Communiversity

Social Capital Database Pilot Project: Results and Recommendations

Prepared in partnership with
Saint Paul Area Council of Churches

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Conducted on behalf of the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches
August, 2007

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Executive Summary

The Social Capital Database, developed and implemented by the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches (SPACC), has been on the organization's mind for several years. The term "social capital" was used in 2000 by Robert D. Putnam to describe what happens when connections are made between individuals and organizations and these connections build a network of resources and relationships. SPACC wanted to use that idea and apply it to the social outreach work that congregations do for our community; thus, the "Social Capital Database" was born. Based on an environmental analysis by Wilder Foundation, this Congregational Social Capital Database will be the first of its kind in the country.

The goals of the Social Capital Database development and implementation are twofold: the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches (SPACC) hopes to quantify and encapsulate the social outreach contributions East Metro congregations make to our community and to build a social outreach directory that congregations can use to link to one another. Thus, the goals of the Social Capital Database pilot project were as follows: to work with 15-25 congregations to gauge their interest in the database, enter their congregations' social outreach information, and work with the database management company to make changes to the database based on feedback from meetings with church personnel.

Congregations are important community partners in terms of social outreach; SPACC wants to document their work and raise awareness among general public. Congregations are doing much in terms of social outreach in their communities and could benefit from networking with other congregations.

As will be described in the "Research Findings" section below, congregations responded very well to the project. All eighteen of the congregations who were trained in the database were optimistic about its capabilities and eager to be part of the pilot group. All of the eighteen congregations entered at least some of their congregations' information, and eleven of the eighteen entered all of their information. The pilot project provided SPACC with the first of the databases' inputted information and put SPACC well on the way to implementing use of the database throughout the East Metro.

Goals and Objectives

In order to accurately describe the goals of the Social Capital Database pilot project, the goals of the Social Capital Database itself must first be described. The goals of the Social Capital Database development and implementation are twofold: the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches (SPACC) hopes to quantify and encapsulate the social outreach contributions East Metro congregations make to our community and to build a social outreach directory that congregations can use to link to one another. SPACC hopes to be able to use the database to answer the question: What social service contributions are St. Paul area congregations making to the local, national, and international community?

Thus, the goals of the Social Capital Database pilot project were as follows: to work with 15-25 congregations to gauge their interest in the database, enter their congregations' social outreach information, and work with the database management company to make changes to the database based on feedback from meetings with church personnel. Other important goals of the project were to develop a training guide that would make the training process more standardized and easier to implement across the other 650 member churches of SPACC. The Saint Paul Area Council of Churches sought to answer the following questions with the pilot project: Does our Congregational Social Capital Database, as it currently exists, adequately capture the data we are looking for? Is it useable for congregations? What is the likelihood that congregations will continue to use the Database on an ongoing basis?

Tasks and Tools Used

The pilot project began with the task of learning how the already developed database system works, both from the web interface that churches would be expected to log in from and from the internal SPACC log in. Much time was spent initially learning how to use the database to fully understand its capabilities and any quirks it had. Once time was spent learning the database, the project took off quickly from there in the following (mostly sequential, but sometimes overlapping) steps:

1. Learned the database system, including how it works and how congregations would be expected to input data into the database.
2. Worked with *thedatabank* (SPACC's database management company) to revise text on web interface pages.
3. Contacted 30 churches from a list generated by the executive director of SPACC to gauge their interest in becoming a pilot congregation for the social capital database. Pilot group ended up being 18 churches (based on their interest and amount of time for the project). See Appendix B.
4. Developed a simple training guide to assist congregations with data input. See Appendix A.
5. Held meetings with pastors and office personnel of 18 churches to show them the database capabilities and assist them with entering information. Taught them how to update their information and use the database to learn about other congregations' activities. Left a training guide with them to walk them through entering the rest of the information on their own.

6. Worked with *thedatabank* to make changes to the database based on church meeting feedback. This occurred throughout the three months of the project.
7. Tracked the entered information to ensure data integrity and followed up with churches and *thedatabank* as necessary.
8. Followed up with churches after the meeting to encourage them to enter the rest of their social outreach information (if we did not finish during the meeting).
9. Presented the pilot groups' compiled information in report form to the Executive Board meeting, where the Social Capital Database and results from pilot group were well received.
10. Revised training guide to reflect changes made to the database.

The tools used included the database and different communication tools (such as phone and email) to contact churches.

Research Findings

The process of meeting with congregations provided valuable feedback not only in terms of how the database should operate, but also in terms of how useful and practical the database might be for them. In most cases, it took an email <u>and</u> a phone call to schedule a meeting with a church staff member (mostly pastors and some administrators) to explain the database and show them how to use it. And it some cases, it took several emails and phone calls to schedule a meeting. Once church personnel heard the benefits of participating in the social capital database, they were receptive. Several benefits were described to congregations, including: increased visibility in the community, can use the database directory to see what other congregations are doing in terms of social outreach; can use the database directory to refer people in need of a resource such as food or clothing; will be able to see impact on the community as a congregation and as a body of congregations.

