

Wilkinsburg Boys & Girls Club
Pat Bluett, Executive Director
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wilkinsburg Boys & Girls Club is trying to integrate technology into its program as a benefit to its members. The club has six computers that are used as part of its 'Power Hour' program. The program emphasizes material learned at school by getting the children to do their homework and allowing them to play educational games on the computers. The games are meant to enhance and reinforce the math, reading, spelling, and cognitive skills learned at school. The Executive Director, Ms. Pat Bluett, also uses computers to do many of her office tasks.

The computer lab used by the club was in a state of disrepair, mainly due to heavy use on a daily basis. Hardware needed to be replaced or purchased and software needed to be reinstalled. In addition, Ms. Bluett wanted to make it easier for the children and the staff to use the computers in a beneficial manner. She also wanted the children to focus on playing educational games instead of video games. Looking into the future, Ms. Bluett wanted to establish a plan for expanding the capacity of the lab by adding more computers.

The computer lab was enhanced by finding a source for replacement hardware and by establishing a new menu for starting the games and software. I recommended an establishment on the World Wide Web that sells reasonably priced peripherals that can be ordered to replace damaged equipment in the lab. The menu was redesigned to divide software titles first by appropriate age group and then by subject matter. This makes it easier for the children and staff to pick programs that will reinforce material learned at school.

Ms. Bluett also learned how to use the office computer more efficiently. I introduced her to Microsoft Works and explained how she could use it to create mailings, letters, and address books. I also showed her how spreadsheets can be used to do financial calculations. She has since passed her new knowledge on to teenagers in the club and also planned to use the computer to do more of her every day tasks.

While working with the Wilkinsburg Club, we discovered a few ways to enhance the overall technology program of the Club. These include purchasing a newer computer for the main office to make use of new technologies, providing more training for the Executive Director, connecting the office to the Internet, purchasing a computer to enhance the teen program, and using older computers for teaching or recycling.

SITUATION

Organization

The Wilkinsburg Boys & Girls Club is a local branch of the larger Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania. The mission of the clubs is to enhance the quality of life for youth, with particular emphasis on members who live in urban communities of highly diverse cultures. Funded mostly by the United Way and public support, the Club strives to achieve its mission by providing regular programs headed by adult role models, sponsoring special events, and tutoring and mentoring its members. Each club is staffed by a small group of full-time employees and part-time volunteers.

The Wilkinsburg Club has an Executive Director who currently plans all activities in addition to her normal duties. There is a Program Coordinator who is being trained to take on the program-planning role. The rest of the staff is made up of full- and part-time employees. Their tasks range from secretarial work to running the programs for the children who are members of the Club.

The Wilkinsburg Club was founded in 1934. It was originally housed in the basement of a flower shop. In the 1940s, the Club moved to its current site in a residential neighborhood to accommodate its growth. Bell Atlantic donated the three-story building when they moved their operations to a new site. The surrounding land used to be private property and housing. Over the years, property lots have been donated to the Club as families have moved out of their houses. The Club's land currently covers half a block. One of the main goals of the Capital Campaign is to raise enough money to renovate and build additions to the old building.

The building is divided into activity areas. The two offices and the main desk of the Club are located on the first floor. The rest of the first floor is a game room. The room has tables for playing board games, a pool table, and a large-screen television in the back. The second floor of the building is a gym. It has been set up to allow children to play basketball or hockey. It could also be used for smaller games if desired. The third floor has three large rooms. The first room is where the computers are set up. The second room is used for arts and crafts while the third room is exclusively for the teen program the Club sponsors.

Currently, all the computers available to the children are housed in one room. This is a large room that is also used for doing homework, playing games, and reading. The computers are against the outside walls of the room, facing large windows. At the front of the room, a desk and computer are set up for the staff to use. The room also contains a large bookshelf along one wall that contains a small library of books for the students to read. The middle of the room contains desks and tables for the children to work on their homework while they are waiting for their turn at the computers. As part of the current fund raising efforts, the Executive Director hopes to renovate the room. This would include fixing the heating system and adding blinds to the large windows in an effort to reduce glare on monitor screens. In addition to those repairs, new desks may be purchased for the computers. The current ones are designed for an adult body, and many of the children have trouble using the computers comfortably. Another effort in the fund-raising plans is to add a teen center that would have a

couple computers for use by the older members of the Club. These computers would be used for research, writing, and self-education.

