

Situation Analysis



Executive Summary

The Lubbock Transition Center (LTC) would benefit from a communications campaign focused on educating potential donors about the organization's mission, impact and values.

LTC needs to create and distribute consistent and tailored messages, as well as exhaust all traditional media outlets to reach the targeted demographics. Creative Alliance PR (CAPR) will also concentrate efforts into expanding public relations endeavors and increasing community partnerships to rebrand and differentiate LTC from similar transition centers and other nonprofits in the Lubbock area. CAPR will use communication strategies to distribute messages through social media platforms and other forms of non-traditional media to increase awareness and establish a relationship within the Lubbock community.

This campaign is designed to establish a strong LTC presence in the Lubbock community and increase the number of donations to the organization. CAPR will distribute messages through multiple platforms to raise the level of awareness and create and maintain relationships with community partners and donors.

Problem Statement

As a fairly new organization, LTC has struggled with donors and generating awareness among the community. This is problematic because without a strong relationship with the community and donors, LTC's growth is limited.

It is also imperative that LTC clarify its relationship with Baptist Child and Family Services (BCFS) to avoid confusing potential donors and sponsors. Being an affiliate of BCFS could possibly cause donors to question if their donations actually help their local community. This issue has occurred since the initial launch of LTC, and will continue to affect its efforts until a substantial identity is formed.

Internal Factors

Mission: According to the LTC website, the organization's mission statement is, "to provide services for at-risk youth and youth aging out of the foster care system that expand their skills and knowledge, strengthen their self-confidence, create healthy community relationships and help youth learn positive self-guidance."

While this mission statement clearly defines the organization's purpose, it is only accessible on the LTC Facebook page. CAPR believes such a strong mission statement should be prominent on all the organization's materials and platforms to uphold consistency, and create a clear demonstration of LTC's perseverance and commitments.

These are the **values** CAPR has determined from client interviews and reviewing the organization's website:

- Positive relationships with and for foster youth.
- Education.
- Emotional well-being of youths in the program.
- Integrity.

Vision:

- To educate the Lubbock-area community about the issues with youth aging out of the foster care system.
- To increase the number of stakeholders and donors to increase the organization's ability to serve foster youth in need.
- To set an example for other transitional programs.
- To help ensure positive futures for foster youth.

History: According to the BCFS website, BCFS was founded in 1944 in San Antonio as an orphanage for children. Today, BCFS is a global health and human services nonprofit organization that helps children, families, and communities in five different continents. BCFS serves populations such as the following: neglected children, those in assisted living, families with individuals diagnosed with a mental disorder, and youth in foster and adopted care. The organization strives to uphold its traditions of serving to communities worldwide.

The history of BCFS is clearly stated, but potential donors and clients would benefit from additional knowledge of LTC's history specifically. According to Jackson, in 2013 LTC served 600 youth. LTC also offers the Court Improvement Project, which is the only in-house courtroom in Texas. LTC currently hosts an alumni night once a month for young adults who have gone through the program.

Funding:

- LTC has more than 17 partners around Texas and receives funding from private donations and grants from organizations including, but not limited to, Lubbock Independent School District, Communities in Schools, Jobs Corps, and Texas Tech University.
- Prep for Adult Living (PAL) provides money for office supplies and classes.
- The Texas Workforce and Federal Work program are both paid for by the state.
- Texas Education Training Voucher (ETV) youth, which helps youth, receive education, training and services (up to \$5,000 per person).

Organizational Structure:

Kami Jackson, executive director of LTC is the principal decision maker at the organization. She plans and organizes special events for LTC, as well as the day-to-day operations. She also updates and posts to the Facebook page. When a contribution is made to the organization, Jackson personally handles the donations.

For special events, Jackson receives help with marketing materials from Krista Pifferer, external vice president of external affairs for media at BCFS at the corporate office in San Antonio. If she needs materials printed, Pifferer creates the content and prints it on behalf of BCFS at no cost to LTC. Also, Ben Delgado, external vice president of BCFS, aids Jackson with advice in regards to promotional materials.

External Factors

Competing forces: Throughout Lubbock there are three other transition programs and centers, all of which are similar to LTC: the Children’s Home of Lubbock (CHL), the Buckner Children and Family Services, and the Sondra’s Song “Soar 2 Succeed” program. According to the 2013 Data Book released by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Lubbock County has one of the highest cases of child abuse or neglect. Statistics show that at least four children are abused in Lubbock daily (1).

According to the CHL website, the organization provides resources for youth after they have left the foster care system. CHL currently has housing facilities but only for those in its Youth Mother Program, which provides a safe place for teen moms to live with their children and acquire the essential skills they need to create a stable environment for their family (2).

The Buckner Children and Family Services center provides transition programs for current and former youth in state care, ages 16 through 21. The center is in a partnership with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) of the South Plains volunteers. Buckner Children and Family Services has established a close relationship with LTC, and LTC is currently located on the Buckner campus.

