Serving migrant and refugee families taught me how big the gap is financially between them and a family that has been in the United States for generations. Also the amount of clothes that we donated opened my mind to the fact that I can still have everything I want on my end while helping someone. I believe people tend to think that laws and actions of aid and help makes their life worse to make someone else better, but participating in this proved that wrong and shifted the way I see advocacy. This also opened my eyes to educational equity. I have so many doors to choose from that lead to opportunity, whereas we learned right away that in the neighborhoods they move into and the schools they attend, they depend on aid and support to get opportunities.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph most people think that to help others reach the same or similar level as you, you need to worsen or lower yourself. But that is simply not the case, as a class we collected 500 lbs of clothes and not one of us was struggling afterwards. Also participating in this put into perspective how much can be accomplished through grassroot organization. After participating in this for only one school semester or 16 weeks, i've noticed what an impact can be made when a community comes together. In this case it was my soc-103 classroom. In terms of emotions alongside learning about all the stuff going on in this world and then first hand being able to help with this ChiEAC, my sympathy for others grew and my acknowledgement for inequality expanded.

Of the three research studies I contributed to, the clothes donation resonated with me the most. The reason for this is I've seen first hand immigrants in my community that look so out of place and different due to their new arrival. There's even a term for it, “that person looks fresh off the boat” is thrown around when you see someone who is clearly an immigrant. As ive mentioned in other responses in this class, younger people tend to develop insecurities and emotional issues due to their social acceptance and experiences which I feel can stem from feeling very out of place or less of themselves compared to their surroundings. When I saw how much clothes was needed, it made those stories you hear about people struggling in the winter and people not having adequate resources go from fairytale or out of touch, to reality and right in front of you. When you hear the expression, “help others” or “donate to those in need” it seems obvious but also broad. But now after participating in this I feel more educated and understanding of the actual circumstances that are so close to home.

This experience confirmed what I believed about the power of community organizations tackling complex issues. I've always heard the expression, “it takes a village” but this gave tangible experience to back up the claim. What strengthens this kind of work is everyone buying into the idea that they can make a change, and what can weaken it is people not all being on the same page for advocacy and change.

Looking back at this experience I think it shaped my personal goals for the better. In the sense that I now have a deeper understanding of social issues and community outreach. I also now will go about my life with a more optimistic and progressive mindset when I see these kinds of issues. I hope to keep supporting issues in the micro by donating and involving myself in any sort of community organizations combating complex issues, but also in the macro I will support political policies and politicians that will help these issues in the long run and in a more broad picture.