

McKelvy Elementary School
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Community Partner, Geraldine Abrams
<http://www.geocities.com/mckelvy2001/>

The Situation

McKelvy Elementary School is a kindergarten through fifth grade Pittsburgh Public School located on Bedford Avenue in the Hill District. McKelvy has been serving the area for 83 years. All of McKelvy's students are African American, as is most of the staff. What makes McKelvy special is that its mission is to teach the values for life to all its students through different competencies. The program is called the "Village at McKelvy", and works to include members from the surrounding community in learning. It also tries to close the achievement gap for students. There is a very strong parent and community involvement at McKelvy, and students are given close, one-on-one instruction.

The program at McKelvy includes math, reading, spelling, science, social studies, and physical education. However, students do not only learn these subjects: one of the focuses at McKelvy is teaching students the seven competencies, which are love and respect, self-esteem, self-persistence, self-confidence, orientation learning, interpersonal skills, self-reliance. Students are encouraged to do well through awards programs such as a "student of the month" award and Village Competency awards. There are also many extracurricular activities available to students, which contribute to the culturally rich environment at McKelvy, such as sports, choir, field trips, energy patrol, and an African drumming group.

Technology at McKelvy

Teachers at McKelvy regularly bring their classes to the computer labs. One of the labs is used solely for a reading / education program which allows students to learn reading skills at their own pace. Teachers also allow students to do research on the Internet for class projects and also sometimes for entertainment. Students also regularly use programs such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft Encarta for projects. However, with all of the other requirements that need to be taught, teachers and students do not have enough time to spend in the lab as they would like.

Geri Abrams—also a teacher at McKelvy—is the school's technical coordinator. No one else had much knowledge about the computer systems when they were installed. Because of Geri's interest and abilities, she took the position of technical coordinator. She has taken some classes through the Board of Education, but must still rely on the Pittsburgh Public School IT Department for technical assistance. Obviously, this is a pretty big job for one person and there is often too much to do. However, because there is no additional funding available, McKelvy cannot hire any additional assistants. This means that Geri must do both jobs: teacher and technical coordinator.

As technical coordinator, Geri is the main contact for fixing machines when there are problems as well as assisting students and staff in using the computers. She works to help the teaching staff to incorporate technology into their curriculum. She is also developing her technology abilities for her next teaching job, and may even continue in the position of technical coordinator.

McKelvy has an adequate technical environment for learning: there are two computer labs that each have 25 computers, and Internet access is available in these labs as well as on computers in the library and in each classroom. However, students and staff do not have all the necessary knowledge and skills to fully use the available technology. Geri is not only working to gain this knowledge, but is also working to incorporate it into the school and community. This will not only help those at McKelvy to increase their knowledge, but also help Geri in her next position in the Pittsburgh Public School system.

Opportunity

In January, 2001, the Pittsburgh Public School Board decided to close McKelvy Elementary School. To help bring the community together during this difficult time, the consulting partnership decided to focus on creating a memorial web site for the school. McKelvy has been a prominent part of the community: it has a rich history within the Hill District and a large amount of community support. The web site will help bring the community closer together during this time by providing a way to say goodbye to the school. Since World Wide Web access is available to the community through libraries, and in some cases work and home, the community will be able to access the web site.

The web site also provides an opportunity for Geri to gain new skills, as well as a greater capacity to use the World Wide Web. These new skills will help her in her next position with Pittsburgh Public Schools. She will continue to use computers in her next teaching job and may even continue to have the job of technical coordinator. While helping to advance Geri's knowledge and skills, the web site also uses technology to allow the community to not only celebrate the school's rich heritage, but to also provide a sense of closure as the community moves on.

The web site will include historical information about McKelvy, including past news articles and documents; information about the Hill District, the area where the school is located; reflections from current teachers; items created by students; and pictures from McKelvy.