Program

The Wilkesburg Club has an afternoon program for children age five through thirteen that runs Monday through Friday from 2:30 until 6:30 PM. On average, they get 100 to 125 children attending every day. There are a variety of different programs available to the children. When they arrive, they join one of three age groups, Cadets (5-7), Preps (8-9), or Juniors (10-13), to do activities. These activities include arts and crafts, games, such as pool and cards, sports in a small gym, homework, and computer time. As the night progresses, groups of 15 to 20 children move from activity to activity, spending an hour at each site. After this daily program, there is a teen program that has an average attendance of fifty people. The teenagers are allowed to use the computers for schoolwork, but there is no technical program designed specifically for them. They have expressed a desire to have access to the World Wide Web from the computer lab so they can do research and communicate with friends.

The computer program is part of the 'Power Hour' in which kids divide their time between doing homework, playing educational games, reading, and using the computers. Each student will spend about 20-25 minutes in front of a computer. The machines are loaded with a mix of software. They have educational games such as Math Blaster, regular games like Prince of Persia, and productivity packages like Publisher. They are supposed to play the educational games but often just spend time with the entertainment software. As an incentive, children who play the educational games can receive points that they can then trade in for toys to take home with them.

One of the major problems with the program is that most of the kids currently use the computers as video game machines. The staff would like to use them to either teach the children about basic subjects (Math, English, etc) or to teach them about computers. They would especially like to reinforce the skills being taught to the children at school.

There is no demand from the children or their parents for computer training or access. The Club provides these facilities because they realize the importance of computer literacy in today's world.

The Club would like to upgrade the computers so they can run the software found on the market today. In addition, they would like to ensure that each machine has the same capabilities and software packages installed. As part of the improvement of the program, they would like to obtain more educational titles that the children would enjoy playing and software that is appropriate for the different age groups that use the center.

Staff

Pat Bluett is the Executive Director of the Wilkesburg Boys & Girls Club. She has been with the Club for four years and with the Clubs of Western Pennsylvania for sixteen years. Currently, the Wilkesburg Club is in the middle of a capital fund

raising campaign. Ms. Bluett hopes to gain enough funding to improve their facilities and programs enough to cater better to the diverse needs of the many children who are members of the Club.

There are currently three staff members that work in the 'Power Hour'. Homer is a part-time employee who comes in every day to work with the kids. He also works for a local elementary school helping out with their computer systems. He is very knowledgeable when it comes to hardware and would like to learn more about the software aspects of computers. Antonio and Ruby are both high school volunteers. They help out with the kids as much as possible. However, Antonio has many responsibilities throughout the Club and is not always available to help with the 'Power Hour'.

Historically, the staffing for the 'Power Hour' section of the Club has been problematic. It is only offered as a part-time position that pays for 20 hours every week, so it is hard to keep people on board. Also, the technical knowledge of the employees has varied, making it difficult to put together a consistent program. Similarly, the number of students that go through each 'Power Hour' can be too much for the employee and the two teen volunteers to handle. On average, there are 15 children for every staff member, volunteer, or staff, in each activity.

Technical Environment

The Wilkinsburg Boys & Girls Club has seven computers available for the students. The Executive Director has one computer in her office that is for administrative use only. Most of the computers came from joint efforts with the YMCA or through grant money. The two newest computers, one of which is being used for office work, were provided through a grant from the City of Wilkinsburg four years ago.

There are two types of computers available. There are six 486 DX2s that run at 80 MHz. They each have a 420 MB hard drive, 8 MB RAM, a CD-ROM drive, and a sound card. The other two computers are 586s running at 120 MHz. These also have 8 MB of RAM, a CD-ROM drive and a sound card. They have 1.3 GB hard drives installed. All the computers are configured with MS-DOS and Windows 3.11. Direct Access, a menu program linked to the startup of the computer provides accesses to the various programs on the computers. The software installed varies by machine. Some machines have many games installed while others have only one or two.

At the beginning of the project, three of the machines available to the children were nonfunctional. Two of the nonfunctional machines worked, but they did not have monitors. The third had lost many important system files, including HIMEM.SYS, which makes it inoperable. The rest were in various conditions of disrepair. Only two of the systems had functional mice attached to them and none of them had working speakers attached to the sound cards. The mice were removed because the children have taken them apart in the past. None of the machines were networked and there were no connections to the Internet.

