

Rich/Collins Community Leadership & Impact Fellowship Report

Joanna Le and Jesse Yang

Narrative Report

Our project was inspired by an idea to create a podcast about healthcare resources in Boston, as we are both interested in the healthcare field. We thought that there was a wealth of healthcare resources in the city, but we also hypothesized that the average person may not know how to access everything and use it to their needs. While working as an intern at a private practice, Joanna saw a need for education about healthcare insurance, as many patients were not aware of the different options that were available to them. We wanted to create a podcast interviewing perhaps a professional who worked closely with patients about their insurance. Then, we expanded our idea to different subjects in healthcare, such as emergency medical resources or oncology. We only had a rough plan to implement our podcast, but it became more grounded when Jesse found a Rich/Collins meeting, and found that we could fund our project and gain access to many other community resources that could be imperative to starting and spreading our podcast.

While researching Waltham's community needs for the proposal, we found that there was an increase in childhood obesity. As Waltham's population is composed of many new immigrants who are under the poverty line, we thought that they may have difficulties accessing cheap and available food in Waltham, as the super markets seemed a bit pricey. Therefore, we reached out to some experts who worked in the field of nutrition, Alex Linnon-Simon, who works with Waltham Community Fields Farm, as well as April Liles, who works with the Waltham Public Schools to deliver breakfast and lunch to students. We learned a wealth of information about nutrition resources in Waltham that is available to all families in the area. We also asked Dr. Elaine Lai, a professor at Brandeis University, to introduce nutrition and its importance in our health and daily lives. At first, we wanted to interview her for the entire

podcast, but she had the idea of shifting the podcast to a more locally integrated podcast instead of a scientifically-based one. It was a great call, and we immediately contacted the Waltham nutrition community members.

Originally, we planned to partner with Shanesha Christmas, who worked with a group of Waltham High School students called the Trailblazers. We wanted to record an episode on alcohol and substance abuse, as that was also an extremely relevant need in Waltham. However, communication between us was very inefficient, and unfortunately, we could not settle on a time to meet before the end of the semester. We were looking forward to recording the podcast with some of the students as well as having them translate it to Spanish and Haitian Creole, as those are the predominant foreign languages of the Waltham community, but we adjusted to making only one episode for time management.

Also due to time management, we unfortunately could not translate the podcast in time, as we had hoped to do an audio translation with more than one person to simulate the podcast hosts and guests. Most of our budget was projected to be used on translation, so without that aspect, we did not use a large amount of our budget.

The website was something that came together rather quickly, which was a pleasant surprise. We expected for it to take much longer. Using SquareSpace, we pieced it together very quickly, and it looks extremely professional. Now, we are currently advertising our podcast by posting it on social media and spreading it through our community partners. In the future, we can hope to further spread our first episode as well as record additional episodes.

