Innovation Capstone Project Report

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Section One: Roles

Ignitor – Haley

As one of the ignitors on the team, I brought energy and ideas into the team, as well as represented our project to the outside world. One of the ways that I did this was by finding key contacts such as Dr. Kwitek and Colonel Stewart who could help us refine our project and shape our pitch to private sponsors. I also went with Cordella and Sean to Pueblo to visit the Chamber of Commerce and Bessemer Academy. Additionally, I participated heavily in designing the program during team meetings. While I think the Mereon Matrix self-organizing team is very intriguing, I don't think the way that it was done this semester was very effective. There was little follow-through during the semester of how our roles were supposed to work practically. I think most of us understood the big picture of our role, but there were several roles that seemed to overlap when it came to practical tasks. I think this caused us to be less effective as a team than we could have been. I do think that the team size is just too large. Six people is a good size, nine people is just too many. It felt like there was not enough work for everyone. Despite some of these challenges, I really enjoyed working on a team of seniors. Everyone's work was high-quality, and I think we pushed through the uncertainty by relying on our previous team training and experiences.

Ignitor – Jacob

As the other ignitor on the team, I supplied ideas and brought a new perspective on the internal design of the project. Being one of two ignitors on the team, I often felt like there weren't enough ignitor duties for the both of us, nonetheless, I still contributed numerous ideas to the team such as the names for the project that we used along the way. The one time that the ignitor team felt useful was when Haley and I worked together to write the scripts to use when calling and emailing businesses. I also worked to build a comprehensive list of businesses near Bessemer Academy that was unfortunately not used in the end. Although the Mereon self-organizing team seemed like a good idea on paper, I don't think that it worked well for this project. It was interesting to be on a team where each person is part of a leader, but I don't think that it worked well to not have one true leader to turn to. Additionally, many roles overlapped and the fields that each person was to work in were unclear, especially with two ignitors

attempting to do the same thing. I think that Mereon teams could work better if there were smaller teams, and some roles were combined so that they don't overlap.

Catalyst – Orion

As the catalyst, I was tasked with quality control, review, aspirations at an attainable level, and making sure the team has what they need to get the job done. I have fulfilled the duties of review, product control, and making sure the team stays grounded. The Mereon team style does not work well in college because of the lack of accountability, specificity, and experience. Everyone is a leader in the Mereon format which does not suit everyone, leading strong voices to overpower others. This happened in previous innovation classes as well but was less of a problem due to the small team size. Assigning specific roles can reduce the efficiency of the team if the requirements are foreign to an individual, this is a part I struggled with as the catalyst.

Visionary-Cordella

As the Visionary I had to ensure that all the team was on the same page before we put out any information. I brought the idea of using the education boxes to the group and we agreed to go with it as a team. I reached out to Bitsbox, one of the educational box companies. I reached out to several businesses regarding sponsorship. I also helped write a portion of the script and got the video and pictures needed for our final presentation.

I believe that the Mereon Matrix has the potential to be great because it empowers people to speak up and communicate more because they are unaccustomed to the role they have. I believe that more time should be spent on learning and understanding the roles because it is changing thought processes and systems that human beings have come to rely on. We struggled at first with the idea of not having a leader, but I believe my team did an excellent job of working together and doing what needed to be done, even if it was not in their role description. That is why I would consider this project a success.

Prioritizer- Matt

As the prioritizer I was in charge of ensuring that the time the team had was managed effectively. I somewhat shared this duty with the coordinator, Helana. I was primarily in charge of scheduling meetings and making sure everyone was available for the scheduled times. Towards

the end of the project, I took on a leadership role in ensuring the final project video was completed, coordinating what needed to be done to record videos, write the script, and get photos taken. I also edited the final video product as I had the best skillset to do so. The Mereon Matrix was a bit confusing at first but after I realized it was trying to formalize the sort of team roles that people end up settling in anyway it made a bit more sese. I think that as a tool for management it would be exceptionally useful because the roles it defines are closer to the actual duties preformed than the current standard, however this would depend highly on the type of team and culture of the workplace and definitely wouldn't work for everyone. In an education setting, with an understanding of its origin and purpose and a better explanation I think the Mereon Matrix succeeds, in a "startup" culture it could perform well, and in the current big corporate workplace culture I do not believe it is a fit. This project came out as a major success and I think that it would not have succeeded as much without the organization the Matrix provided.

