

Central Cass Treehouse- Implementation Platform

The Central Cass Treehouse is a non-profit that provides clothing, hygiene items, and food to Central Cass students in all grade levels. Every student is empowered to reach their academic goals through the alignment of support provided by the Treehouse. Middle School and High School students are empowered to communicate anonymously through a mobile app about any physical, mental, or social needs.

Our success has been driven by the following aspects:

- Anonymous Platform – No student information is recorded when taking items from the pantry. When utilizing the technology, student provides lunch ID, which is not public knowledge and only utilized to determine which locker to deliver items. All items are delivered to student lockers by school staff, teachers, and admins. We partner with the community while leveraging the confidentiality of the school.
- Technology – Providing a mobile app to students for communication of physical, mental, and social needs.
- Community Driven- This platform is driven by resources from outside the school (pantry is onsite), rather than requiring more from our teachers and administrators.

Main Components of Consideration and Strategies for Treehouse Implementation

Key Individuals

- Community Members with specific skillsets (finance, technology, mental health, etc.)
- School Resources – Administrators, Nurse, Counselors/Social Workers, Alternative Learning

On Campus Pantry

- ✓ Speak with school Administration, School Board
- ✓ Survey Students and Staff to determine needs.
- ✓ Create Social Media Account to communicate with community.
- ✓ Locate on campus pantry location and determine needs – shelving, etc.
- ✓ Align a Donation night for community to bring food, clothing, etc.
- ✓ Align with Great Plains Food Bank

Organization

- ✓ Clear totes and labels
- ✓ Grouping of similar items
- ✓ Washing all items to ensure they are clean and ready for wear.

Financial

- ✓ Determine non-profit status (if desired)
- ✓ EasyFile 501c with Federal Government
- ✓ Open Bank account for donations
- ✓ Open PO Box
- ✓ Appoint Treasurer

Technology

- ✓ Review Microsoft Non-Profit Platform
- ✓ Review Microsoft Power Platform and PowerApps
- ✓ Reach out to community for technical resources and/or assistance.
- ✓ Reach out to local university systems for partnership.
- ✓ Create a Social Media profile
- ✓ Work with school IT Department if applicable

Community

- ✓ Align with local businesses.
- ✓ Communicate needs through social media and have a method for drop-off.
- ✓ Community participation without breaching confidentiality of recipient.

Additional Information

On Campus Pantry

- **Location**
 - Pantry can be located anywhere on campus depending on need and availability. (Closet, etc.)
 - The Treehouse is at a K12 school, so we specifically located the pantry in the elementary wing of the school. This was done strategically to be near the elementary school teachers and to allow high school students confidentiality if they wanted to shop in store. If not at a K12, a location that is easily accessible yet provides privacy is recommended.
 - The Treehouse is locked 24/7 with a key provided in each school office and can be utilized anytime during school hours by teachers, admin, staff on behalf of student. After hours needs can be filled by reaching out to School Admins or Treehouse President.
 - The Treehouse President has an individual key for management needs during or after hours at the school.
- **Inventory**
 - Inventory Sheet - Area of school (Elementary/Middle School/High School), # of food/hygiene, Qty Clothing, Qty Shoes
 - The sheet is filled out when anything is taken out of the Treehouse for data measurement and inventory.
 - Completed by: Teacher, admin, or staff
 - Excel
 - All inventory, financial tracking, additional data is stored in Excel to provide organization and data management options (graphs, macros, etc.).
 - Updated/completed by: Individual responsible for data
 - Product Inventory
 - Recommendations
 - Quarterly inventory for quantity/poundage for food/hygiene
 - Inventory of product coming into the Treehouse
- **Organization**
 - Organization is incredibly important in the Treehouse. Maximize space while providing a clean and organized environment. The goal is for a teacher, staff, or administrator to find what they need in under 5 minutes.
 - Clear totes of the same brand – Provides transparency of what is in the container as well as uniformity when stacking.
 - Labeling – Labeling of totes and shelving lead to an ease of use when looking for items.
 - Tote for incoming items – A tote in the front of the room is available for donations that may be dropped off at the school and/or by school children when they come to school.
 - Policies – Essential to align with school needs.
 - Hat Policy – if a child tries on a hat it's put in a bucket to be washed to deter lice.
 - Specialty Items – Requests go to the Treehouse President for approval or majority board vote.