In addition to the working equipment, they have multiple printers in storage. Most of these are dot-matrix printers. They have one HP LaserWriter that is not attached to anything and has been known to be problematic in the past. They also

have a wide selection of older machines including Tandys and IBMs that they were unable to get working.

None of the machines being used at the Wilkinsburg Club have connections to the Internet. The main office of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania has one computer with a dial-up connection. Ms. Bluett must reserve time to use it since it is the main work area for one of the organization's employees. None of the staff members have access to the Internet from home, either. This has been problematic because Club members are used to having access to the World Wide Web from school or home. The teenagers, in particular, want to be able to do research and communicate with other friends while at the Club.

The staff at the Wilkinsburg Club sees many ways in which they could improve this center. Their first goal is to purchase enough working computers and replacement components to provide the students with ten machines in good condition. The staff wants all the computers to look the same to the students. Each machine would have the same exact set of software available and it would be made available in the same manner.

Technology Management

Homer is the only staff member who has been identified as a technically trained person. He has done a lot of the work involved in getting the lab to its current state of operation. In addition, he spends as much time as he can maintaining and repairing the computers. Currently, there is no hardware or software maintenance plan. Besides Homer, no staff members are capable of diagnosing and repairing computer related problems though many are computer literate.

Pat Bluett, the Executive Director, would like to learn enough about computers in general and the PCs in the Club in particular to be able to handle the various problems that may arise. She would also like to become the point of contact for the Club, making her knowledge available to the rest of the staff when they need it and also teaching them what she has learned. On a larger scale, Ms. Bluett would like to be able to purchase new equipment and software as needed. In addition, they would like to have a plan for maintaining the computers and for possibly extending current programs to meet future needs.

PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

In talking with Ms. Bluett, it seems that the computer program at the Club would benefit from two major efforts. First, tailoring the menu system for the different age groups would make it easier for the children to use and the staff to teach. Second, establishing a method for repairing or replacing worn out computer peripherals would keep more machines working on a regular basis. Finally, Ms. Bluett would like to increase her overall computer knowledge and prepare for future expansion of the lab.

Tailored Menu Configuration

Every machine was originally configured to present a menu screen to the user at startup. From this screen, children could select the type of software they wished to use. They then picked a specific application to run from the second list that comes up. If installed and used correctly Direct Access would return when the child exits the program that they had been using. An example of what Direct Access looks like is attached in Appendix B.

While the menu was extremely useful and fairly easy to use, it did have drawbacks. The first was in the way the software was divided into submenus based on type of application. The major groups were Windows, Educational Games, Games, and Art. In this division, there was no sense of appropriate age for a given game. Children were not able to pick the games that matched their skill levels. The staff does not know each game well enough to judge appropriate ages, so they can not always tell the children what to play. As a result, children end up playing pure games instead of educational games.

Many of the staff members are not familiar enough with DOS and the menu program to keep it properly configured. In addition, they are usually too busy working with the children to repair any menus that may be broken. Having a simple way to keep the menu properly configured would save the staff a lot of time.

Restructuring the configuration of Direct Access around the three age groups will help the children pick programs that are appropriate for their age. A new configuration will also help the staff since they will have a better idea of what the children can do during the 'Power Hour'. The new menu should also make it easier for the staff to add new programs since the menu will use a clear division of age and subject matter. Also, the computers should have the same software installed on each machine.

To reduce strain on the staff, a document describing the installation process of the final system will be produced. It will contain information on installing the individual programs available and configuring Direct Access. In the future, this document should be updated as new software is added to the repository.

Hardware Maintenance

The computers at the Club have been under extremely heavy use five days a week for years. As a result, the wear and tear was showing when this project started. While the computers were in working condition, the peripherals were damaged. Mice and keyboards were either overused or taken apart, rendering them useless. Monitors had simply failed after years of use and needed to be replaced. Maintenance costs had been considered too high to get repairs or purchase new equipment.

Replacement peripherals are now affordable since costs have reduced tremendously in the last few years. The Club could benefit from an established provider of replacement equipment. Also, there are many manufactures on the market

that offer a variety of products at different prices. Since the Club deals with heavy use, it needs to be more concerned with reliability and cost. Therefore, they could use a good set of selection criteria for picking manufacturers and products within a reasonable budget.

