# Spent Instruction and Discussion Guide

As part of this collaboration between LifeWise StL and Sharefest, students are invited to participate in an online poverty simulation and subsequent discussion. Since we will not do the simulation in person, LifeWise StL staff wanted to provide you with some details that will be helpful to you as you complete the simulation. First and foremost - while the simulation may or may not reflect your own reality - **we ask that you make decisions as if they were your own, based on your values, education, experience, etc.**
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<p style="text-align:center; color:red; font-weight:bold">***PLEASE READ UNTIL THE END BEFORE STARTING SIMULATION!***</p>

To begin, we wanted to share a couple pieces of information about the simulation, accessed by visiting www.playspent.org:

1. Based on decisions that you will be invited to make, we know that you are a single parent with a college degree who owns a pet. We do not know why you are currently looking for employment. We estimate - based on a math question that some of you may get (not everyone will get the same questions) - that your child is middle school age. With that in mind, with the exception of the initial ones, not everyone will have the same questions.
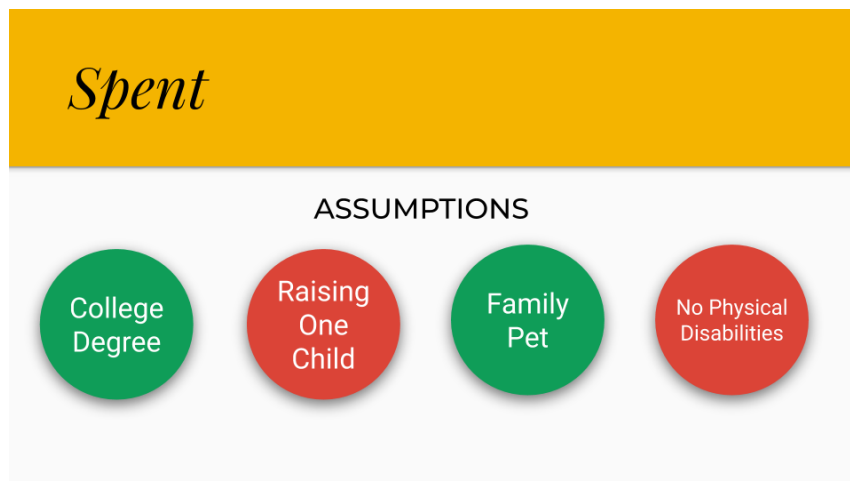
2. You are starting out with money in your pocket ($1,000). If you find that you are **in need of additional money**, you can get additional money by breaking your child's piggy bank, donating plasma, or taking out a payday loan (signified by the icons circled below). To view job options, use the arrows to scroll through the options and then click on the rectangular job description to select the job you want. **Please note that you cannot go back by clicking the "back" key in your browser - it will start you over from the beginning!**


