



Facilitating an Online Store Featuring a Therapeutic Craft to Support Development at a Tuition-Free Center for Children with Special Needs

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OVERVIEW OF CAPSTONE SITE

The Little Light House (LLH) in Jackson, MS is a developmental center that provides services for children with special needs from birth to age six. Their mission is “to glorify God by improving the quality of life for children with special needs, their families, and their communities.” This center has a transdisciplinary team that is composed of special ed teachers, speech therapists, OTs, PTs, and trained volunteers. The students' needs are addressed in a holistic manner and occupational performance is viewed as a priority.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Timeline: June-July 2020
Participants: Fran Patterson, Executive Director & Tammy Tadlock, Events and Volunteer Coordinator
Instrument: 16 qualitative, semi-structured, open-ended questions
Summary: The LLH needs a sustainable, year-round fundraising opportunity. The LLH does many fundraisers throughout the year and most of these are held annually. Although these events typically yield large profits, the LLH needs a fundraiser that is ongoing, rather than another large event that requires a lot of planning and resources to prepare and execute. It has been proposed that an online store featuring products made by the students could serve as a continuous fundraiser. This online store could be managed by a small group of people and could yield continuous funds throughout the year.

LITERATURE SUMMARY

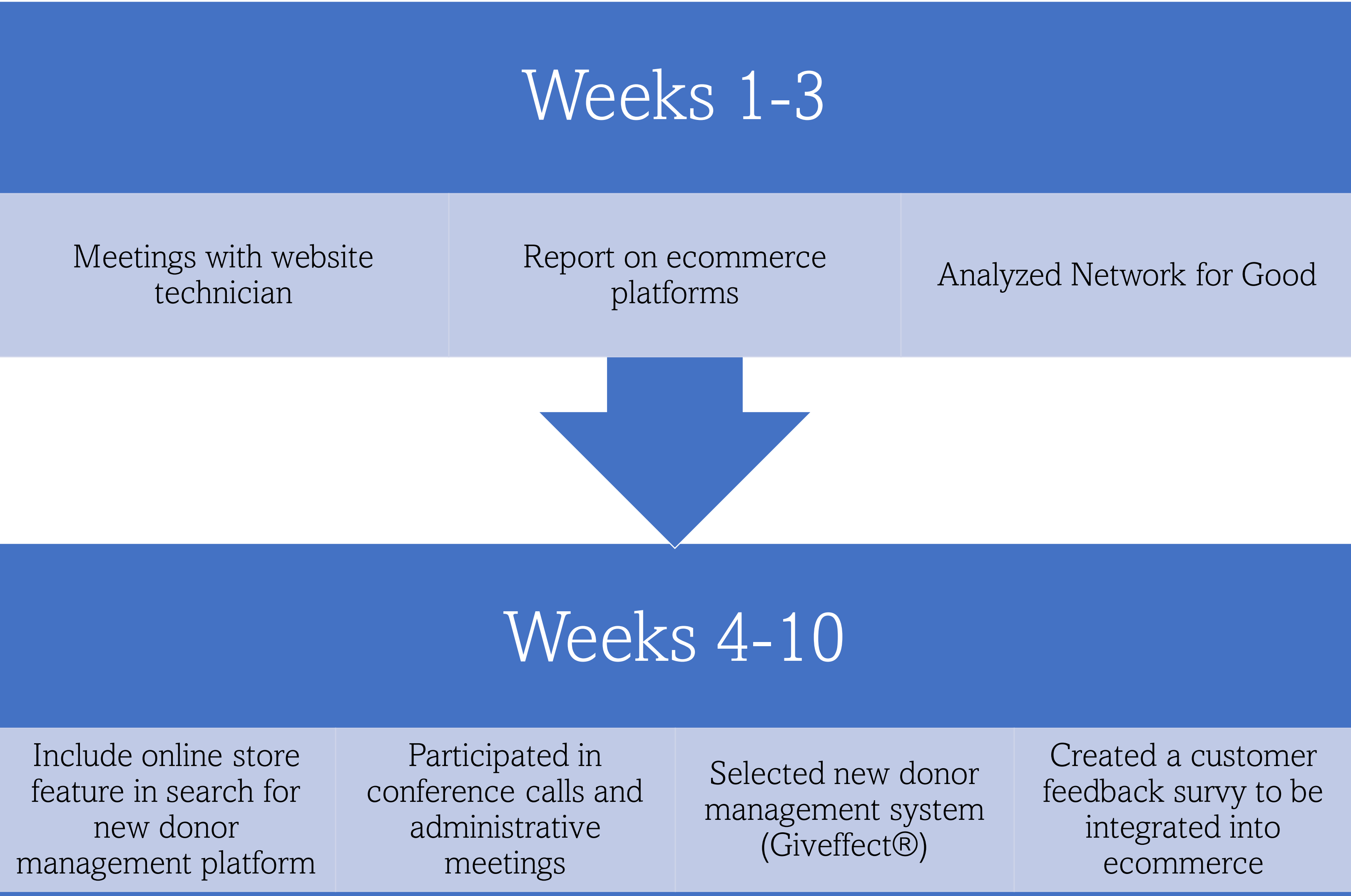
Promote fundraising through ecommerce: An ecommerce can diversify funding sources, advertise brand, connect with customers, and increase awareness, support, donations and product sales. Successful ecommerce examples include The Mustard Seed in Brandon, MS and Jacob's Ladder in Vicksburg, MS.
Crafts as therapeutic media in occupational therapy: Participating in crafts can promote personal development, relaxation and anxiety relief, prevocational skills, motor and processing skills, attention and concentration, and sense of productivity, pride and purpose. Therapeutic crafts are upported by the model of human occuaption and the developmental frame of reference.