While some of the damage done to the equipment is through general usage, Homer and Ms. Bluett feel that the children cause some of the damage. In general, there are 15 to 20 children in the 'Power Hour' at any time. To accommodate all of them with the three working computers in the lab, two to three children will be assigned to play on a computer. The children easily get bored since only one of the group can use the software at a time. The others tend to experiment with the hardware by taking it apart, sometime damaging it. In addition, many of the children see the computers as video game machines, and treat them that way. They will bang on the keys and the mouse trying to get things to run faster or simply out of excitement.

More computers would solve the problem of having too many children sitting in front of a single computer. This would place more responsibility on the staff monitoring the children since there would be more computers to watch. However, providing more access to the computers outweighs this extra cost. To get the Club members to stop treating the computers like video game consoles, the staff needs to spend more time explaining how computers are used.

Enhancing Ms. Bluett's Computer Knowledge

The Clubs Executive Director uses computers often and would like to learn more about them to make her work easier. In general, Ms. Bluett uses the computer in her office to prepare mailings, flyers, and posters. In addition, she usually installs and tests the software meant for the children before allowing it into the lab. She has expressed an interest in learning more about the working of computers so that she can better use the one in her office. In particular, she would like to be able to use the computer to make her work easier.

By working with Ms. Bluett to fix and enhance the computer lab, she will learn tricks and techniques for working with DOS and Windows. She will also be able to ask about any problems she encounters while working in the office. Exposing her to the power of applications like Microsoft Works and the Microsoft Office suite will give her an idea of what she can do with computers in the office. I believe she can gain the most by learning about mail merge, address books, and spreadsheets. With mail merge and address books, she will be able to create mailings to all the members of the Club or a select few. She could use a spreadsheet for tracking financials or inventory records. With these three tools, Ms. Bluett can increase her productivity substantially.

More importantly, as the Executive Director, Ms. Bluett is in charge of establishing policy and purchasing for the Club. She is responsible for planning any upgrades for the lab and for attaining the funding to make purchases. In order to make good decisions about the lab, she needs to have a better understanding of what technologies are available and how they work.

Issues for Expansion

The Club's current computers are outdated by today's standards. This restricts their functionality to very old programs and operating systems. In a world where everyone is using Windows95 or Windows98, teaching computer skills with Windows 3.11 is not adequate. To solve this issue, the Club should expand its capacity by purchasing new computers that are capable of running the latest operating system and software packages.

Purchasing new computers would make some of the work done in this project obsolete. Even the lowest powered machines on the market today are too fast for the software being used in the Club's lab. In addition, Direct Access will only operate in MS-DOS based systems. New computers will exclusively use Windows98 or Windows NT, making the menus useless. To make full use of the new computers, the Club will need to invest in new software and create a new plan for installing the software and dividing it based on age and subject matter. When looking for new software, the club should consult some of the resources listed at the end of this document. Sites like PC Freeware provide access to many programs, both educational and recreational, at no charge. There are also many companies that provide educational software at low costs.

The benefit of having recent technology outweighs the cost of establishing a new technology plan for the Club and transitioning to new computers. While older technology is still available throughout the world, it is the new software and hardware that will be driving the markets. Giving children access to the latest technology will prepare them for higher education and business, where the newest material is always available.

SCOPE OF WORK

Over the course of a complete semester, Ms. Bluett and I worked closely together on enhancing her computer skills and working with the computer lab. We regularly met two times per week for an hour and a half. During these meetings we would discuss her goals and the best methods for achieving them. We worked together to solve problems so she could learn about computers and the problem solving methods I used.

At first, I was concerned with making sure I had a noticeable impact on Ms. Bluett's daily work and knowledge of computers. We spent a good deal of time working together on daily activities while discussing the Club's programs. After working with her for awhile, I realized that I could have a greater impact on both the Club and its staff if I did more work in the computer lab. Ms. Bluett's primary concerns were to get children to play more educational games and to upgrade the technology in the lab. Many children avoided the educational games because they did not know which ones were at an appropriate level of difficulty. Designing a menu that took age into account would make it easier for them to select from their options. Since time and budget constraints made it impossible to order new computers for the lab, I emphasized making the best use of the equipment in the lab. Throughout the entire project, I

wanted to work closely with Ms. Bluett so she could continue to learn about the computers in the lab.

Tailored Menu Configuration

Creating a complete inventory of the software installed in the lab proved difficult because the computers all had different configurations. The menus offered different sets of programs and the installations on each machine were different. Tracking down program locations and finding hidden applications was also difficult.

