My internship experience here at Hamilton Family Center: First Avenues, has provided me with a better understanding of the type of work I want to do after I graduate. Here at Hamilton Family Center, the main focus is to help families break the cycle of homelessness by efficiently moving them back into more stable homes, or simply help them find shelter until they can get back on their feet. They provide different types of housing ranging from emergency, transitional, and permanent housing. Considering that every family has a different situation and setback, having these different options available help more families start their venture to become more independent and safe. Hamilton also teams up with other organizations that offer services they do not to make sure that all of their clients basic needs are met. Some of the organizations include SFUSD, Crissy Fields, and other non-profit agencies.

Although I may not have gotten in depth into the cases here dealing with low-income families, I have helped this organization in other ways. I have learned that I do not need to work with people directly to help them, but just packing things, doing data entry, or making phone calls can help them in a tremendous way. It was great to intern during this semester because of the holidays. I was able to go to the Food Bank and see what it takes to become a buyer, and how the operation works. I also packed over 100 food bags for the clients at Hamilton for their thanksgiving dinner. This thanksgiving holiday has been different from any other thanksgiving I have experienced. After giving families these food bags, I was able to see their appreciation in the work that people to do for them. Many families showed how thankful they are and they also vocalize how much we have helped them during this time of togetherness for the holidays. That alone has made me feel like this type of work is what I need to do; help families in need so they can live comfortably.

Another reason why I believe having programs such as Hamilton help our community is that most outcomes of the clients here are a positive one. One of the projects I did is the Hamilton Assessment Tool. What I did was call clients who have exited the program from 6 months ago, 12 months ago, and 24 months ago to see if they are still stably housed after exiting the program. Although majority of the ones who left 12-24 months ago were hard to reach due to phone lines being disconnected, majority of the clients I got a hold of has reported they are still stably housed. In some case, a client reported she is in process of becoming a homeowner, and another was making about $40,000 a year. Outcomes like this make the work that people here do, all worthwhile. Although not every case came out to be a positive one, some reported they are still homeless and moving from city to city. In reports like that, and actually speaking to these clients made me feel more passionate about this type of work. It makes me want to work harder for people who are less fortunate and to be more thankful for the life that I have.

I thought this experience was very informative. It opened more doors for me as well as reassured me that this type of work is what I want to do. I am more passionate about helping others now that I have an idea of what it takes to be in this field. I was able to learn about different types of family situations, and learn what resources were available for these families. Through this experience, I am more confident of entering the “work world” with the knowledge I gained at Hamilton Family Center. Also, being a part of the team, it offered me the opportunity to put the education I gained from school into practice at an organization.