



UL ENGAGE

Community Briefing

2017 No. 2

Limerick's Gateway to Education (LGTE)

Abbey Benning
Megan Cavanaugh
Taylor Loyd
Esther Morris
Bailey Perry



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

UL Engage

share

enable

grow

Promoting University Community Collaboration

THE BRIEF

As a practicum group, we were tasked with improving the visibility of Limerick’s Gateway to Education, an educational support charity that provides school uniforms, books, supplies, and tutoring services at reduced prices to struggling Limerick families. Our ultimate goal was to increase the stream of donations to the charity by way of various marketing projects. Through our combined efforts this term, we successfully redesigned and rewrote LGTE’s website, wrote an impact report for distribution to potential donors, produced a template for donor thank you cards, distributed a survey to learn how to better serve the students in the tutoring program, and created an organizational communication chart to assist future practicum volunteers.

We believe we succeeded in our mission, and the leaders of LGTE echoed this belief. When asked about the practicum’s impact on their organization, they said, “This is all work that desperately needed to be done but we didn't have the resources or the time to devote to it the way our students had. Without them we would never gotten this work done to this exceptional standard. The girls have been enthusiastic, motivated and always full of great ideas. It’s been a pleasure working with each and every one of them.”



Gateway to Education
LIMERICK



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Limerick's Gateway to Education:

In 2012, Suzanne Roche fell into financial hardship while sending her four children to school amid the recession – prompting her to reach out to her community for assistance. After being inundated with a wave of generosity, Suzanne offered her accumulated surplus of books and uniforms to friends and neighbors. It was through this experience that Suzanne realized financial difficulties surrounding families' abilities to pay for school necessities were very common. With this realization, Limerick's Gateway to Education was born. Suzanne continued to collect donations of books, uniforms and other supplies and began to sell them at deeply discounted prices. She hoped to alleviate some of the hardship experienced by parents paying for their children's education. Within five years, Suzanne expanded LGTE's charity shop from her backyard shed to a shop located on O'Connell Street to the shop's current site on Wickham Street in Limerick City Center.

As time went by, Suzanne also began to receive donations of clothing, novels, and household supplies. In order to gain revenue to maintain the shop, these items, too, were sold in a similar fashion to the school supplies. One day, a local mum walked into the LGTE Charity Shop and expressed concern to Suzanne because she could not read or write and could not afford to pay for a tutor to help her daughter with schoolwork. Suzanne immediately saw an opportunity to help the Limerick community in a new way, and she formed the Homework Club. This program recruits university student volunteers to tutor children who otherwise could not afford the help.

Project Organizers:

Suzanne Roche:

Suzanne is the founder and CEO of Limerick's Gateway to Education (LGTE). She's lived in Limerick for 49 years and loves the city's warm hospitality and sense of community. Her four children all attend or attended school in the area, and it was her experiences purchasing their school books and uniforms that inspired her to start LGTE. Suzanne is a firm believer in the importance of education for all young people and has been working to make education a widespread reality since she opened the shop five years ago.

Karen Keane:

Karen is LGTE's store manager and has spent many years living in Limerick. She enthusiastically joined LGTE's team two years ago when she realized that her educational and work experience could be used to help run a charity. Karen is a strong proponent of LGTE's commitment to helping all children realize their full potentials in and out of the classroom.

STUDENTS

Abbey Benning:

Abbey is a junior at the University of Minnesota in the United States. She is majoring in Journalism and Strategic Communications, and she plans to obtain her secondary education certification to teach high school English. She was excited to take the practicum class and to work with LGTE because, as a future educator, she wanted to play a role in making education possible for those in the Limerick community. She believes education is a fundamental right and wanted to do her part to make it a reality for as many children as possible.

Megan Cavanaugh:

Megan is a senior Communication Studies major at Illinois State University in the United States. Megan was interested in UL Practicum because it operates differently from traditional education and challenges students through real-life experience. More specifically, she was happy to work with LGTE because she believes in their cause of aiding local families of Limerick through educational resources.

