

Project Capstone: [Kyla Hickcox Capstone Project.m4a](#)

Rainbow House is a nonprofit children's emergency shelter and advocacy group. The administrative side contains forensic interview rooms and compassionate family advocates that fight to protect the rights of abused children in a criminal justice system that often revictimizes them. My volunteer work, though minor for the organization, was profoundly impactful for me. I spent every day differently, never knowing what I was doing until the moment I arrived. I spent hours organizing supplies, clothes, and shoes in the shelter storage. I disinfected toys, sorted through donations, and packed baskets for the yearly auction. One of the most challenging parts was the neverending duties; it's hard to feel accomplished with your work when there are a million things left on the list. Sometimes it felt disappointing that everything constantly got



disorganized and cluttered, even after having been sorted through a week before.

But the true burden of working at Rainbow House is witnessing the worst moments of children and their families' lives. To watch a mom come to the front desk teary-eyed before even stepping in the door or shred dozens of old files that you know contain horrifying stories of abuse and neglect. It is truly heartbreaking. But simultaneously with

all the heartache, there are kids in the shelter drawing pictures with a roof over their heads and children in the interview rooms bravely fighting for justice. Knowing that my presence alone may impact a child's day is a fulfilling experience and is unique to jobs that fight for others.

Social work is often draining, thankless, and stressful, but those with the passion and drive to make an impact become a lifeline for many in need. My supervisor Ethan is a prime



example of that passion. He works full-time while in his senior year of college but still shows his work dedication and continuous effort, training volunteers, doing outreach, and so many odd jobs. The power of social work is incredible and has inspired me greatly. When I started volunteering in October, I thought I wanted to be a lawyer of intellectual property.

And now, I'm not sure what field of law I want to go into, but I do know that I want to find a way to contribute to nonprofits like

Rainbow House and use my education to further a cause larger than myself. I'm incredibly grateful for the tiring and frustrating days at Rainbow House. They enlightened me about how unimaginably difficult it is to have a career in the care field. It is not simply the fact that these programs exist; Sierra, Brenda, Dakota, and every other devoted person make these programs meaningful. Because of Rainbow House, I have gained invaluable workplace experience I can

carry into my career and, even more important, growth in my character I can carry throughout my life.