Most of the meetings went the same way. I explained what the database is, the benefits of using it, and then logged on to the database with the staff person to show them how to enter the data. In some cases (small churches), we entered all their staff and social outreach information during the meeting. In other cases (larger churches with many social outreach programs or activities), we entered a few items and the staff member entered the rest later. The time it took to enter the information ranged from thirty minutes to two hours (based on my own experience and the feedback received from churches).

Final Outcome

As of the writing of this report, eighteen congregations had entered some or all of their social outreach information for the year 2006. The numbers are staggering: 506,227 dollars and 2,283 volunteers were given in 2006 by SPACC member congregations (from the St. Paul and East Metro area) in social outreach contributions locally, nationally, and internationally (See Appendix C). These numbers only hint at the probable totals if all 670 SPACC member congregations enter their information.

Another important outcome of this pilot project is the development of a refined database that accurately and adequately captures the social outreach data that SPACC seeks. Usage of the database went through many tests and trials over three months as church personnel entered information, encountered glitches, and reported them as they arose. As it stands now, the quirks have been worked out with the database management company. The feedback from churches about using the database has been overwhelmingly positive. Most of those who actually entered the data reported that the database was easy to use and that data entry went fairly quickly. Although this is exciting news, we must not forget that those who expressed interest in the database may already have been comfortable with computers and therefore had no trouble using the database. Church staff members that are not comfortable with using computers or do not use them often may not be interested in using the database. This is a barrier that SPACC may encounter, but it should not interfere with their moving forward with the project. As was stated before, the feedback has been very positive and word is spreading about the database and its capabilities.

Looking Ahead

Although the pilot project is coming to a close, there is much excitement about the potential for further implementation of the Social Capital Database in other congregations. SPACC hopes to present the summarized information to an assembly of delegates in the fall and work with the rest of the East Metro congregations to enter their information into the database. Now that a training guide has been developed and the data entry process has become more user-friendly, individual training meetings with churches will no longer be necessary. The training guide can be circulated via mail or email, which will enable SPACC to reach more churches more quickly. As more churches enter their information, the directory will be more helpful for churches. The total numbers that SPACC reports to the community will be more accurate as more churches enter their information. In the next two years, Wilder Foundation will work with SPACC to study the accumulated data from churches. They were an integral part of the development of the database and will see the project through to the research part of it. Wilder Foundation has the staff and resources to do the intense studying of the numbers.

It is the hope of SPACC that other community organizations (e.g. public schools, law enforcement, United Way) will learn from the results of this research and will see congregations as important partners in the community. SPACC sees this database as an important tool for congregations that will facilitate networking between congregations interested in similar issues/activities and strengthen SPACC's capacity to interact with and mobilize congregations to greater service.

Appendices

Appendix A: Training Guide
Appendix B: Pilot Congregation Summary
Appendix C: Social Outreach Contributions report page

Social Capital Database
User Guide

Documenting important information and linking congregations to one another.

Saint Paul Area Council of Churches
Social Capital Database
651 646-8805
database@spacc.org

Final Version, August 2007

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Thank you for your interest in the Saint Paul Area
Council of Churches' Social Capital Database!

       The social capital database is an innovative way to quantify the social outreach work your and other East Metro congregations do and to link to other congregations via the database's directory. We hope you will find it helpful! Many churches have entered their information, and the database will be increasingly more valuable as more churches enter their own information.

       This guide is designed to walk you through the steps to enter and update your congregation's information in the database, and to search other congregations' information. If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments about the database please contact the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches at 651 646-8805 or database@spacc.org. Thanks again for your interest!

# Using the Social Capital Database

Name of Church

_____

The following materials may be helpful to have while entering your congregation's information in the database:

      Annual report from the previous year
      Congregation statistics (such as number of members)
      Staff directory
   Social outreach activity or program statistics (if not in your annual report)