The Sondra’s Song program works on both a local and international level. Locally, the organization offers the “Soar 2 Succeed” program that assists older youth in foster care in Lubbock and its surrounding areas. The organization provides services that focus on skills the foster youth need in order to live independently. The youth stay in this program for 6 to 18 months. Internationally, the organization also works to help youth in Haiti by building schools and recruiting sponsors for children. Through the “Soar 2 Succeed” website, sponsors and donors who make contributions have the ability to view children the organization is supporting. The personal connection to the youth is a factor that the LTC does not currently offer to its contributors.

Christina Rosales wrote in a Dallas Morning News article that Texas is the only state that allows youths to remain in these programs until the age of 22, while most programs cut off support between the early ages of 18 and 21. Foster children enrolled in college or vocational training can access a federal fund known as the Education and Training Voucher Program, which gives students \$5,000 toward their education. Current laws in Texas provide a college tuition waiver for youth that have been through the foster care system (3).

Relevant Publics

Primary Publics

Individual Donors from the Lubbock Area: According to the interview with Jackson, the Lubbock Transition Center's main focus for this campaign is to increase the number of donations so the organization can continue with its primary goal: helping Lubbock-area youths. According to a 2013 Gallup Poll, slightly more women donated to charities (84 percent) than men (82 percent) in 2013 (4). The biggest group of donors by age is individuals ages 65 years and older, at 88 percent, but there is only a 1 percent to 2 percent difference between that group and individuals 30 to 64 years old. In 2013, 95 percent of those whose income was \$75,000 or more donated to charities. Also, according to the same poll, 84 percent of those who identified as Protestant/Other Christian were more likely to donate to charities than those who identified as Catholic (79 percent) or those who gave no religious preference (77 percent). On that same note, those who attend religious services weekly or monthly were more likely to contribute than those who attend less or not at all. Based on the results above and religious belief as their self-interest, donors will receive a sense of "good" from volunteering time or items. CAPR believes that these individuals (65 or older with an income of \$75,000 or greater, who regularly attend a Protestant/Other Christian service) would be the best audience to target throughout the campaign (5).

Local Businesses: CAPR believes LTC can increase its visibility in the community by partnering with businesses in the Lubbock area. CAPR believes approaching these businesses with mutually beneficial sponsorship opportunities can help create positive relationships in the community. To harness these relationships, LTC must first establish rapport with businesses. CAPR believes educating businesses about LTC's mission and offering tours of the facility will be the first step in creating partnerships with local businesses.

Situation Analysis

Baptist Children Family Services: All promotional, media and marketing materials for LTC have to be approved by the BCFS corporate office. To ensure a successful campaign, we must create a proposal that carefully explains each detail to these decision makers and explains why these changes are necessary to ensure LTC's future success. BCFS decision makers, such as Kevin Dinnin, president of BCFS, must be considered and consulted throughout the campaign. BCFS's self-interest would be in the growth and expansion of one of its local branches.

Secondary Publics

Lubbock Transition Center Alumni: Jackson shared the stories of some of her former LTC youth. According to Jackson, she is still involved in many of their lives and continues to host alumni events. It is important to keep this group in mind for a few reasons. First, there is the possibility that sharing their stories with potential donors and partners would help further the organization and assist in the development of a brand the community can identify with. Beyond this, their personal experience with the center means they have a personal investment and interest in the center's success.

Partners/Large Donors: As with many nonprofits, Lubbock Transition Center relies on partnerships within the community. An example is Target, where the organization hosts its annual Hope Chest event. Target has provided a 15 percent discount to LTC for this event. LTC also has partnerships with CASA of the South Plains, Texas Tech University, the Lubbock Independent School District, Buckner Transition Center, Texas Workforce Solutions, and State of Texas Access Reform (STAR). We also have to consider organizations that have provided grants to LTC, such as the Lubbock Area Foundation, the CH Foundation, and the Helen Devitt Jones Foundation. These large organizations, and others like them, care about corporate social responsibility, giving back to the community, and improving the company's reputation. In order to keep these partnerships strong for funding and public relations reasons, we must keep all of these entities and their values in mind when planning our campaign.

Lubbock Area: This group is crucial to LTC and has large potential for new donors. By simply spreading awareness of the difficulty with their transitioning out of foster care, we present the organization with new potential donors, partnerships, volunteers and other funding opportunities. Jackson also mentioned when teachers hear about the center, they reach out to her and ask for help on behalf of a student. Besides the potential promotional gains, there is also the possibility of expanding the organization's reach and capabilities to help.

Current and Future Youth Clients: According to Jackson, LTC has served approximately 1,500 youth in the past two years. It is important to be sensitive to the current organization members

and make sure none of our efforts make them uncomfortable (for example, inviting visitors to the center when members might not feel secure). We should also keep potential members in mind. If we increase awareness of LTC and help them gain credibility in the community, it may be easier for the organization to recruit and assist new young adults as they age out of foster care.

