



St. Mary's Child Center **regains control of IT** with managed services

Case Study





St. Mary's Child Center **regains control of IT** with managed services

Overview

- Not-for-profit agency in Indianapolis serves high-quality preschool curriculum to 300 children, many from low-income families
 - Resolved pervasive technology challenges with affordable support and ongoing troubleshooting
 - Improved security and reliability, freeing up time for more productive work
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Summary

Indianapolis-based not-for-profit agency St. Mary's Child Center had for years tried to make do with internal resources to manage its aging IT systems across three locations. But as problems with its servers, PCs and network piled up for the 50-person organization, St. Mary's few technically proficient administrative staff were spending too much time away from their job functions trying to find workarounds.

St. Mary's decided IT had become too important to treat it as an afterthought and engaged Echopath for managed services, including on-call help desk support, cloud backup and recovery, proactive maintenance and antivirus monitoring. Working with Echopath has ensured St. Mary's Child Center adheres to IT best practices and freed up time for administrative staff to focus on their important work.

Overview

Customer Overview

St. Mary's Child Center is living proof that information technology has become an indispensable part of nearly any organization's operations, even if managing IT is not a core function.

St. Mary's Child Center is a not-for-profit agency operating in three locations across Indianapolis, dedicated to serving high-quality early childhood learning curriculum to 300 children aged 3 to 5 years old. Founded in 1961, St. Mary's has a long history and mission of serving children whose families live in poverty. Program funding is received from United Way, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, donations from individuals, corporate and endowment/foundation grants, program fees and special events.

Business Situation

With all revenue directly supporting its programming, St. Mary's and its 50 employees rely on carefully selected IT tools to run a lean administration and fundraising development office. Nancy Needham, Chief Operating Officer, says that technology plays a "huge" part of its operations. "It's grown so much we can't do without it anymore," says Needham. In addition to a PC in each of its 10 classrooms and another 14 laptops and towers across two sites for administrators and development officers, St. Mary's relied on a secure central server for its childcare management system and cloud-based email, donor management, accounting and payroll systems.

Without an IT manager on staff, issues with the server, PCs and even the spotty Wi-Fi network were beginning to pile up. "It was horrible. We



were constantly having computer issues," says Needham. As the most technologically savvy on staff, St. Mary's two donor development officers performed troubleshooting as best they could. "As a not-for-profit, you do what you can," says Needham. "They were spending hours at it. They were even driving between buildings."

The central server was a primary pain point. "We had a local IT services company in to work on it, but they just put in a new server and copied the old one, rather than really fixing any problems with the setup," says Needham. Then she was told St. Mary's was too small to be its client.

As productivity declined and staff frustration rose, Needham recognized St. Mary's needed more dedicated help.

Solution

Needham turned to Chad Whaley, CEO and co-founder of Echopath, who had previously been subcontracted to implement St. Mary's IP-based telephone system.

Initially, Echopath performed an assessment of St. Mary's IT environment and recommended prioritizing the server issues and putting in place an affordable and customized managed services contract to address other issues as they arose.

Because most of St. Mary's staff was not technically proficient, Echopath pursued a proactive approach that would make it simpler for employees to use IT and resolve any problems. Echopath instituted multiple best practices to St. Mary's IT environment:

- Active Directory and central drive with updated file permissions to alleviate an over-reliance on email to share documents
- Software agents on all the PCs to monitor and perform proactive maintenance, with event logs to enable remediation of problems before they happen
- Regularly scheduled defrags, patching and temp file removals
- Up-to-date and monitored antivirus on all devices

Echopath replaced St. Mary's free hosted email solution with a business-grade premise-based service licensed at a much reduced rate through TechSoup, an organization that offers access to donated and discounted products from major IT vendors.

As the workhorse systems within St. Mary's, the administration's computers were prioritized for clean up and in some cases, replacement.

St. Mary's Child Center IT environment

- 24 PCs across three locations, one PC each in 10 classrooms
- Cloud-based services for donor management, accounting and payroll
- Secure central server for its childcare management system
- Wi-Fi and Ethernet IP connectivity
- IP-based virtual PBX communications system
- Cable-based internet and T1's for voice

Echopath Managed Services

- Workstation management with automated maintenance
- Server management to monitor, manage and protect critical data and systems
- Connectivity management for VPN and Internet
- Highly secure cloud backup and recovery for reliable data protection
- Help desk and troubleshooting support

Wi-Fi networks were also reconfigured for better coverage.

Finally, Echopath recommended changes to how St. Mary's protects its systems, which store personal and financial details of children and their families. As it does with all its managed services contracts, Echopath provided a highly secure cloud backup and recovery solution. "We had a not-so-secure cloud service in place, so we needed the better backup," says Needham. "There have been times when people couldn't find their files on the server and panicked and Echopath has quickly found them for us."

Results

“We were really excited when we made the decision that it would be in our best interest to have a managed services contract,” says Needham. “It’s made a big difference to our organization.”

Most importantly, critical systems like the administrators’ PCs, central server and wireless network now operate with much improved reliability—and support is always readily available.

“Echopath is good at responding to any problem we have,” says Needham.

Even relatively minor issues like printer connectivity or incorrect application settings get handled promptly through a help desk ticketing system. “These kinds of IT issues are small but horrible nuisances that we wouldn’t have known how to fix in the past.” With staff who are not always comfortable with computers, it may be as simple as a plug that’s come loose, but Echopath deals with it all.

When it comes to bigger issues like a computer crash, Echopath staff will pick up the device, do what it can to retrieve any information and

repair it, or provide a quote to Needham for the cost of replacing it. “There is good communication between us,” she says.

As a not-for-profit, price was an important consideration, but Needham says St. Mary’s has received a lot of value from the managed services. “This was a big step for us, because we’re not used to spending much on someone to help us with technology, and it was something we discussed for some time,” says Needham. “Echopath has been really good to us.”

The best part is that St. Mary’s staff isn’t spending hours running between buildings trying to fix computers any more. “Having this kind of support has changed our whole approach. Technology has just become too important—we can’t do our job without it—so we’ve taken it from the background and brought it forward. Working with Echopath has freed up time to get our jobs done, which means bringing in more money. It’s done great things for us here.”

About Echopath

Echopath is an IT services provider specializing in Enterprise Data Backup, DRaaS (Disaster Recovery as a Service) and IT Managed Services. Echopath stands out from the crowd by not just selling software, but by co-managing a solution. Based in Indianapolis, IN, Echopath is dedicated to protecting client's data's confidentiality, integrity, and availability.

We call our proactive and protective approach The Managed Path, acting as your IT department so you can focus on your business.

For more info, visit: echopath.com

To speak with a specialist, call: 855-337-2225