1. Go to http://www.spacc.org/ and click on "Database" to log in.
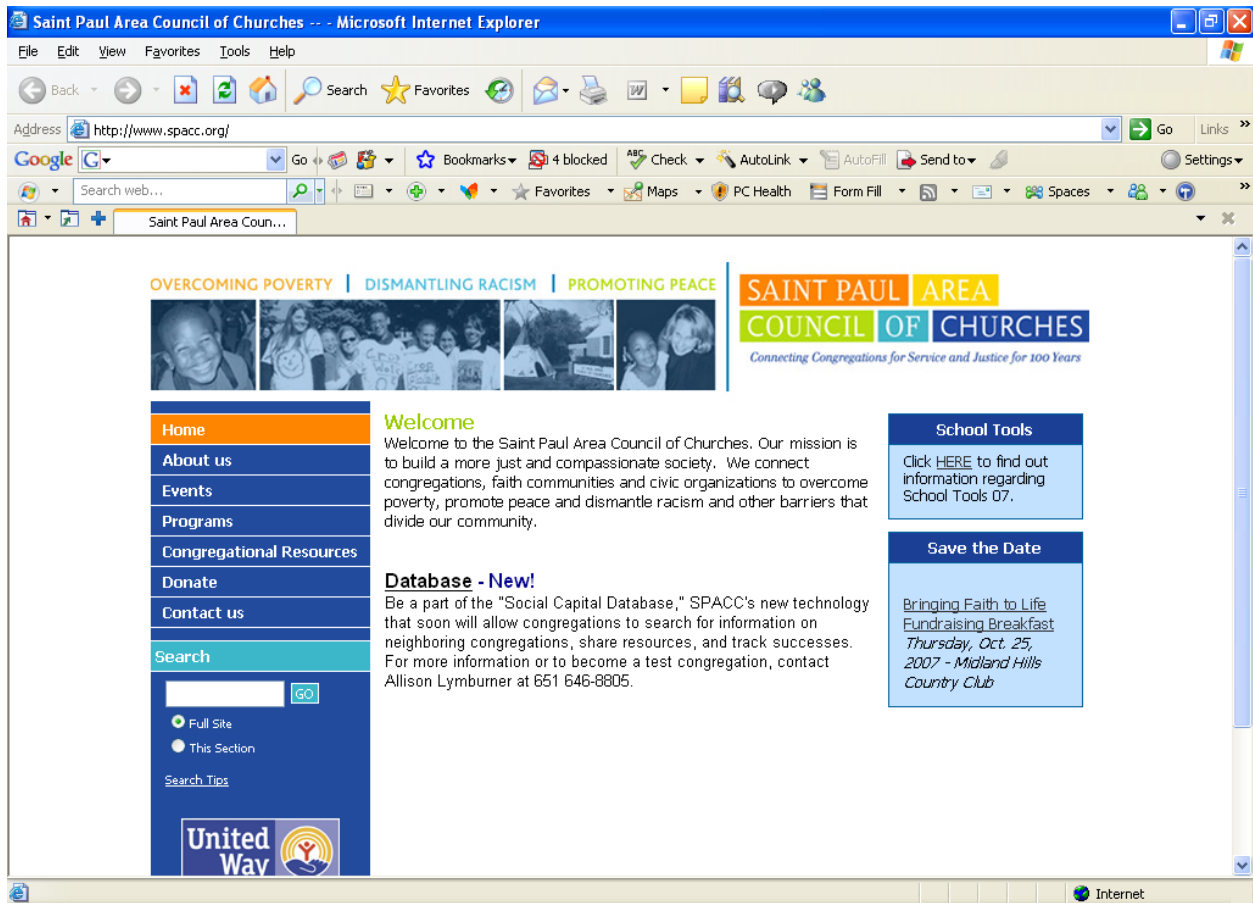
2. Enter your email_____ and password_____ and click "Log in". Should you ever need a reminder of what your password is, click the "Send my password" link. It will send your password to the email address you entered.
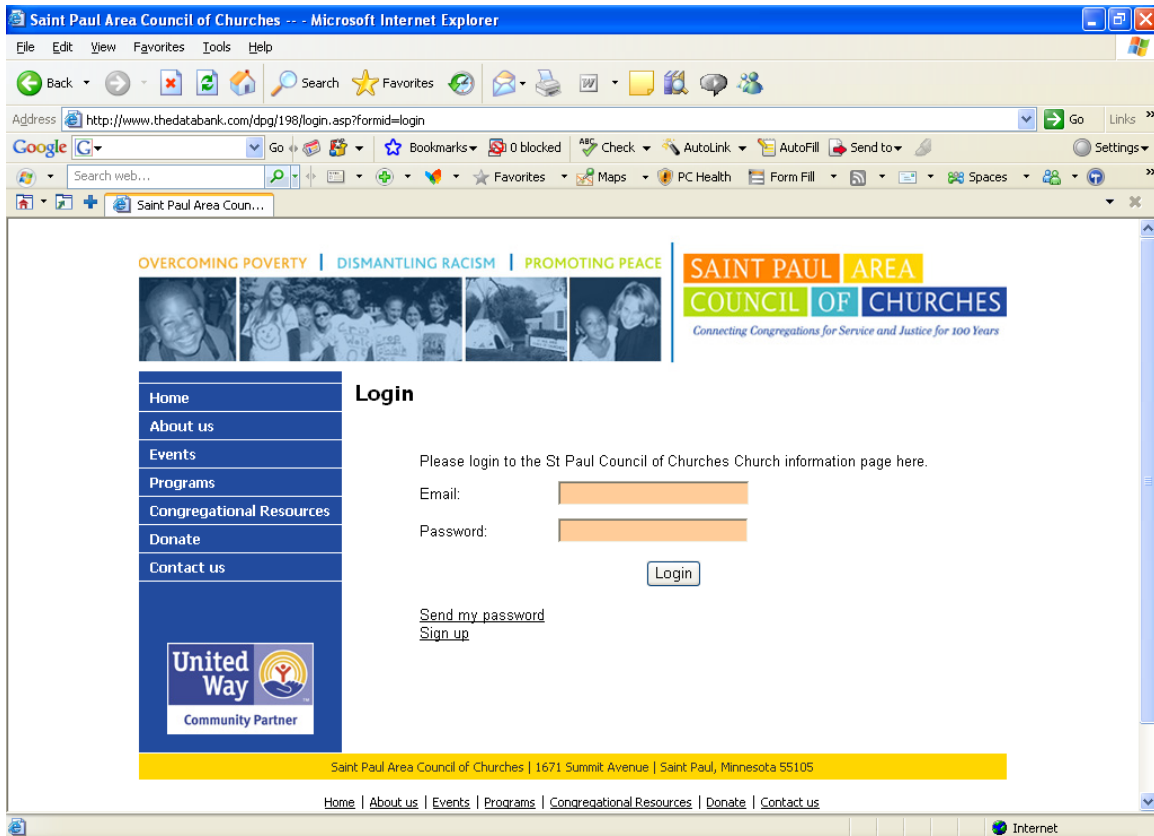
3. Read the "Church Signup" information to familiarize yourself with the process and benefits of providing your congregation's information. The web page will ask you to complete 3 different forms, which are called "Congregational Information", "Staff/Volunteer