Taylor Loyd:

Taylor is a sophomore at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts. She is a double-major student, pursuing degrees in Public Health and in Sociology with a concentration in Global Studies and Social Justice. Taylor was interested in participating in the UL Practicum program with Limerick's Gateway to Education primarily to gain a better understanding of and to gain experience working for non-profit organizations, as her ultimate career goal is to work in humanitarian aid.

Esther Morris:

Esther is a senior at the University of Northern Colorado in the United States and is majoring in Early Childhood Education. Esther was interested in pursuing the UL Practicum because she is passionate about hands-on learning at all levels of education and believes this type of experience offers a type of learning that classroom instruction cannot. She also has a heart for kids and wanted to be involved with local education during her time here.

Bailey Perry:

Bailey is a junior majoring in Statistics at the University of Minnesota in the United States. She was interested in working on the Gateway to Education practicum project because her mom works in Early Childhood Education, particularly with students with special needs or low income families. She believes that education is hugely important, and ideally wanted to have an impact on this system while spending time in Limerick.



Megan



Abbey



Taylor



Esther



Bailey

PROJECT RATIONALE

Limerick's Gateway to Education does important, meaningful work, but many people in the Limerick community aren't even aware that the organization exists. LGTE requires donations to sustain its shop, run its homework club, and pay its overhead costs, so it is imperative that it is well-known and a top destination for donations. We know LGTE is a worthwhile cause because it facilitates affordable education, and education is among the most important things a person can obtain. Our aim as practicum volunteers was to increase awareness of LGTE, its mission, how it contributes to the community, and its need for donations. We decided that the best way to do so was to take a multi-faceted marketing approach.

Donor Report



Contents

Meet the Founder: Suzanne Roche **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Mission Statement 8

Our Story 8

Store Growth Timeline 10

Testimonials & Photos 10

Donor Role & Impact **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

What You Can Do 12

Contact Information 12

Meet the Founder: Suzanne Roche

Suzanne is the owner and CEO of Limerick’s Gateway to Education (LGTE). She’s lived in Limerick for 49 years and loves the city’s warm hospitality and sense of community. Her four children all attend or attended school in the area, and it was her experience purchasing their school books and uniforms that inspired her to start LGTE. Suzanne is a firm believer in the importance of education for all young people and has been working to make education a widespread reality since she opened the shop five years ago.



Mission Statement

Our actions at Limerick’s Gateway to Education are grounded in our four core values:



- **Commitment:** Education levels the societal playing field, and we will work tirelessly to enable Limerick’s population to reach a higher standard of living by creating a bridge to educational opportunities.
- **Support:** We will surround our young people in a caring, welcoming learning environment. We will provide them not only with the materials they need to succeed in school, but also with emotional support and encouragement.
- **Inclusivity:** We will treat all those who use our services with equal care and attention. We will assist the entire family unit to make education both desirable and feasible.
- **Possibility:** We will expand young people’s perspectives and

make them aware of the endless opportunities available to them. They are infinitely capable, and we will help them to realize their abilities.

Our Story

In 2012, amid the recession, Suzanne Roche experienced the financial hardship of sending four children back to school, and she reached out to her community for assistance. After being inundated with a wave of generosity, Suzanne offered her surplus of books and uniforms to her friends and neighbors, and she quickly realized that the difficulty of paying for school necessities was a common one. With this realization, Limerick's Gateway to Education was born. Suzanne continued to collect donated books and uniforms and sold them at deeply discounted prices to alleviate the hardship of paying for education. In the next five years, she moved her shop from a shed in her backyard to a location on O'Connell Street and finally to its current site on Wickham Street in Limerick City Centre.

As time went by, Suzanne also began to receive donations of clothing, novels, and household supplies, and she sold these too to maintain the shop. One day, a local mum walked into the shop and shared her concerns about her daughter's education—the woman couldn't read or write, and she was unable to pay for anyone else to help with her daughter's schoolwork. Suzanne immediately saw an opportunity to help the Limerick community in another way, and she formed the Homework Club, where volunteers from the University of Limerick tutor children who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford the help.