Implementer-Sean

My role for this project was the implementor. I was lucky to be chosen as an implementer because I was able to hold a role that magnifies my qualities. My duty was to gather all the information and ideas that our team produced and share them with outsiders. When meeting with individuals who supported our goals, I was responsible for sharing our vision and initiating group discussion. Ignitors and implementers worked coherently in this effort. I connected the dots with our stakeholders: Barbara Clementi, Melissa Waller, Angela Garcia, David Horner, and Kerry Jones. I had to be on top of communications because of all the moving parts and complexity of our project. I also researched private foundations that aligned with our goals. I compiled a list and reached out to them. Initial contact has been made and grant proposals are on the way. I plan to continue this process for the next few months, until we have sufficient funds for the events to take place.

In my opinion, The Mereon Matrix was a tough learning curve. The only downside was that we have a large group of nine students. With large groups and no official leader, students need to take it upon themselves to assign tasks and get them done. I also believe that there was variance in efforts to maintain roles. Efficiency at times was lost in translation. I am disappointed to hear that the Meron Matrix will not be implemented in the Bachelor of Innovation core anymore, as it has the potential to create amazing things.

This project was a success as we started something that will benefit the children of our communities. I was fortunate to work with students that displayed tenacity and consistency.

Coordinator-Helaina

As the Coordinator of this team, I helped keep everything organized and running smoothly. I made sure that each member of the team knew exactly what their jobs were each week and assisted them if there was anything getting in the way of their work. I also took charge in the documentation of the work that we accomplished and ensured that nothing was slipping through the cracks. As the coordinator, I also prepared a list of topics that we needed to talk about at each weekly meeting and helped guide our conversations through each of the topics. This made our weekly meetings feel much more organized and productive, which allowed us to quickly tackle any challenges that came up.

The Mereon Matrix helped a lot for my role specifically. As the coordinator, part of my job was to assign jobs to each of the team members. The Mereon Matrix approach allowed me to align the jobs with the individuals who are best suited for them, which made the process of delegating work much easier when compared to previous projects. Since the work that each member was given was more aligned with their strengths, it made the entire process smoother and ensured that we were getting everything done in a high-quality manner. While I feel that the Mereon Matrix would potentially be not as beneficial for some of the other roles, for the coordinator specifically it was highly useful. Ultimately, I feel that this project was a success and one of the most comfortable team experiences I have had, which I feel came from having a clear understanding of my role in the group and what was expected of me, as well as the highly motivated teammates that I was fortunate to work with.

Pi-Stabilizer

My role for this project was the stabilizer. I felt comfortable with this role as I hold the same role for my team at the organization I work for and for my research team at UCCS. The role of a stabilizer is to observe conversations between the group, lighten the mood and keep ideas grounded. The stabilizer is also responsible for the financial matters of the group which is why I was in collaboration with Sean to research grant opportunities and get contacts to organizations like the Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation.

The Mereon Matrix helped me understand my responsibilities and do my part for the project. With the things I learned, I became more of a listener to the team and writing down the plans the group wants to prioritize for the week. The Mereon Matrix allowed me to listen to the team discussions on grants and prioritize a few options the team can focus on for the semester. After being in close communication with Sean, we were also able to create a list so that other team members can pick a grant to work on which increased the number of grant applications while getting them done faster. Through this project, I was able to further build on my role as a stabilizer and I hope I can use my knowledge in my career.

Liberator-Noah

As liberator of the team my job was to break up monotony and silence of the team. I would keep relations between the team on good terms and make sure that the communication that needed to happen did happen. I would check on teammates and make sure they were comfortable with the work they were taking on and see if they had any problems and talk them through it. The role of the liberator is to be aware of teammates emotional needs, monitors emotional energy, intercede to help calm things down, and manages conflict resolution. I did this role to the best of my abilities as I was not used to the role or team dynamic of the Mereon Matrix.