Email Addresses", and "Social Outreach Information". Click on the first one, "Congregational Information", to begin entering your information.
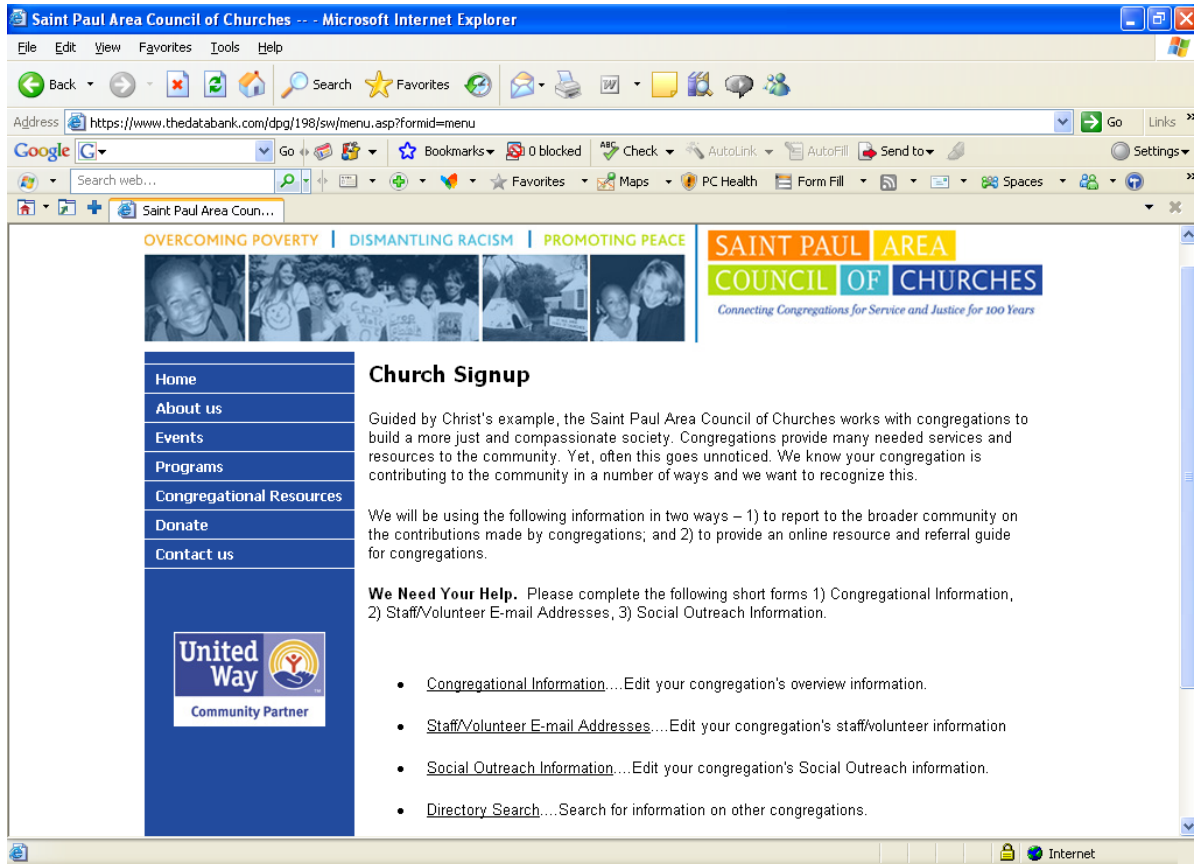
4. <u>Congregation Information</u> Fill in basic information about your congregation, as shown in the screen below. Most of the information will already be there because it has been entered in the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches' database, so just complete the fields that are empty. If the box has an arrow in it, click on the arrow to display the available choices. Choose the appropriate one by clicking on it.