Analysis of Outcomes

Evidence of Increased Capacity

Before this experience, Geri had never created a web page nor worked on building a web site, so she had a large amount to learn. In order to develop the web site, Geri learned what is involved in creating, editing, and maintaining files for a web site. To do this, she used several tools including Internet Explorer, Microsoft FrontPage, an HP Scanner, and Corel Photo Paint. She also learned a basic amount of HTML in order to recognize the formatting tags on web pages.

Geri was already comfortable with the Windows environment and became comfortable with using Microsoft FrontPage. During our first few meetings, she made practice pages that incorporated clipart downloaded from other web sites. These practice pages also included links to other pages she created, text in a variety of fonts, and different background colors for the pages. In between our meetings, she was able to create new pages to explore different possibilities within FrontPage, as well, such as the introduction page for the web site and most of the staff reflection pages.

After we worked together to scan some pictures using the HP Scanner software, we opened them in Corel Photo Paint and edited the images. We did things such as cropping the images to a particular size, resampling the images to make them larger or smaller, and applying simple filters to make the images look better. Geri also scanned and edited images in between our meetings, showing that she is able to do this without my assistance.

Evidence of Sustainability

Geri has gained the knowledge necessary to create the memorial web site. She can scan and edit images, download images and backgrounds from other web sites, and incorporate these into web pages. She is also able to format information using Microsoft FrontPage to create content for the web pages. She has demonstrated that she is able to decide on a structure for a web site, then create and link together multiple web pages to create the web site. She is also very excited to do this, not only because she cares about McKelvy but also because she is genuinely interested in creating content for the world wide web. Because of her knowledge and excitement, she will be able to sustain both her work on the web page as well as her new knowledge about creating web sites.

Recommendations

1. Further learning and use of HTML and FrontPage

Geri should learn more about HTML and FrontPage so that she can practice her skills as well as extend them. This will be helpful for both troubleshooting and fixing problems that may occur on the current web pages, as well as extending the current web site or creating new ones. There are many opportunities to continue to use and learn these skills, such as continuing to update the current web site as well as the possibility of creating a web site for the new school she will be working at. She can also practice these skills by incorporating web page creation into the curriculum for her students, and teaching them to create web pages. Several of the resources below provide suggestions for how to incorporate the web and other technologies into the teaching curriculum, as well as ideas on how to help students create web pages. An ideal way to continue learning about web pages is to teach others how to create them: the summer could provide a good opportunity to decide how to incorporate the web into the curriculum.

Resources: Tutorial and Help Pages for Microsoft FrontPage

Each of these sites provides information on using Microsoft FrontPage. They can be used as guidelines for what to learn, as well as providing an opportunity to reinforce skills already learned. They are documents that can be printed out and followed along while using FrontPage.

- Web Workshop
Step-by-step information on how to create web pages using FrontPage
<http://msdn.microsoft.com/workshop/languages/fp/tutorial98/topics.asp>
- Creating School Web Pages with FrontPage Editor
Information particular to creating web pages for schools
<http://www.siec.k12.in.us/~west/online/website/>
- Training Tools
Provides free online courses for several web applications, including FrontPage 98
<http://www.trainingtools.com>

Resources: HTML Editing

Each of these sites provides information on HTML. All of the tutorials are documents that can be printed out and consulted when needed.

- Beginner's Guide to HTML
A primer for producing documents in HTML
<http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimerPrintable.htm>
- Tutorials from Case Western Reserve University
A series of tutorials intended to teach about basic and advanced features of HTML
 - Introduction to HTML: <http://www.cwru.edu/help/introHTML/toc.html>
 - Intermediate HTML: <http://www.cwru.edu/help/interHTML/toc.html>
 - Advanced HTML: <http://www.cwru.edu/help/wilbur/>

