

## Internship Reflection by Parul Venkatesh

As a mom of two teenagers, I was nervous about being hired at such a matured age, and after a monumental career gap of 17 years, and if organizations would question me given the little experience I've had. Even as these job insecurities and worries were overwhelming, I remember how appreciative the Loaves & Fishes staff was when they realized that I was ready to work again.

I felt valued not just as an intern but as a part of their staff and movement of Loaves & Fishes as a whole. I can step back and really appreciate the professional and personal growth I experienced while interning. My manager, Hilary Nelson would take time to coach me despite having a very hectic and busy schedule and by doing so, fostered my personal growth. At every juncture, she made me feel valued, appreciated and empowered as an intern. Not to forget, Shelly Schmitz, Director of Corporate and Volunteer Engagement, always motivated me and was always appreciative of my work.

I noticed how welcoming, supportive, and empowering the nonprofit work culture of Loaves & Fishes is. I think one of the main reasons why I felt constantly empowered as an intern was because the nonprofit culture understands that each person's contribution and effort is valuable. Each employee, no matter your status or job title, is vital in promoting the cause that your organization fights for.

I gained a depth of insight and a foundation that will guide my career decisions in the future. I feel hopeful, motivated, and ready to relaunch and pursue my desired career.

I am tremendously thankful for the personal and professional growth I experienced while interning. I will always reflect on when looking to better myself as an employee and as an individual.

