Reflection #3

       Reflecting on my experience during this course, it was vastly different from other courses offered because it took a hands-on approach towards civic engagement. Introducing a customer completely shifted my mindset from an individual perspective to one that also takes into account the perspective of another. Therefore, there should be a clear distinction between the customer's needs and our own needs, with the former weighing more. Our team had to be aware of what SafeChat SV ultimately wanted us to do as well as the restrictions they placed, such as restricting access to confidential information. Thus, there has to be an emphasis on communication between our group and our partner to gain feedback on if our current project progress aligns with SafeChat SV's wants, which was accomplished through bi-weekly meetings.

       SafeChat SV seeks to provide aid and resources to their critical customers, which are those experiencing or have experienced domestic violence. Our team kept their critical customer in mind throughout our project development for each branch (portability, functionality, and marketing) by understanding them as a user of our product. Although our team kept a main goal in mind of helping to create a bigger impact on domestic violence survivors within Silicon Valley, each branch had a more specific goal. The portability branch focused on the transfer of the main site to a more mobile-friendly one for ease of access. The functionality branch sought to fix and add features of the main site to improve SafeChat SV's critical customer's experience. Finally, the marketing branch focused on outreach to build a bigger community.

       The process of creating or building upon SafeChat SV's technological resources with the critical customer's wants and needs in mind gave me a broader view of how the engineering building process can greatly benefit our society. This course offered me the opportunity to put into practice my engineering and project management skills, notably with project reiteration as well as practicing strong communication skills with our partner. For

example, the functionality branch had to communicate with our partner (and each other) in order to fully understand the limitations of their Wordpress website. Overall, the course provided me with invaluable personal skills because I was able to work with an actual customer with specific values rather than just my own individual values. Additionally, the chance to work with a team allowed me to think critically on each members' strengths and weaknesses as well as demonstrating teamwork with one another. Therefore, the dynamism between SafeChat SV's wants and being part of a team changes the main purpose of an individual project into one that is centered around community.