MEANS Database

What does MEANS Database do? MEANS is a powerful, yet accessible, online database that maps out excess goods and links those who have too much with those in need. Searchable by geographic radius, this program allows food shelf administrators in the same regions to share their excesses and reduce waste while feeding more hungry people. All you need is an email address and an internet connection. Type in where you are, what you have and when it goes bad. The website does the rest, and any other pantry can search and see if what they need is available nearby.

Who are we? MEANS stands for Matching Excess And Need for Stability, and it came to be after an all-too-common experience in our world – a food pantry volunteer (our founder, Maria Rose, in her hometown of Pella) found herself throwing out a large percentage of a bulk donation from a local grocery because of a short expiration date and an inability to effectively communicate with fellow emergency feeding systems in her area on a short deadline. Food banks everywhere have had it happen. We believe we can minimize the damage.

Our team is here for you! MEANS Database was started by a food pantry volunteer, Maria Rose Belding. Maria has been actively involved with emergency feeding systems, and who still is. She knows what you actually need and makes sure that MEANS can do it. The rest of the team includes college students, law students, international philanthropists, and more. We've worked tirelessly to conduct customer interviews and make sure that MEANS is meeting your needs. We've rebuilt MEANS Database twice from scratch, and we're ready to do it again if we have to. We'll do whatever it takes to make MEANS easy to use, useful, and efficient.

What should I use MEANS? What I'm doing now works! We know you're already probably working with other emergency feeding systems around you. Maybe you use email chains, phone trees, or something else. But switching to MEANS Database will take your food pantry into the 21st century. Unlike a normal email chain, MEANS has a 'claim this item' functionality built in that eliminates confusion about the availability of items and reduces headaches for both interested recipients and donors. The advantage over phone calls is that someone who posts on the website can reach specifically those with an interest in the item, immediately, and en masse. It is the difference between telemarketing and billboards on one hand, and targeted ads the other.

MEANS Database uses the best technology available. One key advantage of the MEANS Database is our tech team and infrastructure. The website is built on Ruby on Rails, considered by many the most flexible, fast, and powerful web platform. Twitter, Groupon, and Airbnb are built on Ruby on Rails. We have studied the economics of two-sided markets and consider Uber, Craigslist, and Twitter models to learn from. We'll use Amazon or Google for static cloud storage. *We haven't seen any charity website bring the same level of technical prowess to its core activity.* This in-house technical resource is one of our core strengths and advantages. The main web developer for MEANS is Grant Nelson, who also serves as Chief Operating Officer. Grant is a third year law student at The George Washington University Law School where he is focusing on tech, business, and privacy law. An avid programmer, he's written (and re-written) thousands of lines of code while developing the MEANS Database. He's not afraid to start over if it means creating the best site for you.

Contact Us:

Phone: (202)499-1507
Email: hello@meansdatabase.com
Website: www.meansdatabase.com