

Personal Statement, September 2020
Nikhil Dharmaraj
Software Engineering Intern, Ameelio

Dear JJCF Board Members,

I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the support of my internship this past summer at Ameelio. Over the past few months, I have had the opportunity to learn many incredible new things, all of which have further fueled my passion for technology-oriented social justice work in the future. Although my internship was limited by the virtual constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, I still found it an incredibly enriching experience. Specifically, I enjoyed the chance to intern at a smaller start-up organization, as I had more of an opportunity to collaborate hands-on with team members and dabble in various sub-projects (i.e. Nationwide Inmate Locator team, Social Media team, Letters Mobile team).

Before my internship, as a first-year student in college, I had experience working in industry-level software positions, conducting research in the arts and humanities, and studying the impacts of systemic racism on everyday life; however, broadly speaking, my future aspirations were muddled and disjointed. JJCF allowed me to gain clarity and crystallize my goals. Indeed, my work this past summer concretely amalgamated all my interests into one multi-faceted experience and instilled in me a deep conviction about what I aspire to do with my undergraduate years and beyond — that is, to work with technology as a tool of liberation for oppressed peoples.

Additionally, it was genuinely inspiring to be able to work alongside my bright co-interns and team leads — all of whom brought their own unique perspectives to the project at-hand. I am filled with gratitude towards JJCF that I was able to join a workplace composed of engineers and sociologists, designers and lawyers, advocates and product managers alike. The cross-disciplinary nature of Ameelio's work shined through in our teams, and I know I will carry the wonderful connections I made forward with me.

Sincerely, thank you so much for supporting me during this transformative summer. I feel extremely fortunate to have been able to gain field experience during my first summer of college, in the exact niche that calls me, and I deeply appreciate JJCF's role in funding this opportunity.

With regards,
Nikhil Dharmaraj
Harvard College '23