While designing the menu, we found that the software the Club was using would not support the desired design. The desired design requires three levels. The first level would have submenus for each age group. Selecting an age group would bring up a list of submenus that would allow the user to pick the type of program, educational, games, or Windows, which would bring up the list of programs that could be executed. Direct Access only allows two levels of menus to be defined. The program first lists the names of the defined submenus. Selecting a submenu will bring up a list of applications that can be executed.

Since a suitable replacement could not be found, a utility built into MS-DOS was used to select a menu configuration based on age group. To use the utility, Direct Access needed to be installed and configured three times on every machine. Each installation was put into a directory named for the age group it represented, Cadet, Prep, or Junior. This increased the level of difficulty for maintaining the system since it uses the rather obscure MS-DOS command, `SELECT`, in the `AUTOEXEC.BAT` file to select a system configuration at startup. To reduce some of this difficulty, we created a file containing the necessary commands named `WILKMENU.BAT`. This file is self-contained and does not need to be edited. Getting the new system to work requires adding a call to `WILKMENU.BAT` at the end of the `AUTOEXEC.BAT` file.

Direct Access is also limited in the number of applications it can support. As stated before, the initial configuration of menus had four submenus. Each of these four submenus can list at most 18 programs, too few for the number of educational games the Club would like to use. To solve this problem, Ms. Bluett divided the programs by subject type. She created Math Wizards, Challenge Games, Spelling Bee, Reading Champs, World Knowledge, and Keyboarding submenus to replace the Educational submenu. With the software divided by age and subject (Appendix A), there is plenty of room left to expand.

A Manual was written to ensure that the changes made to the lab remain and will continue to be viable. The manual contains information on how to install the new menu system and to configure it in case new software is added. In addition, it explains how to install some of the preferred games on new machines.

An example of how the menus are designed is available in Appendix B.

Hardware Maintenance

Finding a reasonable place to purchase peripherals required understanding the purchase processes and budget limitations of the Club. In general, there are three ways to purchase materials for the Club's use in programs. Expensive equipment, such as computers, requires approval from the management at Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania. Less expensive materials can be purchased with a purchase order and permission from upper management. Finally, the Executive Director has the ability to purchase necessary supplies using a small fund under her control.

Since the costs of computer equipment vary greatly, it was necessary to find reasonably priced equipment from retailers that accept purchase orders from non-profit organizations. A search of well-known computer retailers on the World Wide Web found that Buy.com was reasonably priced and met the requirements of the Club. Since Ms. Bluett does not have direct access to the Web, I provided her with hard copies of recommended sites for purchasing monitors and keyboards. She gave these to the people in the organization who handle purchases and who have access to the World Wide Web. On her own initiative, Ms. Bluett ordered a complete set of computer mice to replace the ones already being used in the lab. The new mice are fairly cheap and easy to replace in case they get damaged through future use.

Enhancing Ms. Bluett's Computer Knowledge

Throughout this project, Ms. Bluett and I worked closely together so we could learn from each other's expertise. When dealing with computer related material, Ms. Bluett would do the actual work and I would explain what commands meant and how computers work in general. In addition, I also helped her with her office tasks. Based on a discussion of her general duties, we focused on writing letters using Microsoft software.

Before working together, Ms. Bluett was using MS Publisher to write her letters. If she needed to send multiple copies of the same letter to members of the club, she would write a generic letter and make multiple copies to send. To increase her productivity, I introduced her to MS Works. I showed her how to create a basic address book and use it to create personalized letters and envelopes using mail merge. I also explained spreadsheets to her. I felt that she could save time by making the computer do many of the calculations for her.

OUTCOMES

At the end of the project, Ms. Bluett and I had spent a great deal of our time working on putting together a consistent interface for accessing all the computers. While we produced a clean way for the students to access the system, much more was achieved by just working closely with Ms. Bluett.

