

Okay I think we'll start, or continue, the Community Based Social Media Learning Network Webinar with Heartland sharing the work that they have been involved in.

Thanks Kristin, this is Judy, and I thought it might be nice to first give you a little bit of background on Heartland Foundation because many of you maybe have not heard of this organization. We are located in the heart of the country, here in St. Joseph, Missouri. We serve a four state region and we started out as a hospital based foundation and then in about 93, 94 we began to look at and understand if you want to really improve the health of communities, you needed to look outside the hospital walls. And now our foundation really focuses on a much bigger community purpose versus a hospital purpose. And we began to recognize that to build healthier communities it's a lot of things but primarily you're focusing on education and finding ways to really grow the economy of a community and a region in order to make not only communities healthier but people too. We began to realize very early on in the work that having young people at the table was absolutely critical and essential for this region to sustain itself and I think one of our biggest pressing issues that we found is that we've had significant population loss in this region. In fact, if you look at our region compared to the rest of the country, the country has grown three-fold, Missouri doubled in population and during that same period in time our region lost 44% of the population. And that's pretty significant and so we began to understand that getting a closer connection to young people and trying to find a way for them to not feel disenfranchised but feel very much a part of helping to build communities, it would be more likely that they would stay here in the future. So through surveying and a variety of things we did, it actually led us to this notion that we needed to bring schools and communities together and we have created a one of a kind curriculum and experience called emPower Plant which really leads young people through an integrated continuum involving civic education, workforce development and [inaudible] learning activities, really providing real world experiences for them to be more connected to their communities. And we're starting to see some pretty phenomenal things. Having the social media piece, I think, has been really exciting for us because I do believe it allows us to advance and accelerate our work. Number one, it's a good way to market what we do but it's a better way for us to make connections and when we were one of the recipients of these funds, we had made the decision early on that we wanted to wanted the whole process to be led by our youth so even though we hired River City Studio, there's another River City [ Laughter ]

Okay.

[inaudible] today, but we hired River City Studios out of Kansas City, which is a webmaster, and but we said we wanted to have a student that could really lead the process. So Erica Ricker [assumed spelling] is our really our social media guru here onsite and we'd be lost without her. We've all learned an incredible amount having Erica here. She brings a lot of energy, she has a lot of wonderful ideas and we're fortunate that we're going to be able to hold onto her while she's continuing her education. So Erica's going to give you the run down on how the social media plan is working here at Heartland Foundation and tell you about what a phenomenal tool that we found it to be.

Alright, thanks Judy. Hello everybody. Like she said, I'm Erica. I'm kind of the intern that will never leave.

We hope.

Like she said, it was very important for us to keep youth involved in this entire process starting with me having the college intern and then from there with the development of the website before we even