PROJECT GOALS / OBJECTIVES

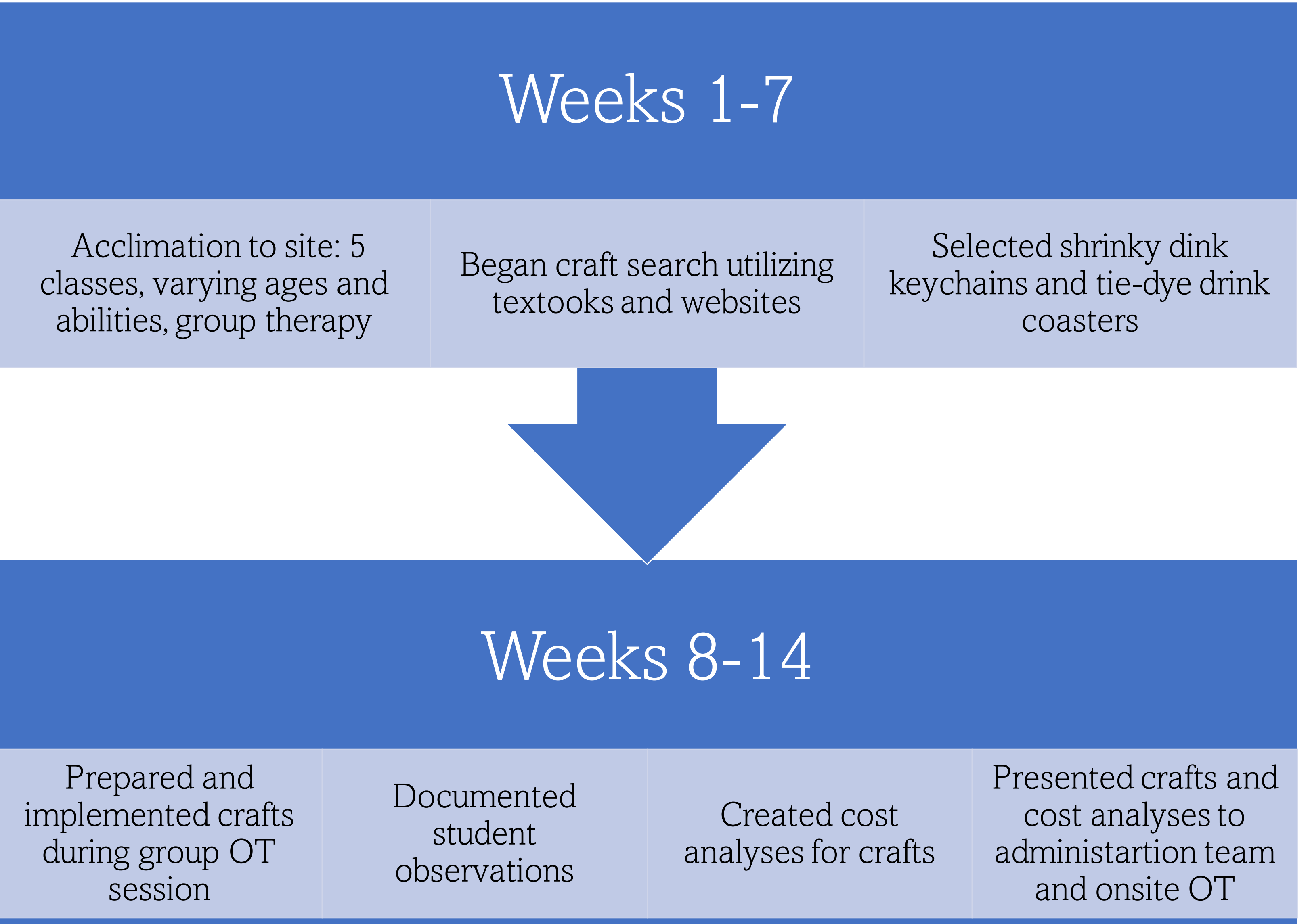
Goal 1: Facilitate the launch of an online store to assist raising funds for the LLH.
Objective 1: Discuss online store with website technician by the end of week
Objective 2: Analyze donor management systems by the end of week 6.
Objective 3: Include a store option in the search for new donor management system by the end of week 7.
Objective 4: Identify and present potential marketing items by the end of week 12.
Objective 5: Create a customer feedback survey to be utilized with the online store by the end of week 12.
Goal 2: Implement a therapeutic craft to be sold on the ecommerce for LLH fundraising.
Objective 1: Identify multiple therapeutic craft ideas by the end of week 4.
Objective 2: Conduct meeting with OT to discuss feasibility and craft options by the end of week 5.
Objective 3: Present three different OT craft products with supply needs and costs by the end of week 7.
Objective 4: Create selected craft(s) during OT sessions in weeks 11 and 12.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT and/or IMPLEMENTATION

Component 1: Facilitating an online store



Component 2: Crafts to support development



Final Craft Products



Tie-Dye Drink Coasters



Shrinky Dink Keychains

PLAN FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

Evaluation Plan: Two surveys utilizing likert scales were created to evaluate the capstone project. One was designed for the LLH administration team to address the marketability and feasibility of the chosen crafts. The other survey was developed for the onsite OT to evaluate the therapeutic effectiveness of the crafts and how well the student implemented the crafts in group therapy sessions.
Evaluation results: The on-site OT did not return the evaluation. The administration team returned 2/4 evaluations. Both respondents selected predominately "agree" and "mostly agree" with no "disagree" statements. Both noted the crafts, although therapeutic for the students, were not feasible to implement during class time. One respndent stated, "I absolutely love these items and that each child was able to design them with their personality in the art." Both respondents also noted that the crafts were not branded with the LLH logo, which they would like to see in future crafts.

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

Recommendations: It is recommended the LLH remain committed to using the ecommerce tool in the new data management system to trial several craft options. Then, analyze the craft sales, and the customer feedback surveys that are completed to identify next steps concerning modifications and reproduction. Also, it may be advantageous to establish specific times throughout the week or month that could be dedicated to creating the crafts to allow for bulk production without imposing additional stress on the teachers. Finally, it may be beneficial to personalize the crafts (name and photographs) to the students on the online store and social media platforms as an advertisement strategy.
Summary: This project provides the foundation for the LLH online store and products to be sold. Also, these crafts have sparked ideas in the minds of the LLH teachers and therapists for future online store products.