

CSIP Final Write-up

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The Website:

My Cultural Stipend Internship Program (CSIP) project was initially outlined as follows:

“Help the PRIDE Initiative develop an up-to-date and sustainable social media presence and website that provides LGBTQQI2S individuals in San Mateo County with information about events, groups, and services being provided for the community. This project requires making contact with the multiple services/entities that serve the community and develop a plan to receive and share up-to-date information about events, groups, and services, as well as compiling resource lists for the community. The project also consists of assessing what would be needed to keep this work going after the internship rotation is complete.”

With this task in mind, I began to conceptualize my project and role in the PRIDE Initiative through a communications/social media lens. I figured the best approach would be to have a central website that would serve as the foundation for all San Mateo County PRIDE Initiative and LGBTQQI2S community information with social media including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as the medium for community outreach/communication efforts.

It took a long time to get started on the project and figure out the logistics. Was I going to use the existing website and just update it? Was I going to create an external website from scratch? If I updated the existing website, was the platform going to allow me enough flexibility and ease to develop the website the way I had envisioned? If I went with an external website with a more user-friendly platform and the freedom to create from scratch, what type of approval

would I need to associate this website with San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services? These were some of the questions I faced regarding the website. It ultimately came down to keeping the existing website and updating it to the best of my abilities with the resources available to me. I received approval and “user” access to the existing website and began exploring the platform and learning how to edit the page. This took A LOT of trial-and-error and going back-and-forth between the page where edits can be made and it’s actual presentation to the community, which did not translate easily/smoothly. This was probably the most challenging, frustrating, and tedious aspect of my project. Once the kinks were worked out and I figured out how to use the platform, things ran a bit smoother.

You can access the website at: www.smchealth.org/pride. I changed the entire format of the page, kept and updated existing content, and added new content. The website starts with the PRIDE Initiative logo/image and is followed by an “Announcement” section for latest information regarding changes in the PRIDE Initiative meeting schedule and or community events. The next section is the “Upcoming Event” section, which is specifically for information related to the San Mateo County Annual Pride Celebration. This section contains information about the event, has the event poster/flyer, and provides information about the entertainers/performers (full bios, pictures, and links to their social media pages) as well as the sponsors for the event (sponsor logos/images). This section also contains a hyperlink to the Eventbrite page for the event. The next section on the website is the “Vision/Mission” section. The content of this section remained the same. The next section is the “Community Presence” section, which is broken down into PRIDE Initiative monthly meetings (information about the meetings, who to contact, and a link to a map), social media (links to Facebook, Instagram, and

Twitter, and Pinterest), past events, and current activities. The next section is the “PRIDE Interns” section, which provides information about the 3 interns and their CSIP projects.

The next section is the “Calendar.” This section took some time to create. I first had to create a Google Calendar account for the PRIDE Initiative. I then created a PRIDE Initiative calendar that contains ALL LGBTQ awareness days/months throughout the year with descriptions and links to more information about these dates. Additionally, the calendar contains information about upcoming events (e.g., the San Mateo County Pride Celebration) and monthly PRIDE Initiative meetings. All of this information can be accessed via the embedded Google Calendar on the PRIDE Initiative website.

After the calendar section, you can find the “Resources” section, which provides information about San Mateo County LGBTQ Resources (this section is fully listed on the website with an additional link to a PDF file that can be downloaded and saved and/or printed by anyone. Immediately following the listed resources in San Mateo County are two links to additional resources in PDF format: 1) LGBTQ Resources Beyond San Mateo County (this list includes the greater Bay Area and is quite extensive) and 2) Trans* Specific Resources (this list includes transgender specific resources throughout the Bay Area). All three resources lists contain the following information: crisis support, mental health/health clinics, community/social organizations, business associations, legal services/political organizations, religion/spirituality, and LGBTQ-friendly businesses. All listings provide contact information, a description of their services, and links to each listings website as well as contact emails. All listings have been checked for updates to assure that provided information is not outdated or no longer a resource. The San Mateo County LGBTQ Resource list also has direct links to LGBTQ Meet-Ups, LGBTQ-friendly therapists (Psychology Today), and LGBTQ-friendly establishments found on

Yelp! There is also an “Additional PRIDE Initiative Resources” section that includes the Pinterest link and a description of the types of Boards that can be found on this page. To make this Pinterest page possible, I had to create a PRIDE Initiative account and search for Pins to add to Boards. The PRIDE Initiative Pinterest page can be found at: www.pinterest.com/smcPRIDEinit and contains a total of 2.5K Pins! Boards include: LGBTQ Pride Images, Inspirational Quotes, LGBTQ Education/Facts, Rainbow Recipes, LGBTQ Literature, LGBTQ Movies, and LGBTQ Awareness Days. All Boards include a description of the Board. The purpose of the Pinterest page is to provide content, specifically images and infographics, for the website and to PRIDE Initiative’s social media presence. Additionally, it provides fun information/resources about LGBTQ culture and community. Creating the Pinterest page was a very time-intensive process. Also in the “Additional Resources” section are existing links to Clinical Considerations When Working with Transgender Populations, the 2001 San Mateo County Rainbow Community Assessment Final Report, and the PRIDE Initiative Brochure. All of these resources are outdated and will be updated when current resources are available in these areas. As for the brochure, I have been working on creating a new, updated version, and thus far, have created one side of the brochure. I am not able to complete the brochure at this time as I am awaiting more updated information/pictures from Katy. The brochure will be completed by June 6th. The entire “Resource” section was the most time consuming aspect of the project.