started any, put together the website, the focus groups that consisted of middle school and high school students. So even in that realm it was important for us to keep the youth in the community involved because the website's for them and so their opinion's very important. This next slide talks about the evolution of our social media adventure and originally our goal was to incorporate social media tools and [inaudible] stuff, to deepen service learning, expand capacity, make new connections. How it all began was with our Jump Starters Program which is a grant program for students who come through Heartland Foundation as the emPower Plant and do our one day emersion where they learn community problem solving in teams and then they also they are either actually the public achievement or the in-class curriculum and the what they do is they go through Jump Starters which is [jumpstarters.heartlandfoundation.org](http://jumpstarters.heartlandfoundation.org) if you'd like to see that, it's an interactive grant application that they fill out and it's for up to \$15,000 to put towards a service learning project which we would of course have to approve and from that to bring the idea for Launch Pad which is, I kind of consider it the sister site of Jump Starters. It is a place for the students to go, and this is what we're going to be showing you mostly is Launch Pad, it's what we just launched back in June which we're really excited about, and I'll show it to you very shortly, it's a place for the kids, after they get approved for their grant, they can go online, they can collaborate, share information, post pictures, post files, discuss the project, post questions for each other, post questions for the foundation, it's just really a good forum for them to gather online and collaborate and get work done like that. So moving on, we go from Jump Starters to Launch Pad and then from there we decided we needed a sounding board to kind of tell people about Launch Pad to kind of drag traffic there so that's how Face Book, Twitter, and our new blog that we're working on on Word Press kind of came to the picture. And I kind of wanted to share with everybody some of the ups and downs of each of these because if you're considering going into the Face Book venture or Twitter account, I'll fill you in on our insights we've had with that so far. With Face Book, Face Book is fantastic for posting blogs and pictures and it's really good for us to interact with our service learning students because it's that's what their demographic is in to is Face Book. My major problem with Face Book is that you're not able to communicate outside of your page as the Foundation. You have to communicate as the Admin, which I'm not a huge fan of. I would like to be able to communicate as the brand and not myself when I'm trying to message either students or another organization. If you can't talk to another organization, you have to talk to them as yourself. So I'm not a huge fan of that which is one of the reasons why we started our blog. That way we can communicate as a brand and not just a website, or I'm sorry, not just the Admin. Twitter is my favorite thing right now. It's been really exciting for us because we've been able to make a lot of connections way outside of our boundaries here and it's great for us because we get up to the minute information and we can also share that information with everybody else which has been really exciting and we've been able to get attention from local media that way because they're all on Twitter so they can be up to date with what we're doing here. Let's see. And like I said earlier, it's a really great way for us to stay on top of media related, social media related information to do with non-profits and also on a national level as well. Um, let's see. And with Word Press, we're really just kind of working on that right now so it's still under construction, but we're really, really excited about the [inaudible] to use that. Another thing about Word Press is we're, we went that direction because we would eventually like to be seen as a source of information and not just a carrier of information. And with Face Book, it's great for reaching our service learning demographic, middle school, high schoolers. So Word Press I felt like it was a little more professional and legitimate so that's kind of the reason we went that direction with that. Okay, the next slide, I kind of wanted to talk about some of our challenges and lessons learned with social media so far. The first big one is our strategy. We just kind of jumped right into this because I've had experience with Face Book and a little bit of Twitter before so I just kind of jumped into it thinking it was exactly the same process when it's really not. You're not allowed to be, when you're working for a non-profit, you're not allowed to be your personal self so your strategy with doing it for a non-profit is much

different than you would. So, like I said, [inaudible] mistakes, if it works just keep doing it. And I kind of wanted to talk about the problems, not problems but challenges we had with the Launch Pad process as well. It was such a big endeavor that we really weren't even sure how to get it even started but luckily with the teamwork around the Foundation, it went really well and our partnership with River City Studios in Kansas City made it a lot easier as well. One of the other problems we had was like I said, we had focus groups involved with us of students and it was difficult to plan and arrange all that because we had to keep the ball rolling and unfortunately this was during December, right before kids went for Christmas, so we didn't have the numbers we wanted but we had really great knowledgeable and very opinionated kids that told us all about their technology experience, what their preference was for the internet, what they liked and didn't like, so we got some really good information about that and then we held a second meeting in January where we showed them kind of the colors that we were going for to see what they thought and so that went really well. So fortunately we got to keep youth involved in the entire process for Launch Pad. And let's see, as Judy mentioned we're middle of the country, mid-west. In the mid-west, especially in central Missouri, there's not a lot of people that are utilizing things like Twitter. Luckily that's one of those things that seems like it's going to fade out on its own and eventually people are going to be on it so right now we're just kind of ahead of everybody else. And one of the last challenges we've had to overcome is time. I personally have been extremely surprised by how time consuming social media involvement is. Not just with the development of Launch Pad because you have to go in there and you have to check comments and make sure that when the students post their projects, everything on there's correct. But with social media you have to keep up on everything, keep up on information because things change by the second and if you miss something then you're behind. One of the ways we've been able to remedy that is planning ahead and one tip I would give is if you're going into the Twitter area, have a list of, a pre-made list of, Tweets. That way in the middle of the day if you need to update something you have something already made, you're not scrambling to find something to tweet about. And I think the overlying [inaudible] of this is social media is all about building relationships and it takes time to build relationships.

And one of the things that Erica did, she created kind of a forum that she sent out to all of the staff here at the Foundation and so if they know of activities or things that are going on with students, they can make that connection with Erica so that that information can be shared and so I think that's been extremely helpful.

