RELIEF SOCIETY MEAL COORDINATOR

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Relief Society meal coordinators face two difficulties in arranging meals for families in need. The first difficulty is keeping track of who has given and received meals. The second difficulty is determining who to ask to take meals when a need arises. This program solves both these needs.

The program is activated from a button in a custom tab in the ribbon. From here the user can select a sister's name in order to either create a new meal record or view/edit an existing record. If a new meal record is selected, the user is presented with a list of sisters in the ward as well as the visiting teachers of the sister in need. Once the sisters who will be taking meals are selected and meal dates are entered, the user can save the record. The meal history form allows the user to view and edit an existing record.

The program also has two report generators. The first report is a list of all sisters in the ward with their contact information and visiting teachers. The second report is used to generate a list of all meal activity in a pre-selected date range. This can be used when reporting monthly or bi-monthly meal activity to the compassionate service committee chair.

IMPLEMENTATION

The program is separated into four main forms with a number of supporting forms. The main forms include search, new record, history and contact list. To create a new record, view history or generate meal reports the user selects the "Meal Data" button in the "Meal Coordinator" tab (Figure 1)
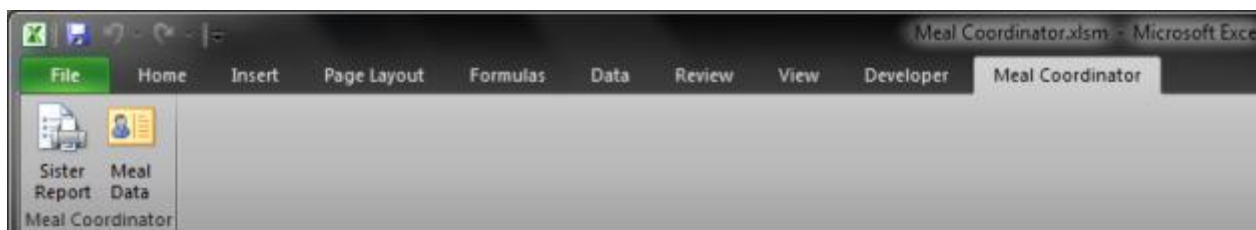

Figure 1 – Meal Coordinator Tab

The user is then presented with a search dialog (Figure 2). The "Last Name" combo box allows the user to select the last name of the sister needing a meal. Once a last name is selected, the "First Name" combo box is populated with all the first names of sisters with the selected last name (Figure 3).
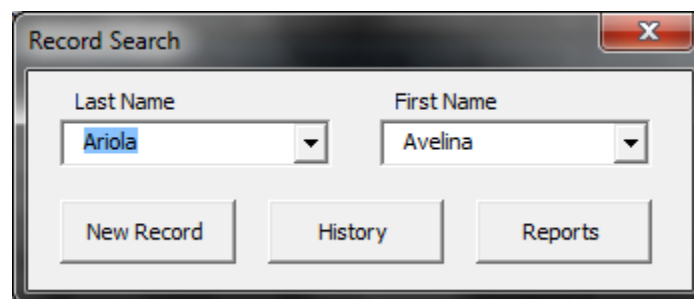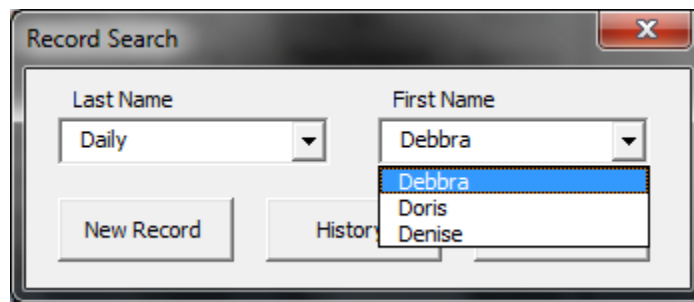

Figure 2 – Search Dialog

Figure 3 – Search Dialog Name Selection

New Record

After a name is selected the user can choose to create a new meal record. When the "New Record" button is pressed the "New Record" dialog appears (Figure 4). This dialog displays the contact information for the sister in need as well as her visiting teachers. A list of the sisters in the ward (minus the sister in need and her visiting teachers) are also shown in the "Suggested Sisters" list. Both the visiting teacher and suggested sister list show the last date that they took a meal to someone in the ward. This will help the user ensure that they do not ask a sister who has provided a meal in the recent past.