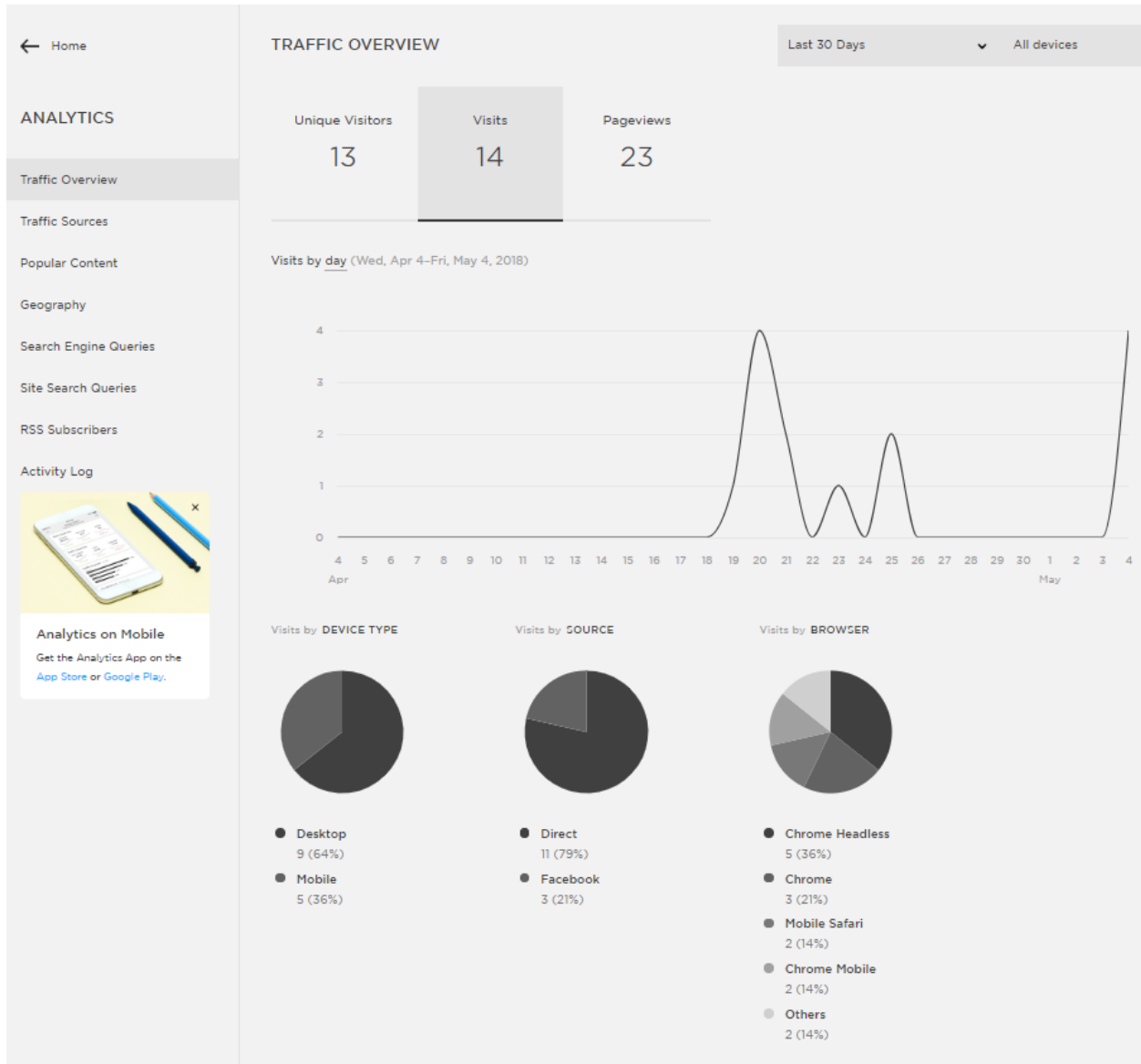
Evaluation

To show our progress in the Rich/Collins Fellowship, we have the very concrete product of our podcast. Regarding spreading it to the community, we are still in the preliminary rounds of advertising our podcast, through our school and our community partners. Our current target audience is Brandeis students, as we address them frequently in our podcast. Therefore, we have several resources through staff connections and email lists to spread it to them over the summer. Eventually, we would like for it to reach Waltham citizens in the community, as these resources apply to them. We can do this with our community partners and contacting further people, as well as hosting a stall at the Waltham Farmer's Market in the fall.

We were planning on buying CDs and burning the podcast on them to hand them out in the community, but since we finished editing the episode so soon before exams picked up, we could not find the time to implement our idea. With CDs, we can spread our podcast to more people in Waltham who may not have easy access to the internet. We would visit the Waltham library, and potentially partner with them to spread the word of our podcast. We can continue our campaign over the summer or next semester on our own time.

Currently, we have an automatic tracker to monitor our progress on both our website and Soundcloud, which is the website that is hosting our podcast as an mp3. They can both track views, and Soundcloud even has a comment section so people can give feedback. In addition, Squarespace has an extremely detailed and high-quality tracking service for people who visit the website. It can track pageviews by day, as well as unique visitors. It has details on percentages of users who use their desktop or mobile as well as whether they use a social media link or type the address in directly. It can also see which browser and operating system they use. A screenshot of the analytics page can be seen below. So far, the page has gotten 25 visits from 21 unique

viewers, but we have just started to advertise the website, so the numbers should gradually go up over time with more publicity and advertising efforts. (This image is slightly outdated, as our numbers rise with each passing day!)



To update our viewers on news and new episodes, perhaps we will add a listserv option on our website. This way, they can be notified and can follow us through our mission to educate all of Waltham about healthcare.

Personal Growth / Reflection and Final Thoughts

We thought that this was a great learning experience in the field of volunteering and community work. We found that it is great to be ambitious and to set high goals, but also to know what is realistic and to be able to settle on a smaller goal when the original one does not pan out. In particular, we learned that time management, goal setting, and communication are imperative for a successful project. One of the issues we ran into early in the project was effectively managing the time needed to plan and create the podcast script, especially in relation to changing expectations and goals. Since we put too much time in the planning and hypothetical phase and less time contacting people and recording the podcast, we found ourselves extremely short on time in the end and could not market our podcast as much as we wanted.

For goal setting, we found that while we had several ambitious goals we failed to include more modest goals. Later into the semester, we transitioned to organize ourselves to become more task oriented, giving us the ability to tackle smaller goals rather than large ones. This transition greatly helped us in making incremental progress on the podcast which helped motivate us as we worked on the podcast. A larger goal was much more intimidating and slowed our progression, making more room for procrastination. A smaller and more concrete goal let us take each piece step by step and move forward, while still feeling like we had accomplished an important step in our project.

In terms of lessons learned through this experience, the importance of communication could not be understated. After initial contact was made with our community partner, where multilaterally we made plans to work on translating the podcast and featuring our community partner in their own episode, communication broke down into the semester. This communication was never recovered into the semester and eventually we had to drop the episode featuring our

community partner and translating the project alongside our community partner. A large part of the reason for the breakdown in communication was not creating a clear schedule of expectations between parties, but also not keeping constant contact with our community partner even during times where we did not require their aid or input. In retrospect, it was very important for the project to keep everyone informed and motivated, and this was where we failed. Next time, we should lay out the expectations for each person in contact. We were clearer about roles and responsibilities with the community members we interviewed for the nutrition episode, and it panned out quickly and very nicely, as we can see by the finished product.

In all, we were very happy to have our finished product, and although we made many mistakes, we also learned that we were able to handle a side project along with our class load. We learned that we could work together as a team and communicate effectively with one another to bring up any problems and brainstorm solutions. Finally, we learned that there are tons of resources about nutrition for low-income individuals locally, and we now know how to better access and utilize them as well as how to better spread the word to our local community.

Acknowledgements:

William Brummett

The Rich/Collins Family

April Liles and Alex Linnon-Simon

Shaneshia Christmas

Guest speakers at our meetings

Our fellow Fellows

Department of Community Service

Name of Program: Healthcare Podcast



Expenses

Item	Purpose	Total # Needed	Cost Per Item	Total Cost
Microphone	Recording the podcast	3	40	120
Pop Filter	Recording the podcast	3	8	24
Armstand	Recording the podcast	3	11	33
Website	Website for distribution	1	72	72
Taxes/Shipping for Equipment	Taxes/Shipping			0.91
Project Total				248.91
Initial Grant Amount				850
Leftover Amount				601.09