We at Limerick's Gateway to Education know that our role promoting education in Limerick is a worthwhile and important one, and we continue to strive to make education accessible for all.



Store Growth Timeline



Testimonials & Photos

“My daughter really enjoys homework club; she loves all the students and I can see a big improvement in her reading since she started. I am very grateful to the students for this. Thank you, looking forward to her starting again in September 2015” – *Regina S.*



“Your classes in UL were a great help to my daughter who will be finishing her second year in school. As a parent who did a leaving cert 21 years ago, it was great to be able to get her help with math especially. I hope you will be able to run this service again next year” – *Elise S.*

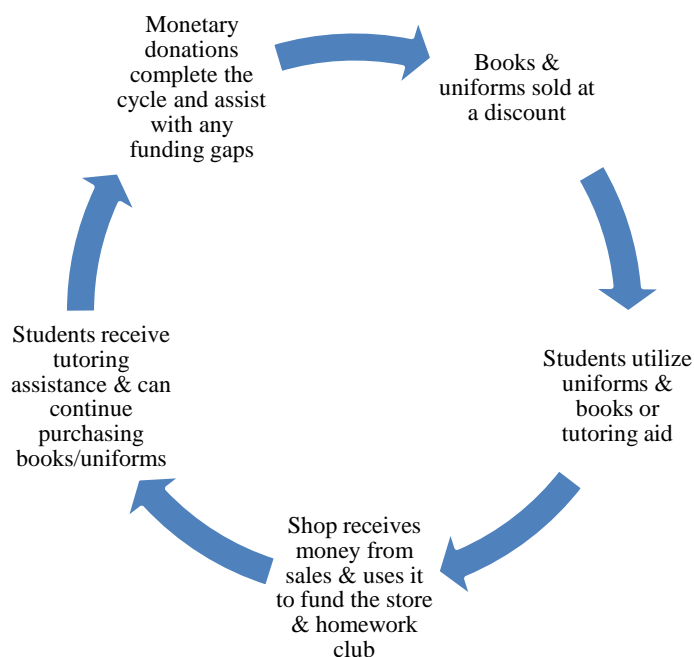
“Homework club has brought my daughter on so much as she is gotten more better with homework and has got more confidence from going she is more social now which has benefited her and even her work has improved from going to homework club” – *Jennifer*



Donor Role & Impact

We aim to make education more affordable for Limerick families by selling the books and uniforms required at local schools for reduced prices. We offer more than just school materials, however. Our shop also supplies secondhand clothing, shoes, novels and nonfiction books, DVDs, CDs, household goods, and more, all for discounted prices. All our inventory comes from donations, and the sale of these goods goes toward maintaining the shop so we can continue to aid Limerick families. The idea is to maintain a cycle of giving that in turn results in the educational assistance and success of Limerick families in need.

Not only does the shop provide these supplies for families, but LGTE went a step further by creating a Homework Club to tutor local children at a discounted price. The Homework Club provides volunteer tutors from Mary Immaculate College and the University of Limerick, and the club meets three days a week on the campus of the University of Limerick. Students receive customized help with any subjects they desire, complete art projects and other fun educational activities, and form valuable friendships outside of school. The Homework Club isn't just a source of academic assistance; it's a welcoming community that encourages students to reach their goals. A small fee is charged to run the club, but prices are much lower than those of typical tutoring services, and most expenses are covered by donations.



What You Can Do



You have the power to help our children reach their full potential!
Visit our website or contact us to donate or volunteer today.

Contact Information

Address: No. 9 Wickham St, Limerick, V94 Y4X7, Ireland

Website: limerickgatewaytoeducation.ie

Call: (061) 481 633

Email: limerickgateway@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LimericksGateway/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/limerickgateway>

Appendix B: Homework Club Survey

Limerick's Gateway to Education Homework Club Survey

Dear parent or guardian:



At our homework club, we value your feedback. Please fill out the following survey, with your child if you like, and return it to Suzanne or a volunteer at the next homework club. Your feedback is completely anonymous, unless you would like to include your name. We appreciate your participation!