Resources: Incorporating the web into school curriculum

- The WebQuest Page
Ready-made web search activities and training materials to make your own
<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest.html>
- www4teachers
Over a thousand researches, index and organized to help you find exactly what you need, including information about how to facilitate projects, create lessons, and build web pages.
<http://www.4teachers.org/>
- Teaching with Electronic Technology
A variety of resources for computing and related forms of electronic technology in teaching including conferences, publications, discussions, instructional resources, projects, and links.
<http://www.wam.umd.edu/~mlhall/teaching.html>
- Classroom Connect: Classroom Today
Internet activities for students. A different curriculum topic each week with activities, questions, and explorations. Topics chosen from science and social studies with connections to other curriculum areas. Subscription based, but there are free trial subscriptions available.
<http://www.classroomtoday.com/home.asp>
- Tammy's Technology Tips for Teachers
Nuts and bolts organization tips for incorporating technology into the classroom including instructions, tools, projects, resources, and links.
<http://www.essdack.org/tips/index.html>

2. Maintenance and Extension of the Website

The web site should be maintained and the information kept up to date. Historical information about the school can be updated and maintained if more news clips and pictures are found. In addition to keeping the web site up to date, new features should be incorporated to help facilitate further learning. One such feature could be to allow past faculty and staff to submit their reflections through e-mail or a web form. Other information that could be added is which schools teachers were moved to. Information from students could be included, as well, such as providing a page for them to leave notes and information

about their time at McKelvy. There are several web sites available that suggest ideas for features for school web sites.

Resources: Suggestions and Ideas for Improvements

Each of these sites provides links and articles that discuss suggestions for school web sites, ideas for creating web sites at schools as well as forums for school webmasters. They can be used for finding news ideas as well as for communicating with other school webmasters regarding any problems that might occur.

- New and Great Ideas for School Web Sites
http://www.techlearning.com/db_area/archives/WCE/archives/jacobsen.htm
- Web66
<http://web66.coled.umn.edu/>
- Sites for Teachers
<http://www.sitesforteachers.com/>

3. Feedback on the Website

It is important to know how visitors are enjoying the web site. One way is to solicit feedback. First, ask staff and students at the school to look over the web site and provide information on how comfortable they are with the navigation, if the pages load fast enough, and if the information is presented clearly. From this information, improvements can be made to the site. Another way to solicit feedback is to have a feedback form or guest book on the web page. A guest book is a web form that people can fill out to provide feedback information for the web site maintainer. There are several free places that can host guest books. Signing up for one will provide a chance for visitors to leave comments about the web site. To create one, visit one of the sites below and sign up. The sites will provide instructions on how to link the guestbook to the web site. All of these sites provide an easy way to create a guestbook by making it for you, so that you do not have to do it yourself.

Resources: Sites for Hosting Feedback Pages or a Guestbook

Each of these pages provides a place to host a guestbook, or place for feedback. A guestbook can be set up at any of these sites, and linked into the web site.

- WEB! Guestbook
<http://www.webguestbook.com/>
- Dreambook
<http://www.dreambook.com/>
- Free Guestbook Server
<http://www.guestpage.com/>

4. Permanent Location for Website

The current website is hosted on Yahoo! Geocities, which is a publishing community where websites can be set up for free. It provides straightforward file management, an HTML editor, site statistics and easy-to-install add-ons such as feedback forms. However, each web page loads with an advertisement box in the upper right-hand corner of the page. While this is minimally intrusive, it would be preferential to have a site that does not require advertisements, so that the advertisements do not distract from the web page. The Three Rivers Free-Net (TRFN) offers free web hosting for local nonprofit organizations, including training, support, and email, and would probably be an ideal new location for the website.

Resources: Information from Three Rivers Free-Net (TRFN)

- Main page
The main list of links for TRFN, including a list of organizations currently hosted there.
<http://www.trfn.org/>
- Introduction for Information Providers
Information providers are nonprofit organizations and government agencies that make information about themselves available via TRFN. This page gives information about TRFN's policies as well as how to sign up for a web page, and training sessions that are available through TRFN.
<http://www.trfn.org/About/ipintro.shtml>
- Frequently Asked Questions
A list of frequently asked questions—and answers—about TRFN users, access, and organizations
<http://www.trfn.org/About/trfnfaq.shtml>

