

Research Assistant Reflection

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1. **What did serving migrant and refugee families teach you about trust, advocacy, and the barriers that families face when trying to access basic educational resources in Chicago? Reflect on specific moments of challenge or growth and consider how this experience shaped your understanding of educational equity.**

Through serving migrant families, I am reminded of the importance of selflessness in today's society. Seeing those in class also selflessly giving to those in need displays the desire of human beings to support and care for one another in a community. These experiences have also pushed me to further realize the immense importance of why students, no matter their race, class, or background, are entitled to quality education.

2. **How did your role in collecting and distributing clothing, raising funds, and organizing community support shift the way you understand mutual aid and grassroots organizing? What emotions or insights came up for you as you took on responsibility for meeting urgent needs in real time?**

Through distributing clothing, raising funds, and organizing community support, I was able to understand the good that is brought forth from mutual aid and grassroots organizing. Having people, who may not know each other, nor who they are assisting, come together to support those in their time of need was a wonderful experience. Through these experiences I feel as if I was able to, at least, contribute to assisting families in need.

3. **Of the three research studies you contributed to, which one resonated most with your personal story or the stories of people you know? How did participating in this research project impact the way you view the role of data in shaping public understanding and policy?**

Of the three research studies, the one that resonated the most with both my own story and the stories of those I know was the study on the value of a college degree. I am surrounded, in my own life, by primarily first and second generation Americans who have almost all, at one point in their lives, run a successful business without a college degree. If I were to ask any of these people what they thought of the importance of acquiring a college degree, they would most likely tell me that it isn't necessary unless you are completely sure of what you want to do in life. Through participating in this research project, I was able to more fully understand how data helps a person to more thoughtfully and thoroughly understand those in the world around us.

- 4. How did this experience challenge or confirm what you believed about the power of community organizations in addressing complex issues like job searching, educational access, and technology in daily life? What do you now see as the strengths and limitations of this kind of work?**

In all honesty, I didn't know too much about the work community organizations did in order to help address issues such as job searching, educational access, and technology, before my participation in it. Through this experience, I am better able to understand that community organizations are an effective tool in quickly supporting those in need. Some limitations for this kind of work may be the reliance on volunteers and a lack of funding.

- 5. Looking back at your time with ChiEAC, how do you think this experience shaped your personal goals, sense of purpose, or vision for the future? What skills or perspectives do you hope to carry forward—and how do you hope to keep supporting others?**

As I look back on my time with ChiEAC, I am grateful to be a part of something that directly impacts those in need in this community. The perspectives and skills I hope to carry forward are a deep desire to support those in need with a selfless attitude, especially as a Christian. I have been, personally, learning these past few months to serve in the manner that Christ served in while He was on Earth. Being able to participate in serving my community has helped me better understand what it means to selflessly serve.