Date

| Your child's grade level

| Your child's school

AREA OF SERVICE

QUALITY RATING

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

PLEASE RANK THE BELOW ON A 1-5 SCALE:

1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE, 2 = DISAGREE,

3 = NEUTRAL, 4 = AGREE, 5 = STRONGLY AGREE

Our club's educational program is of high quality.

Our club is doing an excellent job aiding in your student's understanding of and/or performance in the following subjects:

Reading

Writing

Math

Science

Social Studies

Fine Arts

The size of the homework club group does not affect the quality of my child's education.

SCHOOL RESOURCES

My child has access to a variety of resources to help him/her learn at home.

My child's access to school resources has improved because of the homework club.

Our club's facilities are clean and well maintained.

Our club should try to provide more school resources for the students.

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

My child is being well prepared to continue his/her education.

MORE COMMENTS?

Please expand upon your assessment of any areas that the club could improve.

Your comments, critiques, and suggestions are very important in the betterment of our program. We also strongly welcome and would love to hear your ideas on what donations would be most useful for your children.

Optional comments:

Appendix C: Website Copy

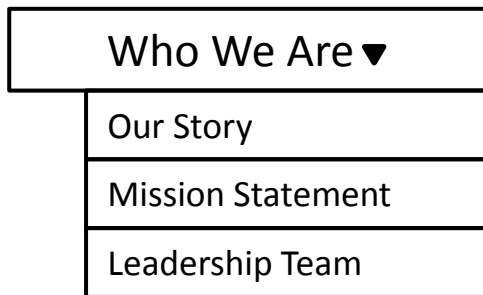
Who We Are (1st Main Website Tab)

Our Story (Drop down from main tab)

Mission Statement (Drop down from main tab)

Leadership Team (Drop down from main tab)

Rough Example:



Our Story:

In 2012, in the midst of the recession, Suzanne Roche experienced the financial hardship of sending four children back to school, and she reached out to her community for assistance. After being inundated with a wave of generosity, Suzanne offered her surplus of books and uniforms to her friends and neighbors, and she quickly realized that the difficulty of paying for school necessities was a common one. With this realization, Limerick's Gateway to Education was born. Suzanne continued to collect donated book and uniforms and sold them at deeply discounted prices to alleviate the hardship of paying for education. In the next five years, she moved her shop from a shed in her backyard to a location on O'Connell Street and finally to its current site on Wickham Street in Limerick City Centre.

As time went by, Suzanne also began to receive donations of clothing, novels, and household supplies, and she sold these too in order to maintain the shop. One day, a local mum walked into the shop and shared her concerns about her daughter's education—the woman couldn't read or write, and she was unable to pay for anyone else to help with her daughter's schoolwork. Suzanne immediately saw an opportunity to help the Limerick community in another way, and she formed the Homework Club, where volunteers from the University of Limerick tutor children who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford the help.

We at Limerick's Gateway to Education know that our role promoting education in Limerick is a worthwhile and important one, and we continue to strive to make education accessible for all.

Mission Statement:

Our actions at Limerick's Gateway to Education are grounded in our four core values:

- *Commitment:* Education levels the societal playing field, and we will work tirelessly to enable Limerick's population to reach a higher standard of living by creating a bridge to educational opportunities.
- *Support:* We will surround our young people in a caring, welcoming learning environment. We will provide them not only with the materials they need to succeed in school, but also with emotional support and encouragement.
- *Inclusivity:* We will treat all those who use our services with equal care and attention. We will assist the entire family unit to make education both desirable and feasible.

- *Possibility:* We will expand young people’s perspectives and make them aware of the endless opportunities available to them. They are infinitely capable, and we will help them to realize their abilities.