Once a sister is selected, she can be added to the "Proposed Meals" list by selecting the appropriate "Add Selected" button. Error messages notify the user if a sister is not selected when the "Add Selected" button is pressed. Before the sister can be added to the "Proposed Meals" list, the program prompts the user for a date when the meal will be taken (Figure 5). Once a date is selected, the sister will be added to the "Proposed Meals" list (Figure 6).

The user can choose one of four actions to perform on the "Proposed Meals" list.

1. Remove an entry from the list using the "Remove Entry" button.
2. Edit the proposed meal date of an entry using the "Edit Entry" button.
3. Display the contact information for the proposed sister by selecting an entry.
4. Save the record using the "Save" button.

New Meal Record

Sister In Need

Name	Phone Number	Appt #
Doris Daily	252-827-1655	131

Suggested Sisters

Name		Last Meal Taken
Xochitl Xavier		1/1/2011
Ngan Navarrete		1/2/2011
Melia Milsap		1/3/2011
Lilian Lorence		1/4/2011
Sau Satter		1/5/2011

Add Selected

Visiting Teachers

Name		Last Meal Taken
Jeniffer Jost		2/13/2011
Silvana Sola		2/12/2011

Add Selected

Proposed Meals

Name		Date

Remove Entry

Edit Entry

Name	Phone Number	Appt #	Current

Save   Cancel

Figure 4 – New Record Dialog

Select Date

Please select a meal date.   4 / 9 /2011

Submit   Cancel

Figure 5 – Meal Date Dialog

Figure 6 – New Record Dialog with Populated Proposed Meals List

Record History

From the "Search" dialog the user can also choose to the view the meal history of a sister. After selecting the "History" button the user is presented with the "History" dialog (Figure 7). This dialog serves three main purposes:

1. Display a complete meals received history for a given sister.
2. Allow removal of a meal from a sister's record.
3. Allow for manual entry of a new meal to a sister's record.

The user may need to add or remove a meal entry if a sister who was previously entered is unable to provide a meal and another is chosen in her place. The "Remove Entry" button is used to remove the selected entry. If the "Add Entry" button is selected an "Add Entry" dialog appears (Figure 8) prompting the user for the name and date of the new entry. The name selection operates in the same as on the "Record Search" dialog. Once the history has been edited properly, the "Save" button will save all changes to the record.

Figure 7 – New Record Dialog with Populated Proposed Meals List

Figure 8 – Add Entry Dialog

Reports

The main report function will generate a full report of the meal history for a selected time frame. This report is accessed from the "Record Search" dialog by pressing the "Reports" button. After pressing this button the user is presented with a date selection dialog box (Figure 9). The default time frame is 2 weeks back from the current date (for a bi-monthly report) but other dates can be selected. Once a date range has been selected the user can press the "View Report" to view a copy of the report (Figure 10). The report is also saved in the same folder location as the excel file.

The "Email Report" button can be used to email the report to the Compassionate Service Committee Chair or any other email address. Unfortunately at the time of this writing this button is not yet programmed.
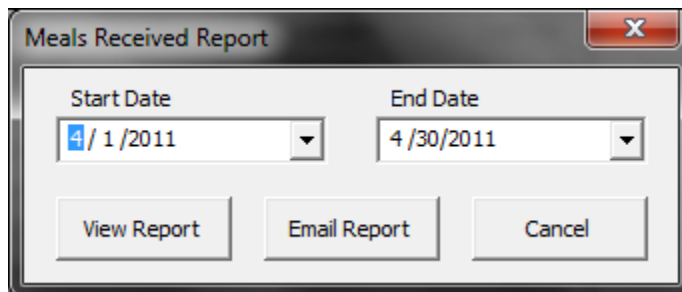