The next section on the website is the “LGBTQ Timeline.” This part of my project was specifically requested by my Unit Chief, Regina. I have embedded a picture of the first slide of the timeline and when clicked, it will link you to the entire 83-slide presentation in a PDF format that can be downloaded and saved and/or printed by anyone. The timeline is updated through

2013 at the moment. I will have the timeline fully updated through 2016 by June 6th. Thus far, I have done the research and compiled the information that will be provided in the timeline. I just need to format it into the Powerpoint.

The next section of the website is “Contact Information.” I just updated the format of this section but left it as it was prior to my access. Finally, I added a “Picture/Video” section, which currently contains a touching YouTube video titled “Love Has No Labels.” This section will be updated with pictures/videos from the San Mateo County Pride Celebration immediately following the event.

Social Media Presence

As mentioned above, I updated and created the PRIDE Initiative’s social media presence. A Facebook page already existed; however, it was in great need of attention and constant presence via posting and responding to the community. I first updated all information in the “About” section, responded to neglected messages, updated/changed the Facebook url (the existing url was focused on the Pride Celebration Event and not the general Facebook page; new url is www.facebook.com/PRIDEinitiativeSMC), and began posting as much as I could. I started posting about general holidays and LGBTQ awareness days. I also posted about community partner events, workshops, and groups. Anytime the PRIDE Initiative Co-Chairs and members had something they wanted to advertise, they contacted me via the meetings and email, and I posted as quickly as possible. One of the bigger focuses of posting was any and all information about the upcoming LGBTQ Pride Celebration. I posted about the need for vendors and entertainers. I posted, in detail, when we secured entertainers and sponsors. I shared postings on my personal Facebook page and “liked” other LGBTQ-related pages for the PRIDE Initiative

Facebook page. Facebook was my most active social media presence for the initiative as I am most familiar with Facebook. I watched as posts began to reach more and more people and engagement with the page increased indicating that my presence on the Facebook page was indeed helpful in connecting with the community.

I created an Instagram account as well which can be found at: www.instagram.com/smc_pride_initiative. This account was less active as it is primarily photo-based. I intend to use the Instagram account to post photos from the LGBTQ Pride Celebration on this social media site. The page currently has 18 posts, 32 followers, and is following 42 other pages. My hope is to increase these numbers by June 6th.

I also created a Twitter account, which can be found at: www.twitter.com/smcpride. Unfortunately I did not use this page at all as I am not familiar with how to use it and did not have the time to look into it much. Regardless, there are 2 tweets, 46 followers, 2 likes, and the Initiative's Twitter account is following 34 other LGBTQ-related Twitter accounts.

Creating, updating, and managing these social media accounts was a real challenge. It was hard to stay up to date on posts while creating the foundation of these pages, along with the website, all at once. I would have liked to actively engage with the community on these sites more frequently. Now that the groundwork has been laid, I believe it will be easier to maintain the PRIDE Initiative's presence on these social media sites. I do think that the posting on the Facebook page has contributed greatly to the LGBTQ Pride Celebration efforts and will bring many people to the event!

Conclusion

I presented my CSIP project at the May PRIDE Initiative meeting. I did a PowerPoint presentation about the “behind-the-scenes” work for the Intern portion of the meeting and presented the website and social media sites to the members of the community meeting. During the first presentation, I talked about what’s left and presented a potential plan for future maintenance of the work that I have done. I still need to complete the brochure and timeline and post pictures from the LGBTQ Pride Celebration, all of which will be done by June 6th. I am fortunate to be staying on for another year with SMC BHRS for a Supplemental Practicum to complete my research/dissertation with youth in Juvenile Hall. That being said, I offered to continue my work on the communication/social media efforts of the PRIDE Initiative for the next year if possible to receive another stipend or contract with the county to be compensated for my work as it is very time consuming and a lot of work. I would really like to maintain what I have started as I feel I have laid the groundwork and would now like to actively engage with these social media sites. Katy has been talking with Jei and they are looking into options to keep me on for another year. If that does not work out, I am willing to pass the project on to the next intern and share with them how I have managed things thus far. I intend to create a folder on the shared drive that contains all the work that I have done so that the next person has everything they need to carry on with the project. That’s all...for now!