Leadership Team:

Susanne Roche:

Suzanne is the founder and CEO of Limerick’s Gateway to Education (LGTE). She’s lived in Limerick for 49 years and loves the city’s warm hospitality and sense of community. Her four children all attend or attended school in the area, and it was her experiences purchasing their school books and uniforms that inspired her to start LGTE. Suzanne is a firm believer in the importance of education for all young people and has been working to make education a widespread reality since she opened the shop five years ago.

Karen Keane:

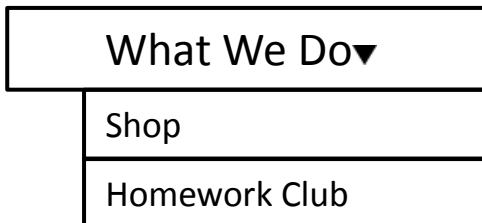
Karen is LGTE’s store manager and has spent many years living in Limerick. She enthusiastically joined LGTE’s team two years ago when she realized that her educational and work experience could be used to help run a charity. Karen is a strong proponent of LGTE’s commitment to helping all children realize their full potentials in and out of the classroom.

What We Do (2nd Main Website Tab)

Shop (dropdown from main tab)

Homework Club (dropdown from main tab)

Rough Example:



Shop:

We are an educational support charity located on Wickham Street in Limerick. We aim to make education more affordable for Limerick families by selling the books and uniforms required at local schools for reduced prices. We offer more than just school materials, however. Our shop also supplies secondhand clothing, shoes, novels and nonfiction books, DVDs, CDs, household goods, and more, all for discounted prices. All of our inventory comes from donations, and the sale of these goods goes toward maintaining the shop so we can continue to offer assistance to Limerick families. Since April 2012, we have helped over 9,000 families send their children to school, and we hope to increase these numbers in the coming years. We believe education is one of the most important things we can offer young people, and the shop is our way of putting that belief into action. We run on the energy of our founder Suzanne Roche, store manager Karen Keane, our C.E. scheme employees, and our valued team of volunteers, in addition to the generosity of donors.

Shop Address:

No. 9 Wickham Street

Limerick, V94 Y4X7, Ireland

Homework Club:

The Homework Club was formed two years ago after a local mum came into our shop and confided in Suzanne that her daughter was struggling in school, but she had little education and was unable to help. Suzanne decided then to expand LGTE’s role in the community; instead of solely providing affordable school supplies, we would also host tutoring sessions to help students whose families couldn’t afford other forms of academic support.

The Homework Club provides volunteer tutors from Mary Immaculate College and the University of Limerick, and the club meets three days a week on the campus of the University of Limerick. Students receive customized help with any subjects they desire, complete art projects and other fun educational activities, and form valuable friendships outside of school. The Homework Club isn’t just a source of academic assistance; it’s a welcoming community that encourages students to reach their goals. The 2016 Homework Club students averaged 80 percent on their Christmas tests, and we couldn’t be prouder of their achievements. To date, the Homework Club has served over 100 students, and we would love to add your children to this group. A small fee is charged in order to run the club, but prices are much lower than those of typical tutoring services, and most expenses are covered by donations.

Quick Facts:

Where: Plassey Village, University of Limerick

When: Every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 4:30-6:30pm

Price: €7 per week

Benefits: Homework assistance, subject specific tutoring, creative projects and educational activities, and a warm atmosphere to make new friends

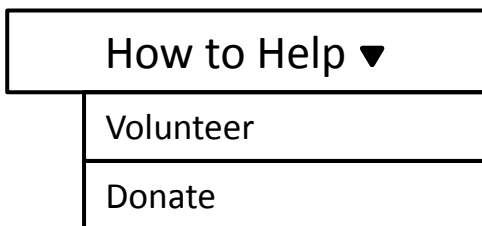
Contact: limericksgateway@gmail.com

How to Help (3rd Main Website Tab)

Volunteer (Drop down from main tab)

Donate (Drop down from main tab)

Rough Example:



Volunteer:

Both the shop and the homework club rely on the support of volunteers. We are thrilled to welcome shop volunteers with all levels of experience, and we can put any skill set to use. The most important qualities volunteers have are a commitment of their time and a willingness to fully engage in our project and mission. Volunteers are vital operation of our shop, and we are always looking to add members to our team.