5. Publicize the Website

In order to encourage more visits, websites should be publicized. This will let more people know about the website and encourage visitors. There are several ways to publicize a website, such as:

1. *Promote the web site with national online listings.* There are a number of online locations that allow you to list your web site, such as Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com), Lycos (www.lycos.com), InfoSeek (www.infoseek.com), Excite (www.excite.com) and AltaVista (www.altavista.com).
2. *Put your web address in your email signature file.* Most email programs have a feature called signature files. This is information that is appended to the end of each email message you send. By listing information about the Website in your signature file, you can easily share the information with each email message you send.
3. *Send your web address to your local newspaper.* McKelvy's closing is an important event in the area. The school could provide an article about the closing and feature the web site as a place for community members to find out more about McKelvy's history.

Promote the web site with local online listings. There are a number of online locations in Pittsburgh, such as web sites for television stations and newspapers, where the web site can be listed. Some of them are: WPXI (www.pittsburgh.com), Post-Gazette (www.post-gazette.com), Tribune Review (www.triblive.com), and WQED (www.pbs.org/blackpress/news_bios/courier.html).

Work plan for McKelvy Elementary School

Creating a School Memorial Web	Responsible	Date	Feb				Mar				Apr			
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Task Name														
Consider our Tasks		4/12												
Discuss initial goals and ideas for web site	cp and consultant	2/5												
Investigate possible places for hosting, notably PPS site	cp	2/12												
Explore Our Tools		2/19												
Examining and using Internet Explorer	cp and consultant	2/12												
Examining and using Microsoft FrontPage	cp and consultant	2/12												
Examining and using the HP Scanner	cp and consultant	2/12												
Examining and using the Corel Photo Paint	cp and consultant	2/19												
Explore other people's Web sites		2/26												
Get reference materials	cp and consultant	2/26												
Find Web sites like you want yours to be	cp	2/26												
Revise our Task		3/5												
Further define your goals	cp and consultant	3/5												
Who is your target audience?	cp	3/5												
Set a tone for your Web site	cp	3/5												
Develop a model for your site		3/5												
Pick elements from other sites that may fit well with your site	cp and consultant	3/5												
Copy relevant examples to your computer to examine	cp	3/5												

WorkPlan, continued

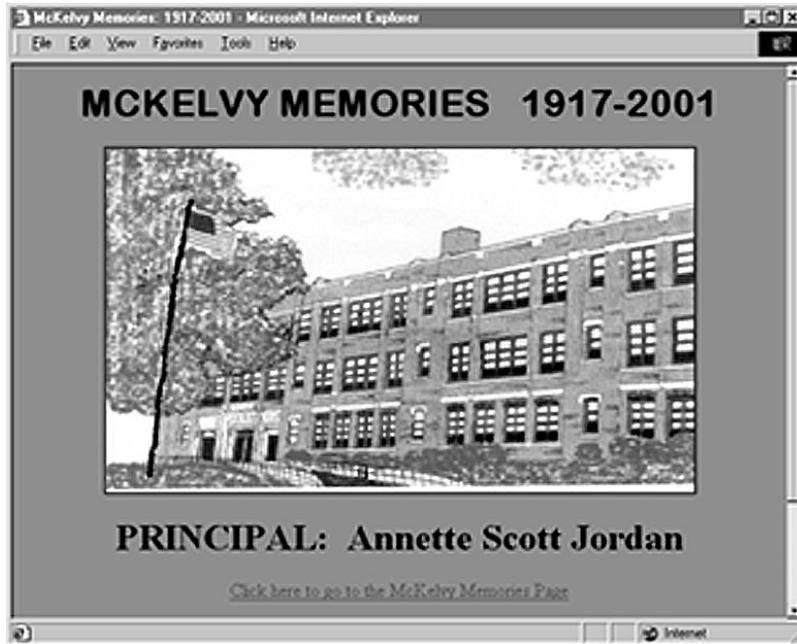
Creating a School Memorial Web Site	Responsible	Date	Feb				Mar				Apr			
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Task Name														
Select the information you want to present		3/12												
Determine what information you want to provide	cp	3/12												
Gather information that you already have	cp	3/12												
Determine what information you need to create	cp	3/12												
Create a plan		3/19												
Develop designs for individual pages	cp and consultant	3/19												
Write a rough outline of each page's text	cp and consultant	3/19												
Decide which graphics should appear on which pages	cp and consultant	3/19												
Create a master list of all files	cp and consultant	3/19												
Turn your information into Web files		4/9												
Rewrite text to produce final draft	cp and consultant	4/9												
Turn text files into HTML pages	cp and consultant	4/9												
Find, scan or create graphic files	cp and consultant	4/9												