According to the Data Count website, in 2013 Lubbock had 574 children in foster care (roughly 8 percent) (6). Those included in the numbers who are not already involved with LTC are our potential clients. This public's self-interest in LTC is dependable support and guidance for their futures.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths

- The Lubbock Transition Center has specialized employees for the foster youth involved in its programs. This is beneficial to the center because it can establish itself as an expert and the best equipped to deal with issues in the community.
- The Court Improvement Project is an essential service provided by LTC. This aspect can be used in campaign messages to differentiate LTC from other similar organizations in the Lubbock community being the only organization to offer an in-house courtroom. This also benefits LTC's clients by providing a comfortable setting during the court process.
- LTC offers several ways to contribute including: donating time, clothes, household items, or school supplies. This allows prospective donors the opportunity to contribute in various ways other than monetary donations.
- LTC is a "one-stop shop" for foster youth. Its facility houses representatives from the various agencies foster youth have to interact with. This increases productivity, which will appeal to potential donors.

Weaknesses

- LTC has a small presence on social media with very little interaction and engagement. This has limited the amount of exposure of LTC among publics who receive information strictly from social media.
- The marketing attempts by LTC have been unsuccessful thus far with local events receiving very little media coverage and a low awareness of LTC in the community.
- LTC has not exhausted all networking options and partnerships with local organizations and companies needed to succeed. This factor could potentially weaken opportunities for donations and sponsorships from businesses in the local community.

Opportunities

- Being backed by BCFS, a well-established, international organization can help provide LTC with credibility. This credibility could potentially ensure donors of the organization's validity and security.
- Free media coverage opportunities often arise for nonprofit organizations. For example, PSAs and the organization's social media page can be used to obtain more media coverage for LTC at a discounted rate. This will increase knowledge and awareness of the organization in the local community.
- Trending activities are prevalent in social media. LTC can incorporate today's trends to engage target publics.
- LTC has the opportunity to increase its social media presence and engage multiple demographics. By generating interesting and relevant content targeted at the local community, LTC can increase awareness in Lubbock and surrounding areas.
- Sponsorships are valuable ways to increase visibility of a nonprofit. These partnerships are an opportunity to receive monetary funds as well as spread awareness among the sponsor's audiences.

Threats

- The Sondra's Song "Soar 2 Succeed" program offers the similar services as LTC. The organization also provides housing for foster youth.
- LTC is often overshadowed by BCFS and the Buckner Transition Center. Both are located on the same campus, very near to each other. This can lead to confusion from the Lubbock community and potentially damage awareness efforts to increase donations to the organization.
- According to the Data Center website, Lubbock had a relatively high number of foster children in 2013, which could potentially make serving the high volume of foster youth difficult in the future.
- LTC has limited exposure in Lubbock. This increases the chances of sponsorships and donations going to other organizations.

Current Situation

Current Position: Some of the public relations efforts LTC implements include a Facebook page and a newsletter. LTC also has an information packet filled with informational materials. Because of these minimal efforts, this campaign has the potential to establish a public image that could enhance the overall brand and awareness of LTC.

Much of the traditional media coverage of LTC is focused on the Hope Chest event and the in-house courtroom. These are both great opportunities for media coverage, but CAPR believes LTC can increase the amount of traditional media coverage it receives. For example, distributing press releases about the organization's impact on the Lubbock community can increase awareness about LTC's mission and not just events. Also, sharing the stories of youth affected by LTC will put faces on the issue and may help generate interest in the organization.

Another issue faced at LTC is the organization has to get everything approved by BCFS corporate. It took Jackson two years to get approval for a Facebook page for LTC. She also has to get PSAs, flyers and other materials from the corporate office. This process to implement new social media or marketing tools takes longer than necessary. We believe increased communication with BCFS leadership would help make the process easier.

LTC is also in need of secure funding. Most of its funding is designated to specific departments and functions and services. The Texas Workforce Program, the Federal Work Program and PAL are funded by the state. LTC is always in need of donors to contribute monetary or donations, or items such as, clothing, furniture, food, cars, etcetera (7).

Direction: This campaign aims to:

- Improve the image and recognition of LTC in the community.
- Increase staff capabilities to maintain media relations and increase social media presence.
- Increase awareness of services LTC provides to all target audiences by becoming more involved on, and producing relevant and interesting content for, social media, and increasing media coverage of LTC's mission and impact.

Through this campaign, CAPR will create awareness and education on the services LTC offers among the Lubbock community.

Potential Obstacles: During the planning and implementation stages of our campaign, CAPR has prepared for obstacles that could arise. These include:

- A limited budget of \$4,000.
- People who remain uninterested or uninvolved despite new information and public relations efforts.
- Having to request and maintain approval from corporate to operate social media tools.
- Encouraging audiences to participate in surveys and focus groups without incentives.

We plan to overcome these obstacles by:

- Providing useful information through our campaign to change public opinion about LTC and develop an identifiable brand for the center.
- Expressing how the growth and improvement of LTC will positively affect the community.
- Increasing amount of free and earned media.

Resources: LTC has limited staff, but this can be made up for with volunteers and interns. LTC can partner with other transition centers and foster homes to educate the public and donors about the different services offered. Resources for this campaign include the College of Media and Communication research facilities, as well access to the Lubbock community for data collection. We can receive more information about LTC via social media and website. CAPR can look at previous promotional efforts for LTC and analyze their successes. We can also look at official documents for more background and donor information.