Evidence of Expanded Capacity

Tailored Menu Configuration

- Created menus tailored to specific age groups
- Divided software titles by subject matter

Hardware Maintenance

- Ms. Bluett is more informed about the costs of maintaining hardware

Enhancing Ms. Bluett's Computer Knowledge

- Uses MS Works instead of Publisher for document creation
- Has used mail merge for creating mailings
- Uses MS Excel in other volunteer work
- Taught MS Works spreadsheet to teenagers in the club

Evidence of Sustainability

Tailored Menu Configuration

- Easier to use menu will promote proper use by children
- New menu configuration allows for easy addition of new programs

Hardware Maintenance

- Provided retailer contacts for purchasing equipment in the future
- Lab upgrade part of Capital Fundraising Campaign

Enhancing Ms. Bluett's Computer Knowledge

- Plans to commit payroll to a spreadsheet
- Wants to work more with MS Office suite
- Planning to automate more of the daily workings of the Club

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Wilkinsburg Boys & Girls Club can grow technically in the next few years. To expand both the capabilities of the Club and the programs they use, I recommend purchasing a new computer and arranging for further training for the Executive Director, attaining a connection to the Internet, purchasing a computer for the teen program, and using the older computers effectively.

Purchase Upgraded Computer for Office

A more powerful computer with better software will allow the Executive Director to perform many of her tasks faster after a bit of training. Even though most of my work was done in the lab the children use, I spent some time working with Ms. Bluett in her office. I introduced her to spreadsheets and some of the time saving techniques made available in office applications such as form letters and mailing labels. This extra functionality, if used properly, would save her a lot of time in the office.

I recommend purchasing a low to mid range computer system. This system should come with a productivity suite (either Microsoft Office or Claris Works) and the latest operating system (currently MS Windows98). I think a lower end model will do because the power gained by buying a higher end model will not make a large difference when dealing with the average office product.

I have two specific usage recommendations for this system. The first is to use a spreadsheet to do the monthly payroll. The Executive Director has already commented that using one would make it easier for her to do payroll since she can just copy the data from the previous month into the new month. Secondly, I recommend entering the members of the Club into a database or address book that details their name, parent's name, home address, phone number, birthday, emergency contact, and any additional information the Club regularly records. This database could be used to produce form letters for the members and to track membership. With a little extra work, it could be extended to allow the staff to send out birthday cards, membership renewal reminders, and other more specific information. To make this useful, a large amount of time would need to be put into designing the system and then entering the data the Club already has. After that, it would just require that the staff routinely add new members to the system. The initial setup costs are worth the savings down the road, especially when you consider the added benefit of being able to produce targeted mailings to members.

Further Training for Ms. Bluett

To make the best use of the new computer recommended above, Ms. Bluett should look into taking classes in computer use. These classes focus on basic computer skills, using the Internet, and working with office software. In addition, classes like these could help her in planning for and supporting the computer lab at the Club since she will learn more about computers in general.

Internet Connection for the Office

A connection to the Internet would allow the Executive Director to find useful information as well as provide a new way for members and potential members to communicate with her and the rest of the staff. In addition, the Internet is filled with useful information for nonprofit organizations. The resources section of this document is a testament to the amount of support available to those who have access to the World Wide Web. It is fairly simple to find information on grants, donations, and programs implemented by other groups. From these sites, the Executive Director could either apply for more donations to the Club or learn about ways to enhance the Club's programs.

I recommend getting a simple dial-up connection for the office that Ms. Bluett will control access to. The Internet is a valuable means of communication for the Executive Director and the Club. Many organizations have published what they have learned while implementing technology programs. The Wilkesburg staff could learn from what these other nonprofit organizations have put on the Web. Another benefit would come from the increased level of communication. The Club receives requests from parents for an email address every week. This shows that parents want to make use of this tool, so it would not be a waste of resources.

Once the connection for the office has been established, I recommend evaluating the use of the Internet in the Club's programs. Teenagers have asked for Internet access to do World Wide Web searches and could benefit from access in the Club. Introducing Internet use to the 'Power Hour' will help introduce the younger children to the capabilities of the Internet. As a precautionary measure, software like Cybersitter and Net Nanny should be used to prevent access to inappropriate material.

Purchase Computer for Teen Program

A new computer loaded with current applications could provide the tools necessary to train teenage members of the Club with good computer skills. A computer matching the specifications from recommendation #1 could easily be used to train teens in word processing, spreadsheet work, and document layout. The Executive Director has already attempted to train teenage members in using a spreadsheet for inventory and sales records in relation to a store run at the Club. Experiences such as these will be very useful in their futures. Word processors and spreadsheets will help them do their assignments in high school or college. When they finish with school, they can use their computer skills to help sell themselves to potential employers.

Use Older Computers to Educate Children

The supply of older computers stored in the 'Power Hour' room could be used to educate children about the internals of computers and how they work. While the machines are very old, and the hardware contained inside of them is obsolete, the basics are still roughly the same. Sessions could be formed where a staff member allows children to see and touch the components inside of these computers. The staff person could explain what each piece does and how the computer works as a whole. This would be a good program for the older kids and perhaps the teens.