Financial

- **Creation of Bank Account**

- Keep track of all receipts, donations, and establish a general ledger.
- The Treehouse setup a reimbursement structure between the President and Treasurer. President purchases and submits receipts for reimbursement.
 - Looking into building a fund at the school
- Structure finances to support reporting and filing to IRS.
- Align payment agreement with local vendors.
 - Treehouse aligns teachers to hair cutting resources, they agree upon services, and resource requests payment through Venmo.
 - This keeps the process anonymous from the Treehouse board and volunteers.

Technology

- The most important part of the Treehouse platform is the technology. Providing an app/web platform allows our students to communicate their physical, mental, and social needs anonymously.
 - Leverage members of the community with technology skillsets.
 - Work with teachers, social workers, school administrators to identify needs and custom asks (example: specific sizing, preference, or items)
 - Build out a workflow for each button on your app – Example: If I click on this button, where will it take me. What will the next page look like?
 - Review Microsoft Non-Profit Platform <https://nonprofit.microsoft.com/register>
 - Review Microsoft Power Platform and PowerApps
 - [Power Apps Login](#)
 - [Build your first model-driven app from scratch with Power Apps](#)
 - [Power Platform Training](#)
 - [Power Platform Training v2](#)
 - Reach out to local university systems for partnership.
 - Students in their final years maybe looking for capstone projects or unpaid internships.
 - Create a Social Media profile
 - Facebook, Instagram, etc.
 - Used for marketing, awareness, and communication with the community.
 - Work with school IT Department if applicable
- Microsoft Teams – Used as our collaboration platform and document management.

Community

- The success of the Treehouse is highly impacted by the support of the community.
- Community members can donate money, products, time, clothing etc.
- Social media is utilized to communicate with the community about current needs and upcoming events.
- Treehouse creates drop off areas for products, clothing, and additional needs. Locations are communicated to the community through social media.
- Creation of volunteers

Special Events

- Pop Up Shop – All clothing is hung in a confidential area for High/Middle School so they can shop or try on items. We provide this 3 times a year – Back to School, Before Christmas Break, Spring
- Squirrel Gift – Providing gifts to students of need.
 - Requested on behalf of the student by family members, teachers, etc.
 - Requested by the student – Middle and High School Only
 - Utilized Google Forms for capturing data.

- Delivered anonymously to student locker or classroom – Each child identified by a number rather than their name.
 - Amazon Wish List provided for the community to participate in gift buying.
- Socktober
 - Requesting socks for pantry.
 - Competition to get the most donated socks amongst the elementary
- Tampax Tuesday/Feminine Hygiene Friday
 - Requesting feminine hygiene products for pantry

Treehouse Board

- Identify people in the community with a shared passion and specific skillsets (tech, mental health, finance).
- Identify people in the school framework with a shared passion - school administrators, counselors, social workers, teachers, alternative learning teachers.
- Vote amongst the board for leadership roles – President, Vice President, Treasure, Secretary, etc.
- Create Mission Statement
- Create By-Laws
- Create voting rules to handle decisions.
- Schedule regular board meetings
- Determine phased approach for measured implementation.

Additional Services Provided

- Haircutting
 - Teachers/Administrators work with local hair stylists to make student appointments, yet Treehouse picks up the bill.
 - Students get a normal hair cutting experience without the bill
- Mental Health Support
 - The Treehouse provides additional funds to school counselors for apps, tools, resources, or items to assist students that may be outside of a school counselors budget.
- Food Baskets
 - Providing food for students over long breaks – Thanksgiving, holiday, and spring break
 - Types of items included.
 - Breakfast bars, Oatmeal Bread, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Granola Bars, Ready Made food items (Mac N Cheese, microwave meals, soup, ramen, etc.), Shelf Stable Milk, Apple Sauce, Fruit cups, popcorn, etc.
 - Packaged into bags with handles (Hornbachers Grocery Bags)