That's right and one thing I forgot to mention was we're not a giant Foundation but there's a lot going on here every single day so it's very, very important that we have staff involvement from everyone and it was sort of difficult at first because not everyone's used to writing for social media. Writing for Face Book is much different than writing for a grant so what I made was a little [inaudible] kits for everybody so when they're writing a blog for Face Book they know to talk more conversationally, what things they should mention and make it interesting and engaging so people want to read it. So that's been very helpful, I think. Okay, and ways that have deepened these engagements. From the very beginning we've allowed students' voices to be heard and we've always felt like students, what they have to say is much more important to us coming from their own mouth instead of us saying it for them. So it was very important from the very beginning of the development of the website to have their say and the best part about, I think the best part of our new website, is our showcase that we have. So after the students go online and they collaborate and they share their videos and their pictures with each other, they can actually go on and make a showcase to tell everyone else what they've done and include these pictures and these videos and their personal opinions and thoughts and I think that's, I think does a really great job of keeping youth engaged in this project. And like I said earlier, it allows all students to get together and others in the community can view the website to then collaborate and share

information and it also it will provide a way for kids to network and share their lessons learned. Alright, and the future. We have a lot going on. We'd like students to make solid connections and build relationships with people from all walks of life through the four state region and beyond. And like I briefly talked about earlier, we want to become a source of information not just a carrier of information. And it's going to continue to coordinate our service learning projects and it'll be a good way to tie some of the other things that we have going on in the Foundation. Mentor opportunities. Showcase, to showcase all of these great projects these kids have been doing. Networking opportunities. Marketing tools so people in our community and beyond can see what we're about, what we've got going on and it's changing everyday so it's something that it would be helpful for them to keep up on. And, of course, through [inaudible] healthier and more livable communities and now here comes all the exciting stuff. First thing we're going to do is show you Launch Pad which is our brand new site. Okay. So this is Launch Pad.

Wow.

This is the very front page that everyone can see when they log in. It's at our social media button down at the bottom and just for time sake, we're not going to look at Face Book, that's just [facebook.com/heartlandfoundation](https://facebook.com/heartlandfoundation) so it's very easy to go to and Twitter's just [Twitter.com/heardlandfnd](https://twitter.com/heardlandfnd), I'll show you that one here in a moment. So here's the front page when you go to it. The log-in is where kids go that are working on their service learning project to go to and it goes to a private part which I'll show you in a moment so only they can go to that part so you know Joe down the street can't log on and talk to the kids or anything like that. So go to the FAQ and this just tells you a little bit about the Foundation, you know, some frequently asked questions naturally and if your answer isn't here in this little spot, you can e-mail us and ask us questions. A little thing pops down and you go to another and another one pops down, very nifty, I'm a fan of it. And then the about tells you a little bit about Heartland Foundation and what the site's about and what the goal and the point of it is and again there's another place for you to ask a question if you have one. And I'm going to go ahead and show you my favorite part of the website, the gallery. It's got this nice little tab [inaudible] on the left there so if you're just interested in looking at projects dealing with health, you would click on that and you would narrow it down to projects just about health. Oops. Okay, so when kids log on, this is the site that they see. What they can do here is right here, if they have questions for each other they can post questions right here and this is actually a project, all the project stuff for right now, myself and some other interns put on this summer because they are past project and we wanted something up there for the kids coming in for this next school year to have something to work from. So this is one of them that I think I put on. So what's going to happen is once the kids are on this page, they'll be able to post questions for each other over on the forum side. On the wall it shows everything that's updated. So if Susie goes on and puts a picture up here, it'll say Susie posted a picture. If Johnny logs on the next day and answers something in the forum, it'll say Johnny answered blah, blah, blah in the forum. And once they submit their project to be approved, it'll say Heartland approved it for the gallery. So this is a way for them to keep updated with everything that's going on. They also have a personalized in-box so if they ask the Foundation a question we can answer them directly and they can check that. Let's see, Edit Current Project. After they are done with their service learning project, this is where they go to put it onto the website, their showcase. They can post up to six pictures or videos and then here's where they can change the order of that and they have their title and a short description and then the extended description and this particular project was a group from inner-city Kansas City who they're surrounded by fast food and just problems with unhealthy stuff so they decided to make a community garden. And this community garden, they donated all the food to Harvesters and it's a very inspiring and very, very good example of a great service learning project. So this is where their showcase starts.

