

# Women Against Abusive Relationships

## Executive Summary

### Community Partner

Roxanne Epperson

### Student Consulting Team

Ananya Bhat

Daniel Ng

Daphne Yang

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## Background

Women Against Abusive Relationships (WAAR) is a nonprofit organization devoted to the awareness, education, and prevention of violence against women and girls, founded and directed by Roxanne Epperson. Through multiple types of media such as virtual panel discussions, a podcast, and art projects, the organization aims to teach their participants, who are primarily women and girls, how to identify signs of an abusive relationship, as well as what a healthy one looks like. Currently, the organization is composed of Ms. Epperson as the director, and various volunteers. For the past three years, WAAR has been on a hiatus period while Ms. Epperson resumed her studies. In 2020, Ms. Epperson decided to relaunch WAAR and resume previous programs. However, due to the pandemic, Ms. Epperson has decided to focus on offering online programs, namely a weekly podcast and a monthly live panel discussion. WAAR officially launched these programs in April. At the moment, they currently maintain an online presence through their website, [waarheals.org](http://waarheals.org), and frequent social media activity.

## Project Description

### Project Opportunity

Based on our research and our meetings with WAAR, we have come to the conclusion that the major problems facing WAAR are that the organization's website does not accurately reflect the programs after their relaunch, lacks the functionality of a login option for an administrator or program participant, and has an inconsistent, confusing structure. As Ms. Epperson hopes to expand WAAR's services and widen their reach outside of just the Pittsburgh community, it is vital that they have a centralized, navigable platform that people can use to learn more about WAAR without any barriers. It is also important that this platform be easy for Ms. Epperson to use and maintain on her own – or easily find IT help for – given that she currently manages the organization and almost all of the organization's responsibilities by herself.

### Project Vision

The goal of our project is to build a new WordPress site and have it serve as a central hub for information on WAAR, their resources, and the services they provide in order to help raise exposure beyond Pittsburgh and make opportunities to heal more accessible for

victims and survivors of abusive relationships. Our solution allows Ms. Epperson and any future employees to more easily manage and maintain the growing organization, and participants to more effectively spend their time on self-learning and healing.

## **Project Outcomes**

Our project outcomes demonstrate the understanding that we have for both the staff and participants of the organization and their needs. These outcomes include interviews and user testing, auxiliary research, and the final product of the redesigned website. In the website, we have incorporated feedback from both groups in order to achieve a solution that addresses what the groups desire in a website for the organization.

## **Project Deliverables**

Our deliverables include our documentation and tutorials regarding different tasks for building the website and wireframes that were constructed to set our design choices. In addition to these, we have included login information for the admin portion of the site, the website URL, meeting and interview notes, website screenshots, and any outstanding issues for future reference and suggestions for next steps.

## **Recommendations**

We recommend that Ms. Epperson migrate the site from their current hosting platform, FatCow, to SiteGround to achieve higher performance on the site, and ensure the site is capable of handling the increased traffic that our solution intends to achieve. We also suggest Ms. Epperson hire technical support local to the Pittsburgh area, to reduce issues of coordinating communication across different time zones. We recommend future IS teams review our training materials and documentation to better understand our solution, and implement additional features such as an events calendar, online activities that can be placed on the site's "Healing Activities" page, and surveys for users to participate in.

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## **Student Consulting Team**

**Ananya Bhat** was responsible for managing the client relationship. Ananya Bhat is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Computer Science. She will be interning at Girls Who Code this summer and is looking forward to a career in tech education.

**Daniel Ng** led quality assurance for the project. Daniel Ng is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with a double major in Statistics and a minor in Computer Science. He is looking towards a career in software engineering.

**Daphne Yang** served as the project manager. Daphne Yang is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with a double major in Statistics and Machine Learning. She will be interning at Facebook this summer as a software engineer.