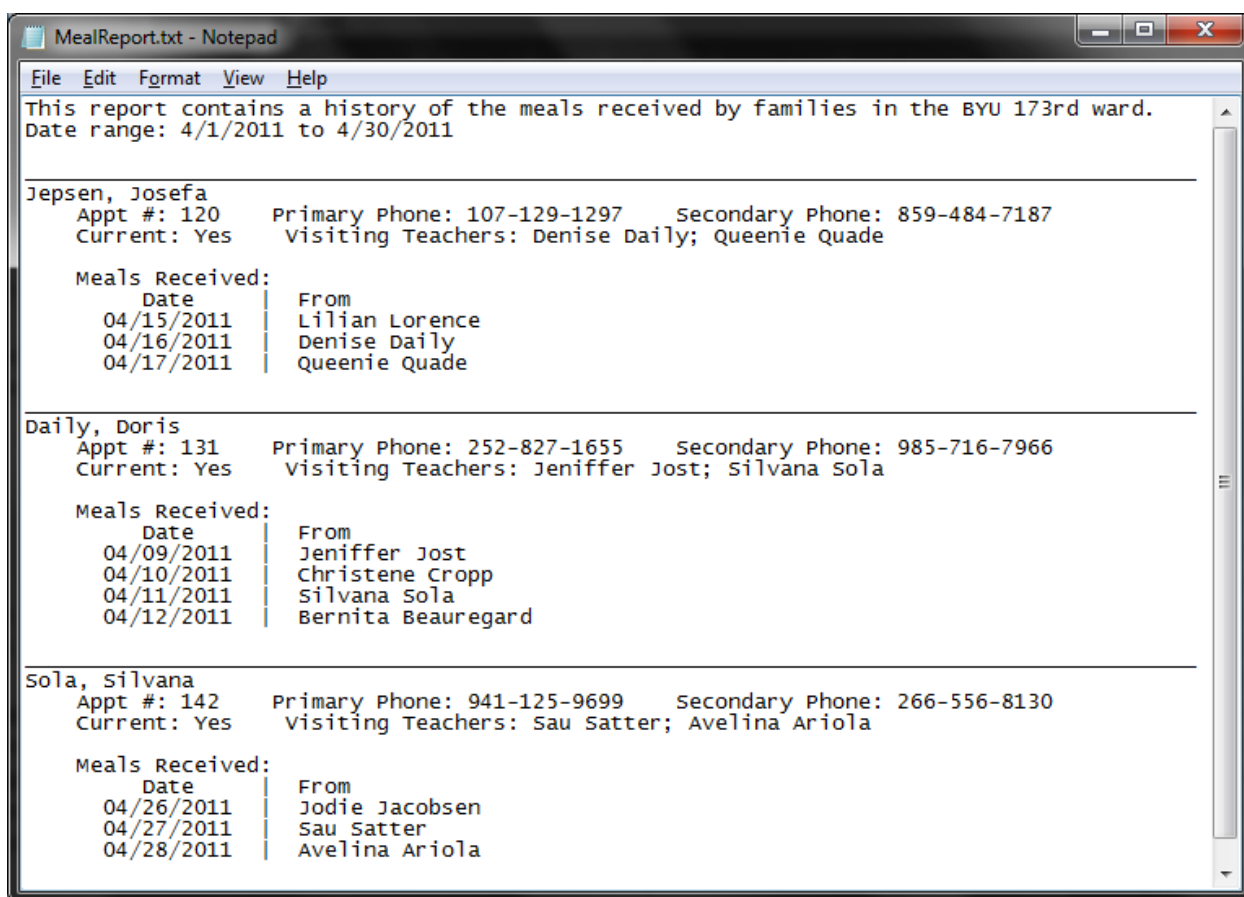Figure 9 – Meals Received Report Date Selection Dialog
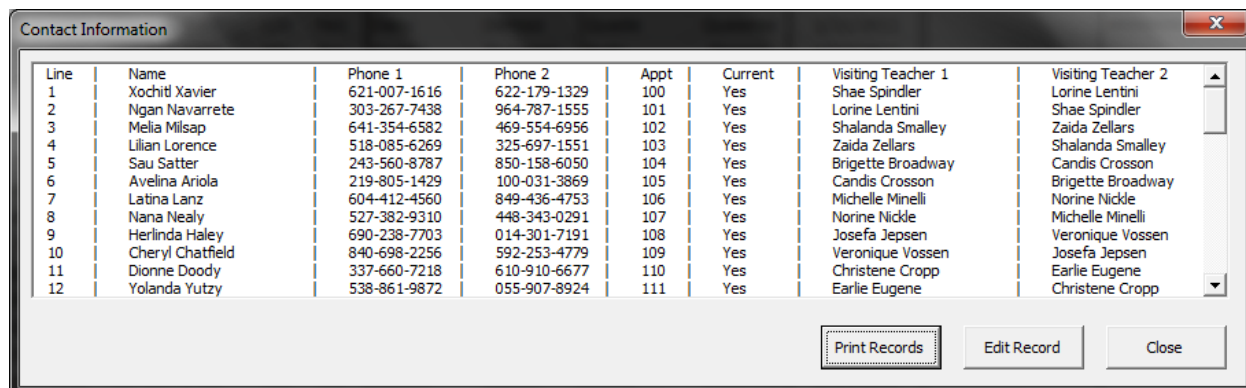

Figure 10 – Meals Received Report

Sister Report

It may be necessary for the meal coordinator to view or print a full contact list of sisters in the ward. For this reason a second button on the ribbon brings up a full Relief Society contact list (Figure 11). This list also includes the current vising teachers for each sister in the ward. From here, the "Edit Record" button brings up the "Edit Record" dialog from which the user can edit the phone number, apartment number,

current ward member status or visiting teachers (Figure 12). The visiting teacher edits are made in the same way as in the "Record Search" dialog.