The Mereon Matrix while confusing on the team dynamic helped me in many ways. It helped me first by approaching this team from a different point of view one focused on team's health and problems than one of leading or organizing work to be done. It took me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to grow as a leader and gave me a new understanding on how to lead in the future to facilitate relations in the team and more communication in meetings. Compared to other projects the Mereon Matrix feels scattered with no true leadership in place but works when everyone understands their roles and helps ignite thinking and work. I hope to use this structure of teams further in my career when leading projects or smaller assignments.

Section Two: Design Thinking Process

Our team began this project with the empathize stage of the Design Thinking process. Starting off, our team all thought of different problems we see in our community that we felt we could impact. All of us agreed that quality education was a problem we were all passionate about and wanted to help in our community. Through our research, we began to realize how expensive high quality educational materials can be. Furthermore, we also learned that in the state of Colorado, there were over 371,000 k-12 students who qualified for free or reduced lunches, making up nearly 41% of all students. These two facts allowed us to define the problem; how can we help bring high-quality education to lower income students?

Having a direct impact on the quality of educational materials students are exposed to in class was out of the scope for this project, so we looked for other ways that could bring educational materials to students. The ideate phase of the Design Thinking process helped us try to think outside of traditional educational methods, and instead look for other high-quality educational content. This led us to the idea of educational boxes, which could expose students to hands on learning experiences. However, these educational boxes are not affordable for most lower-income families, so we began to look for ways to secure sustainable income through businesses or grants. We also sought out a school to partner with for this project, and through faculty connections we were able to meet and partner with Angela from Bessemer Academy in Pueblo County.

As our team moved further into this project, it became apparent that we would only be able to finish the prototype phase of the Design Thinking process. To accomplish this, we wanted to lay the groundwork for this project to continue, and a future group to be able to put it into action and sustain it for years to come. All of the materials were outlined for a team to begin approaching companies for donations to fund the educational boxes and create a catalogue (See Appendix) to organize this information. Through talking with Bessemer Academy, we learned that for any amount of fundraising to begin, we would need to obtain permission from the school district board. This became a high priority for our team, as it was one of the largest hurdles that would need to be overcome for this project to move forward. By the end of the semester, we were able to obtain permission to begin collecting funding for these educational boxes on behalf of Bessemer Academy. We also gathered all necessary information and created templates to

approach businesses for funding, as well as begin applying to grant foundations. We also partnered with Central High School's HOSA club, for the students to help sustainably carry on this project into the future. Finally, we have applied for a BI team for the summer of 2021 to further expand this process, to ensure that we can have an educational night with Bessemer Academy in August.

Section Three: Innovation Capstone Project

For our team's capstone project, we chose the task of creating a sustainable development goal of Quality Education. The vision is for every elementary student to receive a free educational box. The educational boxes are centered around STEAM activities (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) created by companies such as Bitbox and KiwiCo. These companies are experts at developing age-appropriate hands-on activities that challenge children to learn and innovate.

We narrowed our scope and are partnering with Bessemer Academy and Pueblo Central High School, both schools in Pueblo District 60. Four times a year Bessemer Academy has Family Engagement Nights. This is a fantastic opportunity for the teachers to create hands-on learning environments. This night focuses on family and the community as the students' parents are actively involved and with our help the high school will be involved as well. We intend to launch our first event in August.

The educational kit companies offer discounts on bulk orders, making the educational kits more accessible. We will also be applying for macro and micro grants to fund the purchase of the kits. Bessemer Academy will cover the costs of the food, advertisements, and location.

Appendix

Central High and Bessemer Academy Educational Box Catalogue

Overview

This project came into being by a team of UCCS Bachelor of Innovation students to help solve the issue of quality education in the world (U.N. Goal #4). As a team of nine, we started small and decided to focus on underprivileged kids in the Pueblo area to help create educational opportunities at no cost. Education kits were chosen for their fun and innovative way of learning as well as provide a project that can be worked on at school or at home. These kits were designed to be constructed at Title One events with parents to improve bonding and support for the child's education. Some kits provide a variety of activities and can be brought home to be finished at a later time. Title one events often occur around holidays and working on a kit at home will keep a child's mind active and engaged during breaks so returning to school will not be as overbearing.

How to use the information below

Where to get education kits

Education kits information can be found further down in this document. We have created a list of preferred vendors that seem to have the best value in terms of content and educational material. We have reached out to all the preferred vendors and some have provided discount prices for bulk orders.