Recycle Older Computers

The computers being stored in the room could also be recycled. There are organizations that take old computers and refurbish them for sale and donation to non-profit organizations. Other organizations, such as the Goodwill Computer Recycling Center in Pittsburgh, employ people to take the computers apart and remove the valuable pieces, recycling the rest. While this provides no monetary benefit to the Club, it does provide work for other people in the community.

RESOURCES

The Internet and the World Wide Web are extremely valuable resources for finding information and communicating with other people. The following list is just a small sampling of the kind of data that is published on the Web. The list contains sites that either provide services for non-profit organizations or provide access to good children's software. Some of the resources have phone numbers or mailing address for contacting the staff involved in the program. The others just have the World Wide Web addresses of the companies. I included these as an argument for providing Ms. Bluett with a dial-up connection to the argument. Until she is given access to the Internet from her office at the Club, Ms. Bluett can access the Web from the main office of the Western Pennsylvania Clubs or from public libraries.

Information Renaissance

www.info-ren.org
(412) 471-5636

Information Renaissance is a nonprofit organization that supports other organizations with computer networks. They provide a variety of services that meet the different technical needs of organizations in the Pittsburgh area. In addition to providing different levels of Internet connectivity, Information Renaissance also has a variety of training courses. As an affiliate, an organization will be entitled to some of their services at a reasonable cost.

Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh; Computer Recycling Center

www.goodwillpitt.org/crc/crc.htm
Contact: Lisa Campbell, Coordinator
Goodwill Computer Recycling Center
2600 East Carson St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15203
(412) 481-9049 Fax:(412) 481-9371
email: crc@goodwillpitt.org

This is a site with information on the program that the Pittsburgh Goodwill runs for recycling computers. They may have equipment available for purchase at reasonable prices. The Club may be able to go there to purchase computers or peripherals (monitors/keyboards) at a substantially lower price.

Computers for Learning

www.computers.fed.gov

A web site created by the federal government to pass on computer equipment donated by federal agencies to schools and non-profit organizations. There are requirements that must be met and a list of information that tells readers who is most likely to benefit from this program. Currently, the technology they are offering is older than the computers the Club has. In the future it will probably be increased as more agencies begin upgrading the capabilities.

Colgate-Palmolive: Colgate Youth for America

www.colgate.com/Community/youth.html

A program from Colgate-Palmolive called Youth For America for clubs and troops. The ones with the best program earn cash prizes. It can provide interesting ideas for future programs or they may wish to compete. In addition, it may provide incentive for the teens at the Boys and Girls Club to actively attempt to start a program that might place them in a winning category.

Each Nerd In His Small Corner

members.tripod.com/leedonley/nerd.htm

A tongue-in-cheek site that caters to 'nerds' that are trying to set up old PCs for kids to use. The site contains information on using DOS and where to download free programs for DOS, Windows, and Macintosh. It also contains links to organizations that 'recycle' computers for use by organizations and schools. The site's creator advocates taking old office computers and using them to teach kids about computers. This is a helpful site for the Boys & Girls Club of Wilkinsburg because it will show them ways they can use their computers to their outmost potential.

FLIX Productions - Animated Educational Software

www.eden.com/~flixprod/index.html

FLIX creates educational software for children on a shareware basis. Most of the software listed is Windows based software that costs from \$15 to \$40 to get a license to use. The older DOS software is cheaper, with costs starting at \$8, while some is free. Downloading is free, so the Club could try out some software, but they would have to register it eventually.

The software would be useful for the Club's programs since they range in difficulty and material. They have games that teach children how to read clocks and count change in addition to games that teach pattern matching and the basic math and reading skills needed.

PC Freeware

www.kidsdomain.com/down/pc/_subjectfreeware-index.html

A very large list of free software targeted at children. It can be viewed by subject or by appropriate age group. The majority of the games appear to be created for Windows 3.1 or Windows95. This may be a good site to get software from when the Club upgrades to newer machines.

While this site may not be of much help right now, I believe it will be useful in the future. With the introduction of Windows 95/98 and Windows 2000 around the corner, it will become increasingly difficult to find machines running DOS applications. As the Club grows, it will get new machines that will require new software. This site will provide them with a large amount to start with. In addition, they could use the information on the site to support arguments to get funding for new computers.