The Homework Club recruits volunteers from the University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College. Volunteers assist with students’ schoolwork, facilitate academic games and art projects, and act as a

welcoming support system for the children we serve. We need volunteers to assist students with a wide variety of subjects, and while past teaching or tutoring experience is helpful, the ability to encourage and inspire students is more important. Our Homework Club volunteers are role models that show the students that academic success and third level education are possible.

To get involved with the Limerick's Gateway to Education shop or Homework Club, email us at limericksgateway@gmail.com.

Donate:

Contributions from our generous donors are essential to the success of our shop and Homework Club. Donations of school supplies directly assist Limerick families in sending their children to school, and donations of other items help us cover the day-to-day costs of running the shop and Homework Club. These contributions, in addition to monetary donations, are what make our work possible. They allow us to create more openings in the Homework Club, to employ special needs assistants for children who require extra help, to purchase educational games and aids, and to keep our low-cost school supplies available for families.

As a donor, you play a pivotal role in creating brighter futures for Limerick's youth by enhancing their educational opportunities. Education has an enormous impact on children's futures, and we are thankful for donors who believe its power as firmly as we do. Your continued support is incredibly important to us, as we rely on a steady stream of donations to operate effectively. We, as well as those we serve, thank you for standing behind our mission.

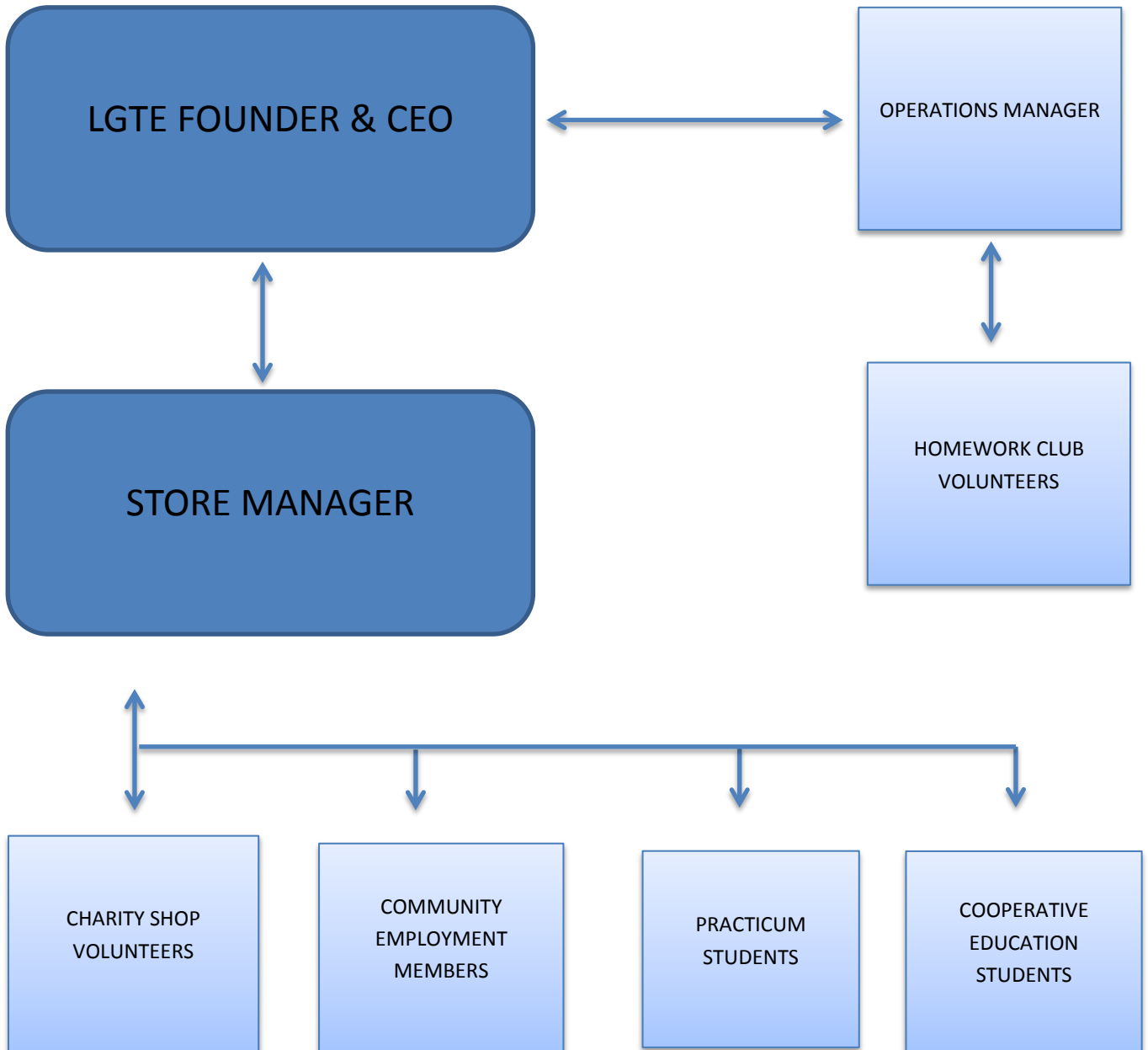
Donations can be made online [HERE](#) or delivered to Number 9, Wickham Street, Limerick.