Situation Description Chart

Additional information on McKelvy and its current organization, facilities, program, staff, technology environment and technology management, which was not included in the initial situation description here.

	Current	Relevant History
Organizational	McKelvy Elementary School, Bedford Avenue, Hill District Enrollment: 250, Class Size: about 20 Mission: teach the Values for Life program called "Village at McKelvy"	Serving the area for 83 years. School will be closing in June. Students will be split through three other schools and teachers will be assigned to other schools.
Facilities	First floor: cafeteria, classrooms Second floor: main office, library, reading computer lab Third floor: classrooms, second computer lab Washer/dryer also available for students' clothing	Reading lab available for 5 years. Second floor lab available for 3 years.
Program	Includes math, spelling, science, social studies and physical education. Village at McKelvy: love and respect, self-esteem, self-persistence, self-confidence, orientation learning, interpersonal skills, and self-reliance Students use computing labs for self-paced literacy learning, research using Encarta or the Internet, and creating class projects	Recently developed a schedule for classes to use labs, when before it was more haphazard. Not enough time to spend in labs with all the other activities that must take place.
Staff	20 teachers, 8 education assistants, secretary, information processor, and principal Community partner: technical coordinator and 4 th grade teacher Staff uses labs and in-class computers for grading, web browsing and email	CP has been tech coordinator because no one else had the skills to do it – but also is full-time teacher as well Some staff use labs more than others and are also more willing to learn than others
Technical Environment	Reading lab: 25 Dell 486s running Jostens from central server Upstairs lab: 25 Digital Pentium IIs running Windows NT; 4 GB hard drive, CD-rom, 3.5" disk drive; software: Microsoft office suite, Encarta, front page, outlook and internet explorer; machines are networked and connected to a main server that dials into the board of education server; also two HP 4000 network printers and two HP scanners Library: two computers, same configuration as upstairs lab; one HP 4000 printer; Internet connection Classrooms: Pentium II running Windows NT, mostly used for grading purposes; Internet connection	Reading lab has been open for 5 years. Other equipment available for about 3 years.
Technology Mgt.	Technical environment was set up and configured by Pittsburgh Public Schools Information Technology Department. PPS IT department services dial-up connection and network. When server is down, McKelvy cannot access the internet. Technology coordinator is Geri Abrams. She has taken classes through the Board of Education and is now the main contact for fixing machines and assisting staff and students for in using the computers. Relies on PPS IT department for technical assistance	Not enough money available to hire other assistants, so technology coordinator is also a teacher