Ohio Distinctive Software

www.ohio-distinctive.com
6500 Fiesta Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43235
614-459-0453

Ms. Bluett has purchased software from this company in the past. They produce high-quality children's games that are meant for a range of skill levels. Prices for children's games start at \$10. The software produced by this company runs on Windows 3.1, 95, or 98. This allows the Club to purchase the software now and continue to use it when they upgrade to newer machines.

APPENDIX A

Software Distribution by type and age group.

Cadets are ages 5 through 7

Preps are ages 8 and 9

Juniors are ages 10 through 12

Math Wizards				
Software Title	Cadet	Prep	Junior	Location
Math Blaster: On The Moon	X	X	X	C:\MB\MB
Math Blaster Plus		X	X	C:\MATH\MATH
Treasure Math Storm		X	X	C:\TLC\TMS\TMS.BAT
Treasure Cove		X	X	C:\TLC\TCV\TCV.BAT

Challenge Games				
Software Title	Cadet	Prep	Junior	Location
Dr. Brain (M)			X	C:\SIERRA\BRAIN.BAT
Fun School Freddy Frog	X	X	X	C:\FSFROG\FS
Fun School Teddy	X	X		C:\FSTEDDY\FS
Fun School Sammy Spy			X	C:\FSSPY\FS
Fatty Bear	X(S)	X		C:\FBEAR\FBEAR
Concentration		X	X	C:\CONCEN2\CLASSIC2
Wheel of Fortune		X	X	C:\WHEEL\WHEEL
Tetris		X	X	C:\TETRIS\TETRIS
Putt Putt on Parade (M)	X(S)	X		C:\PUTTPUTT\PUTTPUTT
Putt Putt on the Moon (M)	X(S)	X		C:\PUTTMOON\PUTTMOON
ODS Games (Win)	X	X	X	C:\WINDOWS\WIN ODS

Spelling Bee				
Software Title	Cadet	Prep	Junior	Location
Spell It Plus		X	X	C:\SPELL\SPELL.BAT
Shady Glenn Spelling Bee		X	X	C:\TLC\SSB\SSBPROG

Reading Champs				
Software Title	Cadet	Prep	Junior	Location
Read N' Roll	X	X	X	C:\READ\READ
Reader Rabbit 2	X(dance)	X	X	C:\TLC\RR2\RR2
Reader Rabbit 3			X	C:\TLC\RR3\RR3.BAT
Grammar Games (Win)		X	X	C:\GRAMMAR\WIN GRAMMAR

World Knowledge				
Software Title	Cadet	Prep	Junior	Location
Oregon Trail (M)		X	X	C:\OREGON\OREGON
Carmen San Diego, USA (M)			X	C:\USAD\CARMEN
Mystery at the Museum (M)		X	X	C:\MYSTERY\MYSTERY

Keyboarding				
Software Title	Cadet	Prep	Junior	Location

Mario Teaches Typing	X(S)	X	X	C:\MARIO\MARIO
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Games				
Software Title	Cadet	Prep	Junior	Location
Mike Ditka Football		X	X	C:\MDFB\MDF.BAT
Hexxagon (M)		X	X	C:\HEXXAGON\HEX
Hexxagon II (M)		X	X	C:\HEXX2\HEXX2
Supaplex	X	X	X	C:\SUPAPLEX\SUPAPLEX
Coaster (M)			X	C:\COASTER\COASTER
Stunts	X	X	X	C:\STUNTS\STUNT
Prince of Persia	X	X	X	C:\PRINCE\PRINCE

Key:

Win – Require Windows to be installed and in the system path

S – Requires sound card to hear the speech. For those who may not be able to read yet.

M – Mouse required or strongly recommended.

APPENDIX B

Main Menu Example

Wilkinsburg Boys & Girls Club

Please Make a Selection:

- A) Math Wizards
- B) Challenge Games
- C) Spelling Bee
- D) Reading Champs
- E) World Knowledge
- F) Keyboarding
- G) Games
- H) Windows

Submenu Example

Wilkinsburg Boys & Girls Club

Challenge Games

Please Make a Selection:

A) Fun School Freddy Frog	F) Tetris
B) Fun School Teddy	G) Putt Putt on the Moon
C) Fatty Bear	H) Putt Putt on Parade
D) Concentration	I) ODS Games
E) Wheel of Fortune	