely user friendly.

7.2 BUDGET

The development of this website is sponsored by the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the University at Buffalo. They would also be performing upgrades. However, we will be responsible for acquiring web space, the domain name, required hardware and any other necessary labor to install and accommodate this project.

It was decided at our Board of Management (BOM) meeting to use JustHost [8] as our web host and continue using the current domain name [1].

The management also decided to implement the web stream on a trial basis initially pending an opinion survey of the parents. Therefore initially we would acquire one close-circuit camera for this purpose. The estimated budget for the project ranges from \$75 to \$100.

7.3 SCHEDULE

1. Feasibility study

A three member volunteer advisory committee comprising of parents was appointed by the BOM to conducted a feasibility study and make recommendation for a website for CHC.

2. Requirement compilation

Extensive research was carried out on websites with similar features to our requirements to determine best possible features for our site. A list of requirements was compiled with the recommendations of the advisory committee and staff.

3. Project proposal

The project proposal was submitted to the University at Buffalo's Computer Science and Engineering Department.

7.4 PROJECT DELIVERABLES

1. Website

- Should be fully operational with the features specified by us
- GUI should be simple with user friendly interaction and appropriate color contrast

2. Website deployment

- Website Should be deployed with JustHost [8] or appropriate host and our current domain name [1] with the applied budget constraints by December, 2009

3. Maintenance and support

- Adequate training sessions to our staff members
- Manual describing the maintaining and using system with instructions and figures
- Website updates and bug fixes should be provided for one year
- If necessary, onsite technical support service and phone or email support is to be provided for issues encountered during the use of the website

8. FUTURE EXTENSIONS

1. To be more committed and caring, video conference for handicapped children's parents can be utilized for educating and providing counseling services for parents to provide services at home from our center at no extra cost.
2. To be more effective nonprofit Web-based community tool, video chat can be provided for families to communicate among themselves to connect, discover and share their feelings to encourage social interaction.
3. To understand and develop the behaviors of children who grow up in chaotic environments, online games for entertainment and e-learning using web based speech tools for focusing on special education can be made available in our web site.
4. To secure an international foothold, the on-line help via e-mail or voice chat can be provided in multiple languages which in-turn encourages prospective international disabled children's parents to utilize much of our services.
5. To quench the thirst for information and expression, blog & magazines can be provided in multiple community languages support to encourage social networking of families across the world to utilize our online services.
6. To be god-in-training and to make our "Circle of Support" we need to integrate the research oriented organizations funded by the government with us, to tap into the network of people who are really interested in building things and join them to be in reach of latest advancements to help disabled children.
7. To carry out long-term commitment to community, our safely assisted care facilities, to handle delicate and sensitive disabled children, can be made available on our web site by transportation requests for daily activities, special events, appointments and holiday gatherings.

CITATIONS

[1] www.chcrainbow.com

[2] www.northcenter.org

- [3] www.edencentre.org/index.htm
- [4] www.techexpresstest.com/index3.html
- [5] wsfcs.k12.nc.us/education/school/school.php?sectionid=84
- [6] www.pacer.org
- [7] <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/>
- [8] www.justhost.com

REFERENCES FOR FUTURE EXTENSIONS

- PatchWorx: Connecting Unhealthy and Disabled Children in an Online Community
<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1069053>
- Northamptonshire (NHS) survey : Aiming High For Disabled Children: Better Support For Families Consultation Outcomes
<http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/EE44F338-D332-4723-960D-E412FE9CDABD/0/AiminghighforDisabledChildren.pdf>
- Charity Navigator : Your guide to intelligent giving
<http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=31>
- Kwintessential's comments : cross-cultural solutions
<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/translation/articles/multilingual-website.html>
- Lovetoknow: Games for Learning Disabled Children
http://kids.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Games_for_Learning_Disabled_Children
- Web based speech tools
<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/hebrew/personal/tts/table.html>
<http://www.acapela-group.com/speech-synthesis-voices.html>
- Robin Good : Be smart, Be independent, Be good
http://www.masternewmedia.org/news/2006/10/12/web_20_ten_ways_nonprofits.htm
- Criss Crossed : adj. marked with crossing lines; resembling or forming a network
<http://www.crisscrossed.net/2007/07/04/10-challenges-for-web20-in-organizations/>
- We Care Transportation:
<http://www.wecaretrans.com/Transportation-Who.html>