Okay, and then I'll show you, I'll show you the big showcase. Okay, so this is what, let's see, yeah, this is what the showcase looks like. So it's got the pictures and their description of it and at the bottom, people in the community can leave comments and of course they come to the Foundation first before they're approved to put on the website but for this project particularly we've had a couple great comments that we're really excited to have. We're really excited once students start putting it on live, the things that they're going to have to say too. And okay, and there were a couple of little ones that I wanted to show you just to give you kind of a different idea. This one was called Germ Busters. The students went through and put hand sanitizers in all, in their school. I like that one a lot and then there was one more. This is a Zebra Mussels Project. These students in Maryville, Missouri, they have a lake here called Mozingo Lake and Zebra Mussels are an invasive species that just cause a lot of havoc and harm to their to the lake and so they made this boat cleaning dock so people could get their boats cleaned before they go into the lake so the lake isn't infested with these Zebra Mussels and that was, I thought that was a real good, unique project for them to do. Okay, so there's our Launch Pad that we're very proud of and very happy with and it's just [launchpad.heartlandfoundation.org](http://launchpad.heartlandfoundation.org) and actually I'll show you we're on Twitter. We're very happy with our Twitter as well so far it's going really well. We've gotten some really good attention off of it and been able to connect with nationally we've been able to connect with really great contacts which has been really exciting for us coming from the middle part of Missouri getting attention from Washington, DC and all over the country. It's been, it's been fantastic. It's been great to, it's been a great place to showcase our service learning projects. Every Friday we have a service learning project of the week where we showcase one of the projects and tell everybody about it. We post it up on our Face Book and we tweet about it and it's a good way to promote the work that is done by these students and it's very exciting for us. And again if you want to go to our Face Book it's just [facebook.com/heartlandfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/heartlandfoundation).

Can you show the background of the Twitter site? Take off that and show the background of that? Or is that possible to do? Is that always up there?

No it's not always up there but the resolution on the screen is a little big. So if you go to our Twitter from your computer, the background will look different and you'll be able to see this side thing a little better. Okay. I think

Erica you might want to talk to them about how to get to the Jump Starter grant application site too [inaudible].

Oh if you wanted to go to see, like I was talking about the evolution, the beginning of it, is our Jump Starter Grant Site and that's just [jumpstarters.heartlandfoundation.org](http://jumpstarters.heartlandfoundation.org) or if you just go to [heartlandfoundation.org](http://heartlandfoundation.org) you can also find it that way as well.

Oh thanks. Kevin said that Launch Pad site is very impressive. I appreciate that. There's been a lot of blood, sweat and tears go into that.

Yeah, you'd be surprised.

Not that it hasn't been a blast because it's been a great time.

Are there any questions?

For Erica, this is Kristin, I guess I followed a little bit, it's just very amazing and impressive and it makes me I sort of wish Joy was on with task with maybe like the garden example that you showed. She's had lots of success in young people writing really short little pieces but not full really fully flushed out examples so that is what struck me. I'm wondering what you do to support you know support that level of quality.

Well luckily in our grant application, they have, the grant application is written by the state and they actually have to go through and write a lot of this stuff beforehand so they already have a lot of it written up all they have to do is go in and add how the project went and their personal thoughts to it. So from the get-go they're already writing on the project from the very beginning.

It is an expectation if you receive the grant funding, then you have to send us progress reports and a final report about your project and so it just fits very nicely adding that information then to the showcase.

Yeah, it's just a culmination of everything they've had to write already.

I have one other question, this is Kristin again. Can you talk a little bit more about sort of the decision to go external for the expertise, the website stuff? I mean, why did you decide to do that and you know as sort of grantees one of the questions for us is always to think about do we build our own [inaudible]internally or do we go outside and for what so can you talk about how you thought through that?

Yeah, Kristin, we had a relationship with River City Studios.

Okay.

They actually helped us to develop our main website and we had a great experience with them and they have been just most helpful. I think they brought a certain expertise that we lacked in our Foundation staff. And so for that reason we sat down and had a conversation to see what it would take to bring them on board and to really serve as our webmaster in working with Erica and the students and our staff to figure out what it was we needed. So it was, it was really a great learning opportunity but I think we were able to come up with a high quality product between and I would say the nice thing about it, it was really what I would call a co-creation process. It wasn't River City Studios just saying okay here it is folks. I mean it was design forums and a lot of conversation and a lot of give and take and coming to consensus on what was the right thing to do and I think the fact that we had young students, students involved from the very beginning was absolutely essential too because that also kind of guided the look and the feel for how this whole thing played out as well. The other thing I'll add, River City Studios has a fairly young staff that were assigned to this project and so we had those young thinkers that were really into social media tools as well. It was just a really nice match.