How many kits to purchase

The number of kits to purchase will depend on the event. Contact Angela Garcia or an event coordinator to find out the number of students that are going to attend the event and order one kit for each student. It is suggested to order a couple more kits in case of damaged materials. Kits can be purchased before each Title-1 event if the theme of each event changes or can be purchased once a semester depending on the storage space of Bessemer Elementary. Contact Angela Garcia for event scheduling and storage space inquiries.

Which kits to buy

Which kits to buy is solely up to the club as long as it falls within the range of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math). Some kit providers have both educational kits and kits that are simply just toys. When selecting kits, make sure that the age ranges are suitable for the students. Angela Garcia can provide a breakdown of the number of kids in each grade or age group. A few other things to identify are variety and value. Check the number of projects per kit and what each requires. If the club is helping at the event to assist with the projects, it might be easier to select one kit and one project for ease of assistance. On the other hand, a variety of kits will let students compare their projects. If desired, single boxes could be bought before an event and put together by club members.

Things to look out for

The purpose of the kits is to provide a fun, educational experience for students. Some kit companies provide both educational kits and kits that just contain toys and do not have an educational component.

Make sure the selected kits will have some educational component that also looks fun to work on.

Most kit companies provide kits on a monthly subscription. These subscriptions can be 1,2,3, 6 and even 12 months. It is suggested to order a one-time bulk shipment if possible, and if not, single kits so that the funds do not drain every month resulting in duplicates and cancelled orders. It is best to contact the selected kit company first to find out if they can ship a bulk order on pallets for easy storage.

Before finalizing any orders, check with Bessemer Elementary to see if the Title-1 event has a theme and order kits accordingly.

How to get funds

Funds are kept at the district's Education Foundation separate from the high school and Bessemer Academy. Contact Melissa Waller or current club manager after obtaining a quote for the number of selected boxes.

Boxes

Preferred Vendors

These are the box vendors we are most confident would provide both a great value for money as well as being supportive of our vision for the project. Some of these vendors have been contacted to begin forming a relationship that could be beneficial to the project in the future.

Box Company	Subject area/ y Description	Additional Information	Contact Information
KiwiCo	Site: https://www.kiwico.com/ KiwiCo provides education crates of various types. Starting at shapes and puzzles and working all the way up to engineering constructs, KiwiCo has a box for everyone. Other topics include simple to advanced crafts, culture, and basic mechanics with robots.	• 0-24 • 2-4 • 5-8 • 6-11 • 9-16+ • 14-104 Retail Price & Quoted Price: Retail: \$25 (1 box) Quoted: \$13.50 (200-250 boxes)	KiwiCo Bulk Orders: https://www.kiwic o.com/schools- and-groups/bulk
Bitsbox	Site: https://bitsbox.com/ Bitsbox is a programming focused education crate with the company headquarters in Boulder, CO. This box has great value but only focuses on programming rather than a variety of STEM topics. Programming lessons cover the basics and will help even the most inexperienced build different applications. Bitsbox as trial versions for free, a full digital version for \$16.95, and a more expensive option with extra projects. This kit can be used on any computer with a web browser and can be shared with siblings as well. The only downside of this kit is it may be too difficult for very young children.	Available Age Ranges: • 6-12 Retail Price & Quoted Price: Retail: \$24.95 (1 box) Quoted: \$16.64 (250 boxes)	

Little Passports	Little passports has education kits in the areas of world culture and STEM. The STEM kits look to have less value than the culture kit as well as the other STEM kits listed in this section. The culture kits revolve around the countries of the world with different types of projects for different learners. They also have a large variety of age ranges and would work great for a K-5 school. When ordering, it may be possible to also select from a variety of countries so students can compare their kits and projects. Little Passports is constantly adding new countries to their catalog so they could be used for multiple events.	Available Age Ranges:	
Groovy Lab in a Box	Site: https://www.groovylabinabox.com/ This box is STEM oriented with a range of topics that include electricity, earth science, aviation, and robots. This box provides 6-7 hours of activities that can be started at school and finished at home.	Available Age Ranges: • 4-7 • 8+ (This age range appears to provide more value than the younger age range) Retail Price & Quoted Price: Retail: \$40 (1 box) Quoted: \$19.95 (~250 boxes)	Contact at the Vendor: Eric Email: eric@academicsina box.com Phone: (757) 285-3979 (cell)
Green Kid Crafts	Site: https://www.greenkidcrafts.com/ Green Kid Crafts has a variety of science themed kits. These kits are more expensive than most of the other brands, but a few have really good value. The one that stood out the most was the Chemistry Lab Box. There are multiple projects in this kit and it can be brought home for future learning.	Available Age Ranges: • 2-4 • 5-9 Retail Price & Quoted Price: Retail: \$35 (1 box) Quoted:	

