

Project Case Study: Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments



> The Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments (DGC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in St. Louis, provides comprehensive early intervention services to address the needs of infants and toddlers who are blind or visually impaired.

DGC, along with two nonprofit partners with similar missions serving the blind or visually impaired, asked the Center for Experiential Learning's (CEL) Taylor Community Consulting Program (TCCP) for help.

The three agencies recognized that a greater level of community awareness was critical to each organization's success, but with limited resources, achieving it was a challenge.

The other nonprofit agencies involved in the project were:

- **Lighthouse for the Blind (LHB)**: provides employment opportunities for the blind and visually impaired.
- **St. Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SLSBVI)**: supports seniors who are blind or visually impaired.



Client: Debbie Naucke, DGC Executive Director
Websites: dgckids.org/lhindustries.com/slsbvi.org

the PROJECT

As a nonprofit veteran, Debbie Naucke had worked previously with the CEL and TCCP. She, along with the executive directors of LHB and SLSBVI, had been working for a year on how they could pool their resources to make the biggest impact. "Because we were three organizations, we wanted some help finding the intersection. We really wanted out-of-the-box thinking for how to proceed cohesively," she said. Naucke took the lead in applying to the TCCP.

Maggie Hughes, MBA/MSW '16, who served on the CEL team, described Naucke's proposal as outlining the agencies' common goal of better serving the St. Louis community. The nonprofits' initial project proposal listed specific areas where they needed help, including clarifying major target market segments and tailoring their messaging accordingly. Naucke was pleased when the proposal was accepted and the CEL team was assembled.

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DGC Executive Director

the PROCESS

Naucke recognized that understanding three different agencies as well as determining strategies and solutions for each would be a challenge. From the outset, Naucke was pleasantly surprised with the

seamless implementation of the project. “The team was very organized and focused, putting their attention on the important aspects,” she said. “They worked very independently. I was very impressed with how insightful their questions were.”

Hughes recognized the challenge and opportunity her team had with DGC. “We were proactive and intentional in our interactions with DGC employees. We wanted to make the most out of each conversation to ensure that we knew what they were looking for in our final deliverables and how to add value to their organization,” Hughes said. “We wanted to be sure DGC knew that we were invested in the project. We understood that their staff and resources were limited.”

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—Maggie Hughes
MBA/MSW '16

the OUTCOME

Naucke considered the project to be very successful. “We have the best and the brightest right here in our backyard at WashU,” she said. She described the team’s analysis and recommendations as top-notch and outlined three major areas where the students provided clarity and actionable recommendations for developing a marketing strategy:

- Identification of three distinct target segments
- Unique messaging tailored for each
- Mediums for effective messaging delivery/promotion



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Following the CEL team’s recommendations, the three nonprofits began execution to include the development of a billboard that was placed in the St. Louis community in 2016, highlighting each agency’s services.

Participating in the Taylor Community Consulting Project was a formative experience for Hughes and her CEL teammates. “The firsthand experience you gain from working with real-life clients provides a perspective that you can’t get in the classroom,” said Hughes. “The experience re-emphasized the idea that the business and nonprofit world is characterized by virtually constant ambiguity. We are taught that in every course, but it resonates much more strongly when you’re forced to push through ambiguity for the sake of real clients who depend on your work.”

next STEPS

Does your nonprofit qualify?

The TCCP has a rolling application process for the spring, summer, and fall.

Your organization may apply to participate in the TCCP program if:

- You are a registered 501(c)(3) agency based in the St. Louis region
- Your agency has held its 501(c)(3) status for a minimum of two years

To get started, contact the Center for Experiential Learning at cel@wustl.edu or +1-314-935-4512.