Appendix D: Thank you card Template



Appendix E: Organizational Communication Chart

LGTE Communication Chart



Appendix F: Roles and Contacts Guide

LGTE Roles & Contacts

Founder & CEO

Suzanne Roche

Phone: (086) 0666 143

Email: Limericksgateway@gmail.com

Responsibilities:

- LGTE external liaison
- Drives funding opportunities
- Collaborate with local organizations for common goals
- Grow LGTE
- Oversee operations manager of homework club

Store Manager

Karen Keane

Phone: (086) 6054 385

Email: Limericksgateway@gmail.com

Responsibilities:

- Manage day-to-day operations of charity shop
- Organize accounts and payroll for the shop
- Recruit and manage charity shop volunteers, community employment members, and cooperative education students
- Oversee practicum students
- Supervise content of LGTE website

Operations Manager

Paul Shaw-Kelly

Phone: (087) 249 5540

Email: paulshawkelly@gmail.com

Responsibilities:

- Organize homework club elementary students
- Coordinate college student volunteers for homework club
- Manage homework club finances
- Communicate with local schools involved in homework club
- Create and provide additional learning resources for elementary students

Homework Club Volunteers

- 40-50 Students
- Students based out of the University of Limerick (UL) & Mary Immaculate College

Responsibilities

- Tutor elementary students
- Coordinate arts and crafts
- Offer support and encouragement in the classroom
- Act as role models to the elementary students

Charity Shop Volunteers

- 15-20 Members

Responsibilities:

- Manage retail transactions at register
- Customer relations
- Security of charity shop
- Maintain cleanliness of shop
- Sort donated items
- Complete requested administrative tasks by store manager

Community Employment Members

- 5 Members
- Government employed for one year

Responsibilities:

- Manage retail transactions at register
- Customer relations
- Security of charity shop
- Maintain cleanliness of shop
- Sort donated items
- Complete requested administrative tasks by store manager

Cooperative Education Students

- 1-5 Students
- Also known as “Co-Ops”
- Service Term: 1 Semester
- Students based out of the University of Limerick (UL)

Responsibilities & Potential Roles

- Business Development
- Generate funding and donations
- Raise awareness of LGTE
- Social Media Chair
- Website coordinator
- Marketing & communication role
- Assess & analyze homework club data and overall impact on community
- Provide innovative ideas to forward the mission of LGTE

