

## Final Narrative

The SEF has had a huge impact on this past semester. For the first eight weeks, my studies were enriched by my work with Dr. Schatteman. This project had two sides to it. The primary one was the research/data analysis side which consisted of a brief research project. I used NCCS data to analyze the state of the nonprofit sector in Aurora, IL. I was given a crash course to the NCCS data file by one of the NNGO graduate assistants, Danielle Hoske. This in itself changed the course of the rest of my studies at NIU. Our relationship was initiated before we went on a Huskie Alternative Break to Memphis. I was one of the site leaders and she was my trip's chaperone. She also suggested taking a statistics class to grow my skillset when looking at data in the future as a nonprofit professional. She also opened my eyes to the possibility of graduate school at NIU. This research project also supplemented my studies of the nonprofit sector in the classroom by giving me an opportunity to look into nonprofit organizations and their information in a community that I am personally connected to. I grew up near Aurora and went to high school there. This research project also helped me to think about my future CAPSTONE course that I will be taking next spring. I now have an idea for a possible research project that builds off this project. The second half of my work with Dr. Schatteman is centered around Thrive Collaborative Center. Thrive was created as a city initiative by the City of Aurora and its purpose is to support nonprofit organizations and social entrepreneurs by providing space, workshops, seminars, and resources at an affordable price. Since this project was done to support Thrive's mission, Dr. Schatteman also provided executive coaching for Thrive. When she had meetings, I went with to Thrive and took notes during these meeting sessions with local nonprofits. I loved every second of it. It was very insightful to hear from nonprofit leaders and to see the back and forth discussion between them and Dr. Schatteman. I was also invited to give

input myself, so it was the first time that I have been able to apply what I have learned from my studies so far to a real scenario. Unfortunately, I do not have many pictures from my project. The picture on the next page is from the soft opening of Thrive. I'm in the blue sweater chatting with Julie Ann O'Connell from NIU and Adrienne Holloway from Thrive. The next two pictures on the last page are from the grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for Thrive. I'm wearing the grey dress. The first picture on this page is from a tour led by Adrienne Holloway of the upstairs portion of the building. The second image is of the ribbon cutting ceremony that night. Lastly, the funding received for this project has given me the opportunity to spend time on the two halves of this project without worrying about how I could spend my time working myself. In sum, this project has helped to shape my future plans, allowed me to build off my classroom knowledge, and given me a memorable experience that I thoroughly enjoyed.