Other Vendors for Future Consideration

STEM	Art	Reading	Culture
Club SciKidz Labs	Palleteful Packs	Literati	Little Global Citizens
STEM Discovery Boxes	Guide Dots	Imagination Library	Entire Global Chileria
	duide Dots		
X Workbox		Bookroo	
Sensory Theraplay Box		Just Like Me Box	
<u>Creation Crate</u>			
Steve Spangler Science			

Attached Documents

Executive Summary

We are a group of students at UCCS in the Bachelor of Innovation Program, a degree focused on teaching students how to transform ideas into impact. We are spending our final semester at UCCS developing a program that will enhance elementary students' education and inspire them to become innovators. Our goal is to provide free education boxes to every student enrolled at Bessemer Academy in District 60. The education boxes are centered around STEAM activities (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) created by companies such as Green Kid Crafts and KiwiCo. These companies are experts at developing age-appropriate hands-on activities that challenge children to learn and innovate. Below is summary of all of the stakeholders and moving parts.

University of Colorado Colorado Springs:

We are spending our semester creating a sustainable model for this program, so it survives long past our graduation. This model will empower high school students from Pueblo Central High to plan the events, select and order the education kits, and facilitate elementary parents and students to use the education kits to their fullest potential. The team will find funding through local foundations and private partners with mission statements that align with our vision for this program. We would like to launch our first event in August of 2021 with three or four annual events going forward.

Bessemer Academy:

Bessemer Academy students are the recipients of the education boxes. The school would incorporate the education boxes into their quarterly Title I Family Engagement Nights. This program caters to this school's emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The principal, Angela Garcia, would collaborate with the high school students from Pueblo Central High School to coordinate the distribution of the boxes.

Angela Garcia:

Pueblo Central High:

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Melissa Waller is a science teacher at Pueblo Central High who sponsors the STEM and HOSA clubs. She believes that these clubs would be perfectly positioned to get involved with this program and help facilitate the program in the future. Our vision is for the students in the clubs to control the education box funds, order the boxes for each event, and help facilitate the distribution of the boxes at Bessemer Academy.

Melissa Waller:

Melissa Waller

Destin Mehess:

Destri Mehess

Pueblo District 60 School Board:

We need permission from the Pueblo District 60 School Board in order to move forward with this program. Upon approval from the district we will be able to request funds and have them dispensed to the district's non-profit organization, Education Foundation, Inc. It will be responsible for collecting, holding, and distributing the funds to Pueblo Central High School.

Education Foundation, Inc.

We will write grants and proposals on behalf of Pueblo School District 60's Education Foundation. The foundation is the districts non-profit organization. Once grants and requests are accepted by individual foundations, the funds will be collected by Education Foundation, Inc. The foundation will then distribute those funds to Central High School.

Foundations/Private Partners:

The foundations will receive grant proposals and will review them accordingly.

• Anticipated Foundations

Gates Family Foundation, Kinder Morgan Foundation, Schuster Family Foundation, John and Patricia Steinhauser, R.M. Watts Foundation, Schramm Foundation, Horsfall Family Foundation, LSB Foundation, Braly Family Foundation, Robert and Anne Sneed Family Foundation, George Hopper Foundation

• Goal of the funds

The goal is to raise enough funds for every student at Bessemer Academy to receive an education box. The money raised will be placed in the foundation to create a sustainable model that can be used by the schools year after year.

Education Box Companies:

The education box companies we have spoken with have agreed to partner with our team to lower the unit prices in order to make the education boxes more accessible. There are several excellent companies to choose from. After the boxes have been ordered by the high school clubs, the company will ship them all to Bessemer Academy before the event.

