My final project is an exploration into the diversity of my small town Minnesota student body and the unique home lives each of my students lead. I wanted to see a different side of my students and visit their homes to learn more about what life is like for them when they leave school each day. To accomplish this, I worked in tandem with the school counselor who was able to suggest some families that fit my criteria. I selected families of various ethnic and socioeconomic groups as well as students that came from non English speaking households, and students that were dealing with a difficult life event (cancer, substance abuse, single parent, etc.). Upon sending a letter home and obtaining permission, I spent two weeks traveling to student’s homes after school to photograph them and was able to meet family members and get a small taste of their home lives.

With an audience of our class and viewers of my website in mind, the end result of this project was a photomontage created using Photoshop that features six families of students in front of their homes with other buildings and landmarks from our communities speckled in the background. I had hoped to use photos of as many as twelve families, but due to a sunset time of 4:30 and hectic schedules, I was only able to make it to six households. Using Romare Bearden's "The Block" as inspiration, I wanted the images to feel like they linked up together to symbolize how all the families in our community share common ground, yet lead completely different lives. As an educator, it's difficult to wrap my mind around giving each student the same education, when their home lives and support systems are vastly different. I created two different versions of my final image, one with a plain, muted filter that keeps the color uniform across the image, and the second with pops of color in a vibrant tribute to Bearden's collage work.