And with the focus groups these students had no qualms telling us if it looked silly, if it looked too little-kiddy, or if it was complicated or too bright, they didn't like this color, they didn't like the rocket on that side, they had no problems telling us if they liked it or not. So it was very helpful for us.

They were bright kids.

And that's really the way we do our work here at the Foundation is that we put what we call healthy communities into practice which means we bring to the table people who should be well invested or want to be well invested in something as well as making sure we have a diverse group of players so that we can come up with better and better answers to come up with a solution that will help us get us where we want to be.

I think that's great and I appreciate since I come from a little bit of a formal organization too that you're willing to customize and do things like Twitter, how to write the Twitter style sheets because that seems like great you know who else is in your organization that you want their ideas and opinions but they might be nervous to write using that technology so

And they've been great, very flexible. It's been a really fun, I think, learning experience for everybody.

Are there other questions that come up for Heartland?

I had a question. Did you see my question down there?

Let's see,

Is it [inaudible]?

I can just see it.

How much time do you spend on your social networking site?

Initially quite a bit because you have to find out who's worth following, what blogs are good to follow. Every morning I probably spend I would say a half an hour to an hour just going through the blogs to see what's worth reading, what's worth reposting, what's worth commenting on, and then going through the tweets from overnight and seeing what's worth re-tweeting, just going through what information's relevant and kind of it's in a process. I've got it down to a pretty good system and if I've got a lull in the day I'll go ahead and I'll make some tweets for the next day so that the next day it's not taking as much time not as much time to upkeep. Initially there was a lot of time invested but luckily it's kind of, it's starting to taper off which is helpful especially when school starts again we'll start having more kids get on Launch Pad so it'll be something I can put a little more time into monitoring and so initially lots of time, now not so much which is nice.

You know the other thing, Erica has really spent a lot of time in looking at how you really utilize these tools to the max and one example, she was able to gather information to learn about how you follow others that you eventually want and hope will follow us so we've been able to bring in people we never would have been able to connect with were it not this tool. And I'm talking not only about local media but some folks that are on the national scene that are now following us because of that connection that she made. So it's been very exciting for us.

And like I said earlier, social medial is all about building relationships and it does take a little bit of time to build those relationships, there's a lot of give and take and if you want people to support you, you're going to have to support them and sometimes that takes time.

What about Face Book?

Face Book, the longest part of Face Book is writing blogs. So if I have the support of the staff, if they've had something going on and they're able to write something, it's not as bad so luckily a lot of people here are pretty good at writing blogs now so it's not as time consuming as I initially thought it would be. It's really all just about keeping up with comments, making sure we're posting pictures that way there's actually a face with the Foundation so they see who we are because if people see us and see us as people not just as this organization who wants them to donate their time or their money, then they're going to be a lot more likely to be engaged if they see us as people. So we have to make sure we post pictures and it's not too terribly time consuming it's just something we need to make sure we keep up on a few times a week. I would say probably three times a week max that way we're not overloading people with it.

How do you cover the weekends?

I probably shouldn't do this but I usually log on during the weekends just to see if there's anything that needs attention but usually if nothing too pressing is going on, on Monday morning I'll go in and respond to things that need responded to. And actually a lot of organizations and companies don't post on the weekends I've found, especially non-profits, so I'm not behind on that many things.

I just wanted to add there is more to come. We're working on let's just say in the evolution we have another new website that we're going to be unveiling this fall and so we'll try to find a way to let you all know when that happens because it's going to be a way to promote philanthropy with young people as well as help people make the connection to the value and importance of this work and how to get involved as a philanthropist in supporting service learning, youth empowerment and the other projects and programs that are a part of this Foundation. We're very excited about that piece as well.

[inaudible]

It's fun to keep up with though. I enjoy social media work a lot.

Great. Well thank you so much Calvin. Others are commenting on great job, great job, I would echo great job so thank you Judith and Erica.