3. The first few slides involve **selecting a job, choosing between health insurance options and identifying where you want to live**. For where you will live, you can click on the house (per the below image) and slide it left to right to **change the amounts** that you spend on housing and transportation.
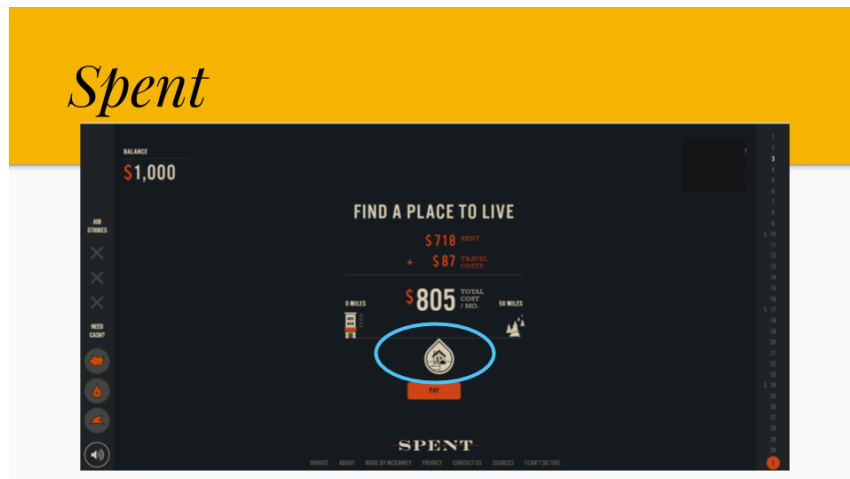
4. As you progress through the simulation, you may need to visit the **grocery store** to shop for food. **Keep in mind that this will need to last you for "a few weeks" and that you're not just feeding yourself but a middle school aged child.**
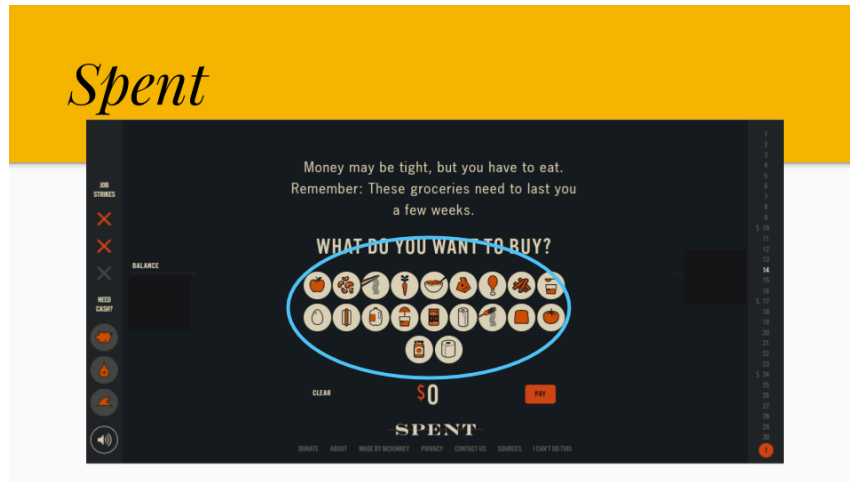
5. You may be given the option to **"ask a friend for help"** via FB or Twitter. You can select this option without actually logging into those platforms. Simply close the pop up window after you select the "ask a friend" option.
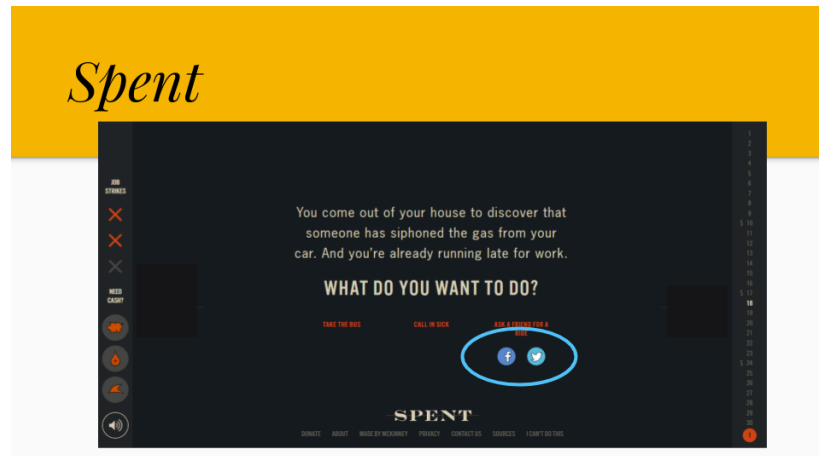
6. When you reach the end of the month (or run out of money, whichever comes first), please note your **remaining bank balance** as well as your **debts**. If you hover over the orange circles (pictured below) you will see any outstanding debt that you have.
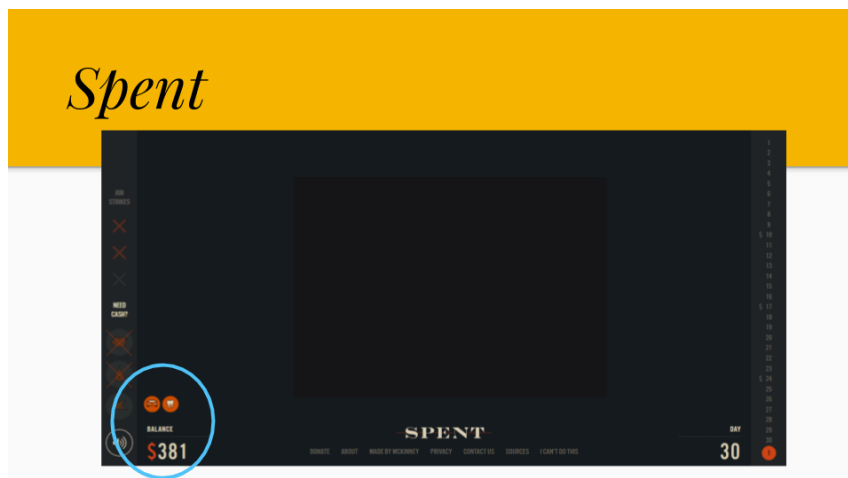
7. You are more than welcome to do the simulation more than once. **If it is helpful, please feel free to use the worksheet [here](#) to document your decisions**. Otherwise, we will look forward to conversation with you shortly after you complete the simulation!

Discussion Questions:

What was your most difficult decision to make and why? What made it difficult?
(Take time to ask the prompts and let each person share what they chose and explain why they made that decision. Follow up by asking if that's the same decision that they would have made without money or time restraints.)

- What happened to your car?
- What happened to your pet?
- Did you have any health concerns?
- Were you able to pay your bills?
- How did your landlord treat you?
- How do you think your child is feeling?
- How is your health (mental and/or physical)

What surprised you the most about the simulation or one of the decisions you made?

Did you have autonomy over the decisions you made? Why or why not?

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