Homeplate Mobile - An Android App

Richardo Hopkins, 2013

Professor Tucker, a longtime proponent of the open source software movement*, stumbled upon a charity called Second Helpings in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Second Helpings, a food-distribution charity, uses a number of trucks to drive around the island in order to pick up (unspoiled) food that would otherwise be thrown away from supermarkets, restaurants, and other local businesses and then distribute that food among churches, schools, orphanages, and other shelters/locations for the needy. As a charity, Second Helpings can only afford to carry out their operations through funding by another company to which all records of food movement have to be reported.

Previously, Second Helpings kept records through paper and pencil. While this could work with a small amount of data, keeping neat becomes overwhelming and messy due to constantly adding new records -- especially when the numbers did not add up! This summer, we developed an Android app that the truck drivers of Second Helpings could use every day to record pickups and drop offs of food along each route. The app then syncs with the Second Helpings database, called Homeplate, that Professor Tucker, two other students, and I created before the summer through a projects course.

The biggest challenge of the project was creating a user interface that was friendly enough for less than tech-savvy volunteers, some who didn't have email addresses or even phones!

* Open Source : software that does not hold any copyright information, and thus can be built upon by the general public, with the philosophy that collaboration will lead to more advancement as a whole than private software that is more profitable.

Faculty Mentor: Professor Allen Tucker

Funded by the Gibbons Summer Research Grant.