Click on "Continue" when you are finished and it will move you to the next page called "Staff/Volunteer Contact Information".

5. <u>Staff/Volunteer Contact Information</u> Enter the title, name, phone, and email address of each paid or volunteer staff member of your congregation. You can do that by typing in the box, or if the box has an arrow in it, by clicking on the arrow to display the available choices. Choose the appropriate one by clicking on it. If you do not have permission from the person to enter their private information, entering the general church phone number and email will be fine. The message can then be forwarded to the appropriate person. After you have finished entering information for the first staff person, click "Add". **Click "Add" after each staff member you enter** and click "Continue" when you have finished entering information for all of your staff.
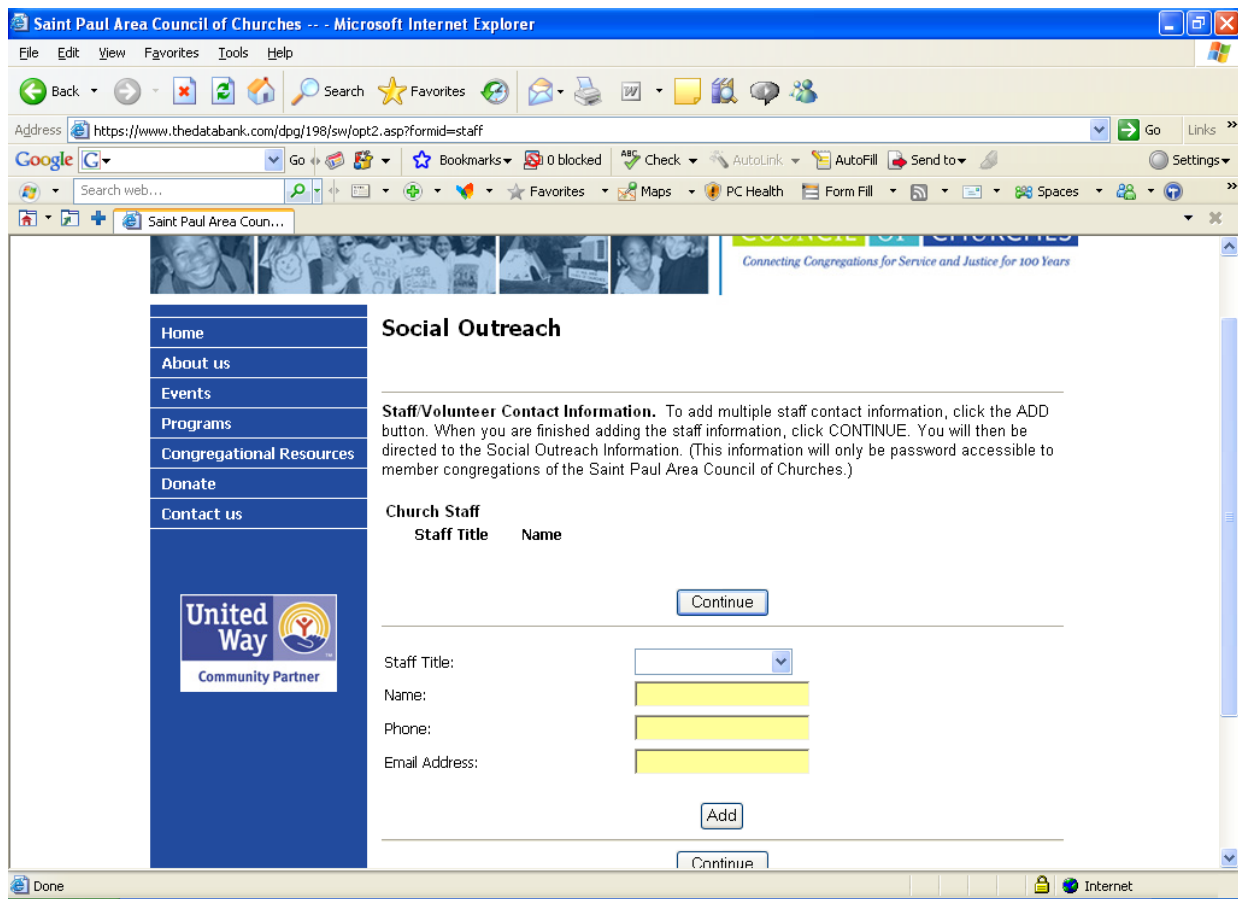
This will lead you to the final page, "Social Outreach Information".

