

[HOME](#)

[ABOUT US](#)

[ADMISSIONS](#)

[PEOPLE](#)

[RESEARCH](#)

[PROGRAMS](#)

Computing for Social Good Continues with Noteworthy Project

[SEE MORE >](#)





Home ► About Us ► News ► Computing for Social Good Continues with Noteworthy Project

Computing for Social Good Continues with Noteworthy Project

Even in a Pandemic, Computer Science Students Connect with a Local Non-Profit

Whether you are new to the Stony Brook area or someone deeply rooted on Long Island, a visit to Stony Brook village is not complete without a stop at [The Jazz Loft](#). A performance space and museum dedicated to preserving and cultivating jazz music, The Jazz Loft offers performances and a vigorous educational program, in collaboration with Stony Brook University's (SBU) School of Music, which delights crowds each year. The museum at The Jazz Loft also houses an extensive collection of original music, recordings, photographs, instruments, and memorabilia.

It is the museum's collection which attracted the attention of the Department of Computer Science (CS) at SBU. Jack Heller, one of the early chairs of the CS department, developed the Museum Computer Network back in 1969 with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the NY Public Library. In keeping with this legacy, several teams of computer science students in Tony Scarlatos' benevolent computing course created a multimedia database for The Jazz Loft which encompasses original music scores, master recordings, photographs, and other historic assets.

According to a recent article in the [Times Herald](#), The Jazz Loft received a \$40,000 grant from the Lion Gardner Foundation to renovate the facilities and to purchase equipment needed to create a digital archive. Since the grant did not include funds for staff to build the archive, Scarlatos presented the idea to several CS student teams.

"The students were 'jazzed' about the project because in addition to honing their skills by helping a local non-profit, they learned a lot about the history of American music," said Scarlatos.

The database the students created has three purposes:

- 1) To standardize and simplify data entry for archivists and interns cataloging the museum's collections.
- 2) To facilitate online query of the collections by musicians, researchers, students and educators.
- 3) To preserve the museum's collections digitally for future generations.

In Spring 2020, as with all of the benevolent computing projects, a design brief was prepared by the teams working on the database, user interface, and digitization of the assets. Kristen Nyitray, Director of Special Collections for the Melville Library, advised the student teams on the archival process. When the

[Chair's Message](#)

[Why CS @ SBU](#)

[Rankings](#)

[Diversity and Outreach](#)

[News & Events](#)

[Career Opportunities](#)

[CS Intranet](#)

[Student Resources](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Latest Stories



[Computing for Social Good Continues with...](#)



[NSF Awards Nearly \\$3 Million For Graduate...](#)



[Developing Robust Quantum Networks](#)

pandemic moved classes online, the work of digitizing documents, photographs, and audio recordings was continued by Scarlatos, his son Alex Scarlatos '18, and Tom Manuel, Stony Brook Artist in Residence, president and founder of The Jazz Loft.

The dedicated teams worked well remotely and delivered a robust prototype to The Jazz Loft as their class project. Work is continuing this fall on digitizing additional collections and populating the database.

The Jazz Loft was thrilled with the outcome and was happy to be a partner in this unique undergraduate class. CSE/ISE 391 Benevolent Computing, created by Scarlatos more than a decade ago, explores the phenomenon of software applications that leverage web and mobile computing to affect positive social outcomes. Appealing to the civic-minded undergraduate has worked well for the longevity of this computer science elective, which has attracted close to 400 students who have completed approximately 100 tech projects for non-profits and social service related agencies.

Working to support the non-profit's mission and to provide skills that would otherwise be quite expensive, the course benefits both the students in need of real-world experience and the agencies and non-profits with limited budgets.

"The course synthesizes the department's offerings in software engineering, human computer interaction, and ethics, while providing a practical focus," Scarlatos said.

Over the last decade students have created solutions ranging from inventory management systems, educational and training applications, to data visualization tools. Agencies and non-profits who have benefited from this course, some of which are highlighted in this [university article](#), include Island Harvest, L.I. Against Domestic Violence, Sunshine Prevention Center, EAC Network, Toys of Hope, The Stony Brook Food Pantry, Boy Scouts of America, and Response of Suffolk County.

Faced with new challenges, the recent pandemic did not impede the students' ability to share their knowledge and skills with a non-profit in need. Without missing a beat, the student teams produced a truly noteworthy project.