Project Summary

- Bring new educational opportunities to the children at Bessemer Elementary in the form of hands-on educational boxes.
- Provide opportunities for a Title I school to spark an early interest in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics.
- Develop a sustainable method that can be executed by a Pueblo Central High club to continue to provide educational boxes to Bessemer Elementary through business donations and grants.

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Grant Templates & Foundations

Grant Proposal

Pueblo School District 60 Education Foundation

(Date)

315 W. 11th St.

(Foundation Name)

Pueblo, CO

(Foundation address)

City, CO ZIP

Dear (Foundation),

Mission

Bessemer Academy is a Title One elementary school for (232) underprivileged students. Our school has a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) focus. Bessemer Academy is seeking engaging and revamped Title One family nights. Our mission is to provide every child at the school with a Kiwi-Co educational STEM box to promote a beautiful, family-oriented experience. Our objective is to stimulate interest in our children at a young age who may never realize their talents.

Your Foundation (Foundation's name) can be the difference for these disadvantaged, bright, young students. Our kids will have something to look forward to with this new after-school activity.

It would be an absolute pleasure to submit a grant application through your foundation, as it will aid our community and build interest for our future leaders.

Please consider the children at Bessemer Academy. We are grateful for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

(Your Name)

(Club name)

Pueblo Central High School

(Phone number)

(Email)

Possible Grant Opportunities

Grantmaker	Street Address	Telephone	E-mail	URL	Notes
Name			ı		
Gates Family Foundation	1390 Lawrence St. Ste. 400 Denver, CO 80204	PH: (303) 722-1881 F: (303) 316-3038	<u>E-Mail</u>	<u>Link</u>	
Kinder Morgan Foundation	370 Van Gordon St. Lakewood, CO 80228	PH:(713) 420-4792 F: (303) 984-3306	<u>E-Mail</u>	<u>Link</u>	Matching program; need initial funding first
Robert Hoag Rawlings Foundation	301 N Main Street Pueblo, CO 81003	(719) 544-2566			Long term option.
Schuster Family Foundation	P.O. Box 1626 Loveland, CO 80539	(970) 227-0752			
John W. and Patricia E. Steinhauser Foundation	21703 Unbridled Ave. Parker, CO 80138	(303) 840-5417			
R. M. Watts Foundation	37 Calle Del Sol Pueblo, CO 81008	(719) 545-0148			
Schramm Foundation	800 Grant St., Ste. 330Denver, CO United States 80203	(303) 861-8291	<u>E-Mail</u>		Common Grant Application
Horsfall Family Foundation	9469 Memory Ln. Longmont, CO 80504	(303) 746-1401	E-Mail		
LSB Corporation	25 Polo Field Ln. Denver, CO 80209	(303) 316-7902			
Braly Family Foundation	645 Tenacity Drive Longmont, CO 80504	(801) 531-9100		<u>Link</u>	Grant proposal sent.
Robert E. and Anne T. Sneed Family Foundation		(303) 377-7851			
George W. Hopper Family Foundation	21649 Cabrini Blvd. Golden, CO 80401	(303) 526-0785			Contact for more info.
The Melvin and Elaine Wolf Foundation				<u>Link</u>	Long term option; apps open Aug-Oct.
Zarlengo Foundation	PO Box 1911 Wheat Ridge, CO 80033	(303) 357-5633	<u>E-Mail</u>		Grant proposal sent.

The Larry R. Dipasquale Foundation	6800 South Xanthia St Centennial, CO 80112	(303) 741-1897			
The Don Warren Family Foundation	106 E. 1st St. Julesburg, CO 80737	(970) 474-3326			Contact name: Daniel M Pederson
Sam S. Bloom Foundation	PO Box 2413 Littleton, CO 80161	(303) 771-2266			Common Grant Application
Lisa Halverson Foundation	16644 NW Paisley Dr Beaverton, OR 97006		E-Mail	<u>Link</u>	
David and Lucile Packard foundation	The David and Lucile Packard Foundation 343 Second Street Los Altos, CA 94022	(650) 948-7658		<u>Link</u>	
E.M. Christmas foundation	37 Calle Del Sol Pueblo, CO 81003	(719) 545-0148			

Important Contacts

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