6. <u>Social Outreach Information</u> Read the explanation and directions for the Social Outreach Information page. This section of the database is where the bulk of your information will be entered. Please **complete a separate page for each social outreach activity or program** your congregation participates in or sponsors, and **click "Add" after each activity you enter**.

Some helpful hints about the fields on this page:

- Calendar Year - Click on the arrow and choose the year the information you are entering is from. It will most likely be from the previous year, because you'll have totals for the previous year in an annual report. For example, if the current year is 2007, you would choose the year 2006 and enter the totals from 2006.

- Social Outreach Activity – Click on the arrow and choose the type of activity that most closely describes what your congregation is doing. If the program does more than one type of social outreach activity, hold down the Control key while you click on the appropriate activities. This will allow you to choose more than one. If none of the categories closely matches, click on "Other".

- Program Name - Type in the name of the program. **Please write names without symbols (write "Loaves and Fishes" instead of "Loaves & Fishes").**

- Program Contact Name - Type in the name of the person that other churches or people would contact to hear more about that particular program.

- Contact Email & Phone - Enter the contact persons' information so that interested churches can contact her or him (if you do not want to put home phone numbers or emails, just list the church phone and email).

- # Volunteers from Congregation - Enter the number of volunteers, if any, from your congregation who work with this particular program.

- Congregation Contribution $ - Enter the amount of money, if any, that your congregation invests in this program or activity.

- Are in-kind contributions made? – In-kind contributions are donations of things besides money. Use the drop down box to answer yes or no to whether in-kind contributions are made. If you answer yes, click on the type of in-kind contributions (in the next box) that your congregation makes to this program. If you want to choose more than one item, hold down the control key while you left click on the items you want to report.

- Is activity affiliated with another org? - Use the drop down box to answer yes or no. An example would be if the congregation works with Habitat for Humanity to do housing/shelter construction/rehab. You would click "yes" if this were true. If yes, type in the name of the

organization the congregation works with on this social outreach activity. Below that, use the drop down box to choose "yes" or "no" to indicate whether or not the affiliated organization is faith-based.

- Where does this activity benefit people? Please indicate whether this social outreach program or activity benefits people locally, nationally, or internationally. Click on the arrow and choose the appropriate one.

When you have finished entering information for all the social outreach your congregation provides, click "Continue". This will bring you to the "Thank you" page.

7. Thank you! You will automatically log off by clicking in the upper right hand corner on the "x" to close the window. Please remember that you may log in with your email and password at any time to edit your congregational information or to search the directory to see what social outreach other congregations are providing. If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments about the database please contact the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches at 651 646-8805 or database@spacc.org

Editing or Updating Information

After you have entered some of your congregation's information, you may log in with your email and password to edit or update your information. The screen below will be displayed when you log in.

1. Go to http://www.spacc.org/ and click on "Database". Log in with your email and password.

2. Click on the section you would like to update (Congregational Information, Staff/Volunteer Email Addresses, or Social Outreach Information).

2. Change the text or fields that need editing by left-clicking on the text or drop-down field you would like to change. Type in your changes or choose the appropriate choice from the drop-down field. Click "Continue". Your changes are saved, and you will automatically move to the next page. If you are finished, you can close the window by clicking in the red X in the upper right hand corner.

Searching the Directory

After you have entered your congregation's information, you may log in with your email and password to search the directory.

1. Log in (see #1 on page 11) and click on "Directory Search". This screen will be displayed:
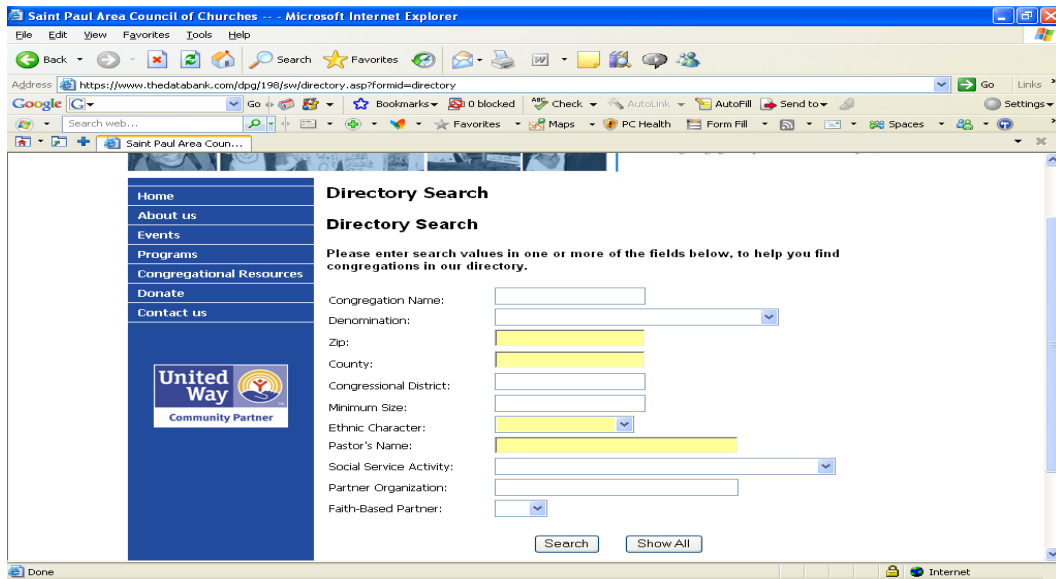
2. You can search using any combination of the fields. For example, if you wanted to see which churches have a clothing ministry, you would click the drop-down arrow for "Social Service Activity". You would then click on "Clothing". Once you have entered your search criteria, click "Search". You will then get a list of the churches that apply to your search criteria.