Screenshots from McKelvy Memorial Website

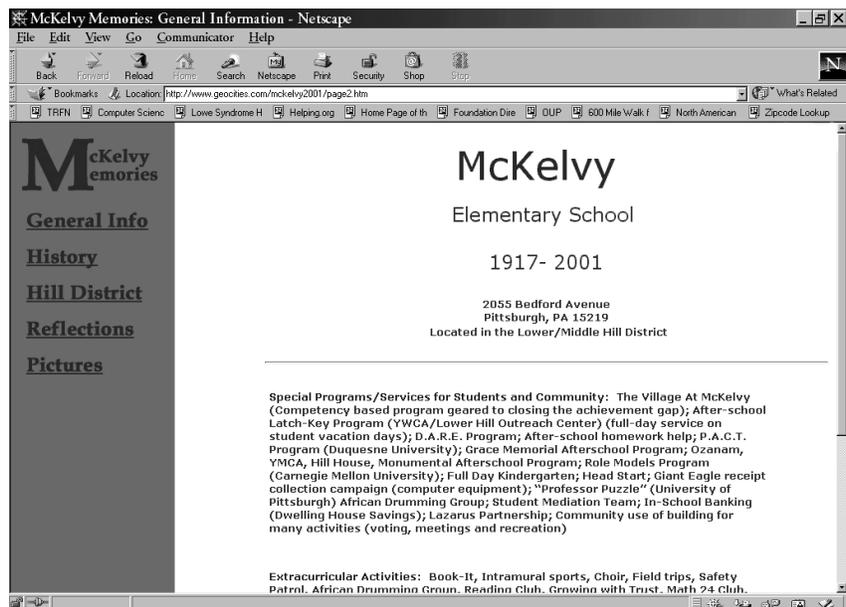


The Splash Page

The first page shows an image of McKelvy. The background is a sky blue with maroon text. This links to the page of general information about McKelvy.

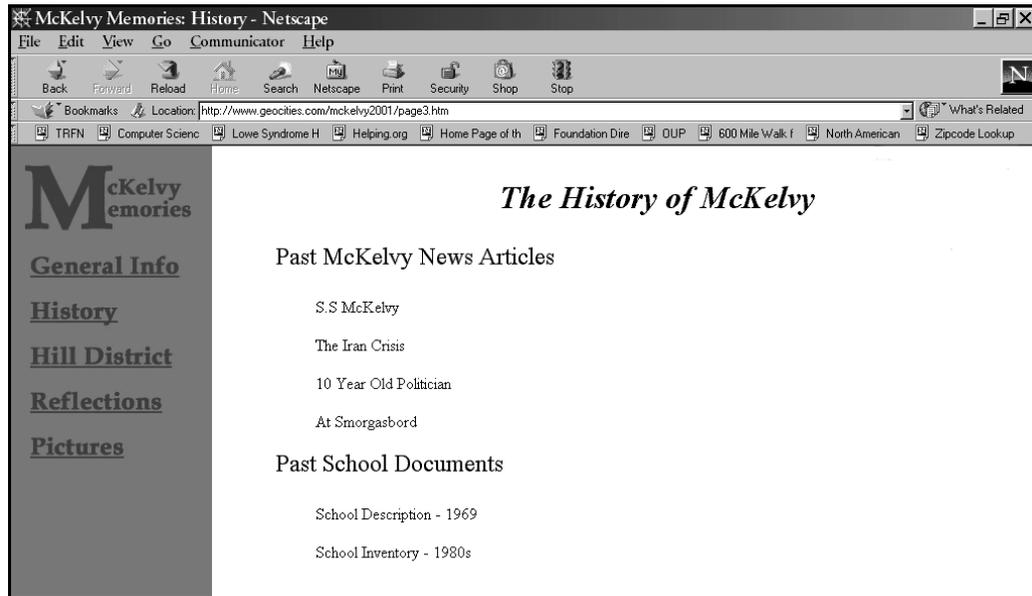
General Information

This page lists general information about McKelvy. The McKelvy Memories logo links to the splash page. The sidebar on the left is the same background color as the splash page with maroon text. The text on the right part (which has a white background) is also maroon.



History Page

The history page has the same layout as the general information page. It links to different news articles about McKelvy as well as school documents from the past. One of the news articles is shown on the next page.



'S.S. McKelvy' News Article



The background for this page is a light yellow, to reflect the yellowing shade of old newspaper articles. This is one of several articles which are linked from the history page.

Reflections Pages

The reflections page is similar to the history page. It is a starting point for all the reflections for teachers, linking to pages for different groups within the school. Each of the reflection pages shows a picture of the teacher or staff member, then lists his or her reflections on McKelvy.