From the "Contact Information" dialog the user can also choose to print the list by pressing the "Print Record" button. Unfortunately this button has not been programed at the time of this writing.
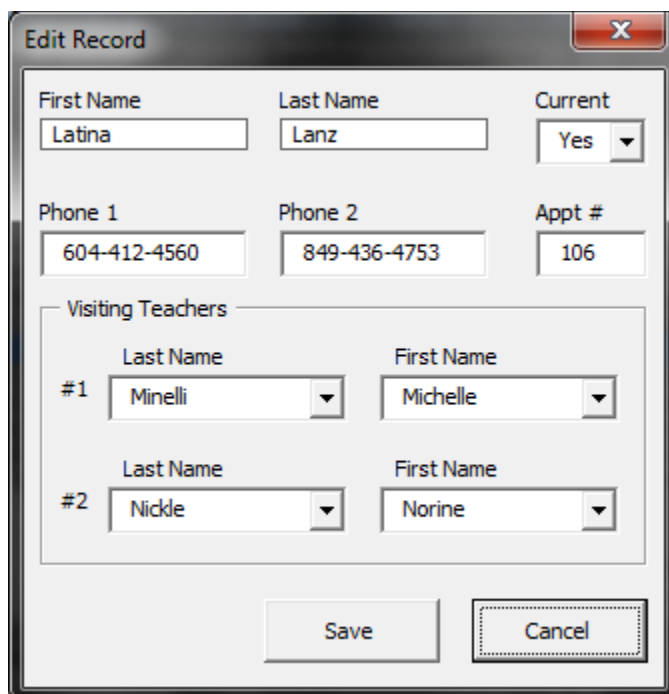
It should be noted that since my entire ward is currently in one group of apartment buildings only the apartment number is shown. A future variation of the program could include the full address of each sister.

Figure 11 – Relief Society Contact List

Figure 11 – Relief Society Contact Edit Record Dialog

LEARNING POINTS

- The main learning point is that proper planning is critical to be able to create a successful project. This is particularly important when forms are involved. I began programming based on a mental concept of how I wanted it to work. As the project progressed and became more complex, I found myself re-doing a lot of code and wasting a lot of time thinking about better ways to make it work. By spending a few hours up front to plan each form, the interactions between forms and the design of the underlying spreadsheets, I could have saved considerable time.
- The major constraint for the project was time despite working on the project for three weeks. As stated previously, proper planning could have lessened the impact of the deadline. Had more time been available, I would have included the following items:
    - Ability to email the meal report.
    - Ability to print the contact List.
    - Ability to automatically update the contact list from the ward list on LDS.org.
    - Ability to update the visiting teacher list from an electronic copy of the visiting teaching report.

    As this program is very useful to my wife in her calling as Relief Society Meal Coordinator, I plan on adding the email and print feature in the near future.

- To understand how to perform some of the functions used in the project, I spent considerable time performing Google searches. I found this to be an invaluable resource in learning new techniques. However, I also noticed that you find what you ask for. There may be a better way to perform a task than how you think it should be done but this will not be apparent unless you spend considerable time performing a more general search.
    There are some tasks I would do differently if I were to do the project over. One of these changes would be to use a formatted Word document for the report. Another would be to not use the list box as much. A lot of the time programming was spent populating, formatting and reading data from the list box. I am not sure how else I would display the data but I would use more support from hidden sheets or more arrays to store temporary data.
- One of the more useful controls I came across was the date picker. This was clean, easy to use and added a great deal of functionality to the program. Unfortunately this control is not always present in all installations of Excel.

Despite some frustration, the project was very enjoyable and I feel I learned a great deal.

*Please note that the data contained in the spreadsheet is fictional as I did not think it appropriate to distribute the ward contact list. It was an enjoyable side project to write a program to generate random names, phone numbers, apartment numbers and visiting teachers for the submission.