

How Feminist Camp Impacted Me

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I discovered Feminist Camp through a conversation shared over biscuits and gravy. During our weekly breakfast together, my friend Syna Pal, who works with the Newcomb Institute, described the program to me. She said it was an opportunity to network with feminist leaders in New York City and to learn more about how feminism can be incorporated into a professional career. I've been passionate about feminism since middle school, so I was immediately interested. When I found out I was accepted to attend Feminist Camp during June of 2023, I knew I had an eye-opening, unforgettable experience ahead of me.

Stepping out of my rideshare onto the streets of Brooklyn was like something out of a dream. I had never been to New York City before, and I was expecting to feel intimidated, but instead, I felt comfortable and ready to jump headfirst into the experience. My fellow Feminist Campers were incredibly intelligent, uplifting, and passionate. Throughout the week, we navigated the city together, learned from each other's perspectives, and formed lasting friendships in the process.

Each day of Feminist Camp was centered around a different theme- careers, justice, media, reproductive justice, and art. Though every day brought enlightening experiences, our reproductive justice-centered day was the most impactful to me. I study cell and molecular biology and I plan to attend medical school, so I was very interested in how I could incorporate feminism into my future career as a physician. During our reproductive justice day, we met with Fikayo Walter from Pregnancy Justice and leaders from the Reproductive Health Access Project. Pregnancy Justice is a non-profit organization that works to prevent anyone who is pregnant from losing their rights or autonomy due to their pregnancy. Fikayo discussed the ways in which Pregnancy Justice provides pro bono legal assistance to people who have been criminalized for using drugs and alcohol while pregnant. During our meeting with the Reproductive Health Access Project (RHAP), we explored common myths related to abortions and corrected these myths as a group. RHAP "[trains, supports, and mobilizes primary care clinicians to ensure equitable access to sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion,](#)" and as a tool to better understand what an early-term abortion looks like, we were shown the process of a vacuum aspiration abortion, performed on a papaya. Being able to see the tools used to perform this type of abortion was incredibly eye-opening for me. While growing up in Louisiana, I was surrounded by misinformation about the danger of early-term abortions, and my time with RHAP helped me to better understand this process.

Feminist Camp broadened my understanding of the meaning of feminism and how it can be applied to my future career and everyday life. I am extremely grateful for the connections and perspectives this program has given me, and I would highly recommend Feminist Camp to anyone passionate about feminism.