3. Click on "Details" on the left of your screen to bring up more details about that specific congregation and their social outreach activities.

4. If you would like to clear the current search criteria and start a new search, click "New Search".

5. If you would like to see a list of all of the congregations in the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches' database (there are 670 of them!), click "Show All". They are listed in alphabetical order. If you click on the web address that's listed for each church, that church's web page will open on your screen in a separate window.

Database Announcement

Church Office:

Please use the text below to let your congregation know about your participation in the St. Paul Area Council of Churches' database. The text could be placed in a service bulletin or newsletter, or used as an announcement during worship. Use it in whatever way works best for you!

Taking part in a "Social Capital Database"—
The first in the nation!

Our congregation recently signed on to be part of an exciting new project with the St. Paul Area Council of Churches. It's called the "Social Capital Database" and has the capacity to store and run reports on the congregational and social outreach information of 700+ congregations in the East Metro, ours included! This database is the first of its kind in the nation and will serve not only as a directory and link between congregations, but also as a collective body of information that will enable the East Metro faith community to see the total impact of their social outreach work. Because we aim to include accurate information about all social outreach programs our congregation is involved in, please contact _____at _____ if you are responsible for any social programs at our church (such as a food shelf, school supplies drive, or raising money for Habitat for Humanity). You can then be sure that your program's information will be included in our congregation's database entry. We are excited to be part of this new and important project!

Appendix B: Pilot Congregations Summary

	Training meeting held	All information entered
1. St. Luke's Episcopal, Hastings	Grant, 5/17	No (Some entered)
2. House of Hope Presbyterian	Allison and Lee, 6/28	Yes
3. Dayton Ave. Presbyterian	Allison, 7/10	Yes
4. First Presbyterian, Stillwater	Allison, 7/11	Yes
5. Camphor Memorial UMC	Allison, 7/12	Yes
6. Unity Unitarian	Allison, 7/13	No (Some entered)
7. Woodbury Lutheran	Allison, 7/17	Yes
8. Trinity Lutheran, Stillwater	Allison, 7/18	Yes
9. Gloria Dei Lutheran	Allison, 7/18	Yes
10. Centennial UMC, Roseville	Allison, 7/18	No (Some entered)
11. Lutheran Church of the Redeemer	Allison, 7/19 & 8/6	Yes
12. United Church of Christ, New Brighton	Allison, 7/20	No (Some entered)
13. St. Peter Claver	Allison via email, 7/23	No (Some entered)
14. St. James African Methodist	Allison, 7/24	No (Some entered)
15. Pilgrim Baptist	Allison, 7/31	Yes
16. St. Christopher's Episcopal, Roseville	Allison, 7/26	Yes
17. Como Park Lutheran Church	Allison, 8/6	No (Some entered)
18. Central Baptist Church	Allison, 8/9	Yes
Total: 18 Pilot Congregations (Met with and trained)		**11 of 18** have entered <u>all</u> of their information; **7 of 18** have entered <u>some</u> of their information

Social Outreach Contributions

The following 92 programs have contributions or volunteers for Year **2006**:

Program Name	Congregation	Contribution	Volunteers
Adopt-a-Highway: Hamline Avenue	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$0.00	12
Affordable Housing Ministry Team	Unity Church-Unitarian Church	$2,000.00	130
Alcoholics Anonymous / Narcotics Anonymous	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer	$0.00	0
Angel Tree	Trinity Lutheran Church	$1,050.00	100
Bill's Pantry	Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church	$0.00	3
	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$1,400.00	0
Total for Bill's Pantry		**$1,400.00**	**3**
Blood Drive	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$109.00	12
Bread for the World - Offering of Letters	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$610.00	12
Car Care Ministry	Trinity Lutheran Church	$500.00	10
Central Child Care	Central Baptist Church	$0.00	0
Central's Food Shelf	Central Baptist Church	$900.00	10
Central's Tutoring Program	Central Baptist Church	$10,000.00	25
Central's Youth Program	Central Baptist Church	$2,000.00	20
Change for Change	Trinity Lutheran Church	$500.00	80
Christian Closet	Woodbury Lutheran Church	$0.00	20
Community Stabilization Project	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$1,000.00	0
Daffodils for Cancer	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$600.00	0
Daily Work	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer	$0.00	1
DAPC Clothing Center	Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church	$0.00	0
Eco-Ministry	Trinity Lutheran Church	$0.00	50
Family Night Ministry	Pilgrim Baptist Church	$0.00	0
Family Place	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$6,000.00	0
Fare For All	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer	$0.00	6
Feed My Starving Children	Trinity Lutheran Church	$500.00	30
First Sunday Food Drive	Como Park Lutheran Church	$0.00	0
Food Drive	St. James African Methodist Church	$0.00	10
Food Shelf Ministry	Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church	$0.00	5
Giving Tree	Trinity Lutheran Church	$2,000.00	132
Global Health Ministry Assistance	Trinity Lutheran Church	$1,000.00	20
Gulf Coast Trips	First Presbyterian Church	$4,000.00	50
Habitat for Humanity	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$2,500.00	12
Health Initiative	Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church	$0.00	8

Helping Hands	Trinity Lutheran Church	$500.00	30
Holy Hammers	United Church of Christ in New Brighton	$2,700.00	30
Hurricane Katrina Relief	Trinity Lutheran Church	$10,000.00	40
Interfaith Builders	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$1,200.00	10
ISAIAH	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer	$0.00	2
J.L.Zwane Church	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$9,800.00	0
Jeremiah	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer	$0.00	0
Jesus Delivers	Trinity Lutheran Church	$2,340.00	100
Joseph's Coat	Trinity Lutheran Church	$0.00	5
Journey to Financial Freedom	Woodbury Lutheran Church	$500.00	12
Kid's Winter Wear	Trinity Lutheran Church	$0.00	5
Knitting into the Mystery-Prayer Shawls	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$0.00	10
Liberia Assistance	Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church	$250.00	20
Loaves and Fishes	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$4,140.00	100
	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$300.00	10
	Trinity Lutheran Church	$3,100.00	100
	Woodbury Lutheran Church	$3,600.00	24
Total for Loaves and Fishes		**$11,140.00**	**234**
LSS Counseling	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$600.00	0
Lutheran Health Care Bangladesh	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$1,000.00	1
Mano Amiga	Trinity Lutheran Church	$140,000.00	100
Martha's Closet	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$13,000.00	0
McVay Youth Partnership Program	Central Baptist Church	$0.00	0
Meals on Wheels	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$300.00	31
MICAH	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$125.00	0
Midway Area Outreach	Trinity Lutheran Church	$0.00	30
Midway Food Shelf	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$5,368.00	15
Military Family Support League	Trinity Lutheran Church	$1,514.00	50
Mission Tanzania	Trinity Lutheran Church	$200,000.00	30
Missions & Benevolence	Pilgrim Baptist Church	$0.00	0
MOPS	Woodbury Lutheran Church	$2,594.00	60
PCUSA Mission Support	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$10,000.00	0
PCUSA Mission Trip	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$1,000.00	0
Prayer Shawl Ministry	Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church	$0.00	8
Project Home	Central Baptist Church	$350.00	85
	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$1,245.00	200
	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$2,400.00	258
Total for Project Home		**$3,995.00**	**543**
Project Spirit Site	Camphor Memorial United Methodist	$0.00	0

	Church		
Ready for Success	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$0.00	0
Redeemer's Arms	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer	$0.00	8
Refugee Resettlement	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$0.00	0
Refugee Services Assistance	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$3,000.00	0
Resource Center for Churches	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$500.00	0
Rezek House	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$2,500.00	4
School Tools	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$0.00	0
Sharing and Caring Hands in Mpls	Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church	$0.00	15
Social Justice and Advocacy Committee	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$0.00	0
Southeast Asian Ministry	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$1,000.00	0
St Paul Area Council of Churches general support	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$7,500.00	0
St. Croix Chaplaincy	Trinity Lutheran Church	$1,000.00	0
St. Croix Valley Outreach	Trinity Lutheran Church	$6,190.00	25
St. Philip's Food Shelf	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$800.00	0
Stillwater Cares for Kids	First Presbyterian Church	$5,000.00	26
Thanksgiving Food Drive	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	$4,564.00	15
Transitional Housing Program	First Presbyterian Church	$13,000.00	6
Tubman Family Alliance Holiday Gift Program	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$200.00	0
Two Rivers Community Land Trust	Trinity Lutheran Church	$1,000.00	35
UJIMA - Teen Social Skills and Pregnancy Prevention	Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church	$0.00	10
United Thank Offering	St. Christopher's Episcopal Church	$1,378.00	0
Valley Outreach	First Presbyterian Church	$2,000.00	15
Walker West Music Academy Scholarships	House of Hope Presbyterian Church	$2,000.00	0
Grand Total		**$506,227.00**	**2283**