Practicum Students

- 4-6 Students
- Service Term: 1 Semester
- Students based out of the University of Limerick (UL)

Responsibilities & Potential Roles

- Business Development
- Generate funding and donations
- Raise awareness of LGTE
- Social Media Chair
- Website coordinator
- Marketing & communication role
- Assess & analyze homework club data and overall impact on community
- Provide innovative ideas to forward the mission of LGTE

Appendix G: Poster

LIMERICK'S GATEWAY TO EDUCATION

ABBEY BENNING, MEGAN CAVANAUGH, TAYLOR LOYD, ESTHER MORRIS, & BAILEY PERRY



Introduction

Limerick's Gateway to Education is a Limerick-based educational support charity that offers school books, uniforms, and tutoring services to local families who would otherwise struggle with the expense of sending their children to school. In order to pay for its overhead, LGTE also sells second-hand books, movies, clothing, and shoes in its shop and relies on donations to receive these items. LGTE also runs a Homework Club, where university students provide affordable tutoring services to local children.



Figure 1: Store Growth Timeline

Aims & Objectives

Limerick's Gateway to Education does important, meaningful work, but many people in the Limerick community aren't even aware that the organization exists. LGTE requires donations to sustain its shop, run its homework club, and pay its overhead costs, so it is imperative that it is well-known and a top destination for donations. We know LGTE is a worthwhile cause because it facilitates affordable education, and education is among the most important things a person can obtain. Our aim as practicum volunteers was to increase awareness of LGTE, its mission, how it contributes to the community, and its need for donations. We decided that the best way to do so was to take a multi-faceted marketing approach.

Implementation

Donor Report & PowerPoint:

The donor report and accompanying presentation highlight LGTE's impact on the community and encourages prospective donors to contribute.

Survey:

The survey was designed to collect commentary, suggestions, and concerns from those who are directly impacted by LGTE's Homework Club, and it will be used for program evaluation and assessment.

Thank You Card:

The thank you card showcases appreciation to those who have donated and encourages them to donate again.

Website Update:

The LGTE website was rewritten and redesigned to make it clearer, more concise, and more intuitively structured.

LGTE Communication Chart, Roles & Contact Sheet, and Charity Shop Contact Sheet:

These resources will allow internal and external constituents of LGTE to communicate effectively and further LGTE's cause.

Donation Drive:

At the end of the semester, we organized the first annual International Spring Cleaning Drive on behalf of LGTE, which was communicated to all international students through the UL International Education Division.

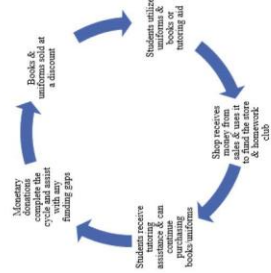


Figure 2: Shop Donation Cycle

Outcomes

The University of Limerick Practicum students of Spring 2017 have positively impacted Limerick's Gateway to Education through providing the organization with resources that will encourage future donations, improve LGTE's internal and external communication, measure the effects of the homework club, and give thanks to current donors for their support. Overall, the practicum students have created a solid foundation for future students to promote LGTE and spread awareness of the organization moving forward. They have also benefited the Limerick community as a whole by supporting an organization that works to promote education among local families.

Conclusion

Overall, we worked together to provide Limerick's Gateway to Education with concrete tools to use in furthering their goals. Future practicum students could help by updating the existing donor report and PowerPoint to reflect current information; developing innovative ways to contact potential sponsors and news outlets; using the tools we created to aid Karen and Suzanne in presenting to potential clients and donors; or engaging with media to develop advertising and marketing strategies. Future students can use the tangible products we created to advocate for LGTE in the community among donors and media outlets.

Community Partners:



Suzanne Roche & Karen Keane
 Address: No. 9 Wickham St, Limerick, V94 Y4X7, Ireland
 Website: limericksgatewaytoeducation.ie
 Call: (061) 481 633
 Email: limericksgateway@gmail.com
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LimericksGateway/>
 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/limerickgateway>



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