

From NOLA to NYC: My Feminist Camp Adventure

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Kelly Jackson newcomb@tulane.edu

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When I first applied for Feminist Camp, I was just looking for something exciting to do before my internship began. I had no idea what to expect, and after a late-night flight and an interesting cab ride with fellow camper, Claire Huff, I arrived at the hotel exhausted and a bit nervous for what the next few days would have in store for me. However, after the first breakfast at Amy's and officially meeting my fellow

campers, it quickly became clear this week would make a significant impact on me. The first day expanded my definition of feminist work and settled some of my nerves about going into the workforce as a rising senior. We spent the day learning how to incorporate feminism into business practices and the working for companies that align with feminist values. We spoke to female employees of different levels at Wasserman on navigating the workforce as women and work/life balance. We also ate lunch with Betty Reid Soskin, who taught the cohort valuable lessons about life, the importance of trying new things, and the many untraditional ways to explore my passions.

Learning these lessons opened up a whole new world of unlimited possibilities for me. As I am currently a Reproductive Justice intern with Women With A Vision in New Orleans, I had been looking forward to Day 2: "Reproductive Justice Day," which allowed me to explore the topic from different angles. It was interesting to discuss reproductive health and access with people from such diverse backgrounds, as where you are from and what identities you hold have a significant impact on your relationship to abortion access and can impact your role in the fight for equitable healthcare. In this vein, Jenessa Waiters, an energy healing teacher and Collective Rising Internship Fellow at Collective Power, imparted amazing advice on how you can shift your role in the movement throughout your life. She spoke on how every role in the movement is vital to its success and how your type of participation make look different at different stages in your life. We also learned some of the myths and facts surrounding abortion care from representatives from the Reproductive Health Access Project. Dr. Faso from the RHAP led a Papaya Workshop, where we were able to learn how abortions are performed, and were able to perform the procedure ourselves on a papaya. The hands-on aspect of the day was both fun and rewarding.

The following day, we went to Bluestockings Cooperative, "New York's only queer, trans AND sex worker run bookstore", where I bought a book for myself (*Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu) and a book for a good friend (*Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl* by Andrea Lawlor). Furthermore, our group was able to receive a Narcan training and Narcan kits, which are designed to help reverse an opiate overdose. This is an invaluable community resource that students should look into learning more about. After the bookstore, we had an intimate meeting with Feminist Press, which "is an educational nonprofit organization founded to advance women's rights and amplify feminist perspectives." Here we learned about feminist printing and publishing. This portion of the day appealed to my inner bookworm and caused me

to think deeper about the broad applications of feminist publishing outside of works centered around Gender and Sexuality Studies or Women's Studies. Later that afternoon, we watched director Paula Kwesin's short film [*Samira's Camera*](#), and we discussed her organization the 49% and the implications that media has on advancing women's rights.

In my downtime, I was able to bond with my fellow campers by going on afternoon walks exploring the city, going to happy hour, and swing dancing events. While wandering around the city together, we shared stories about our lives, explored our identities, and learned more about the world and feminist praxis through each other. To top off all of the amazing memories of the trip, my new friends and I had the pleasure of spending Thursday morning on a walking tour of Hasidic Williamsburg led by [*Frieda Vazel*](#). We were able to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the community and their culture. I was able to treat myself to their delicious food as well. This tour was one of my favorite parts of the camp and could only be topped by the afternoon activity, a roundtable style discussion at Gloria Steinmen's house. Gloria Steinem has been with me throughout my journey as a feminist, from discovering who she was when I realized how deeply I cared about women's rights to deciding to become a Gender Studies major my freshman year at Tulane. It was so meaningful to be able to discuss decarceration and its impact on women of color with her in her home. She was a kind, warm presence, and meeting her surpassed all of my wildest dreams. However, she was not the only strong feminist force in the room as we also accompanied by Rev. Sharon-White Harrigan, Executive Director of the Women's Community Justice Association and Rita Zimmers, Exective Director of Housing Plus. Sharon's personal connection to the topic as a formerly incarcerated woman herself and her expertise and dedication to serving and uplifting women was not only inspiring but also captivating. It is impossible to not be moved by her words (or laugh at her jokes). I'm pretty sure I was starstruck for the rest of the day.

Friday, the all-too-soon last day, was spent learning about and appreciating feminist art. We began our day at the MoMA with the *Our Selves: Photographs by Women Artists from Helen Kornblum* exhibit and then were given sometime to explore the museum, which I used to see the *Matisse: The Red Studio* exhibition. Our next stop was an art gallery where we learned about feminist artist, Anita Steckel and her daring work. After, we had lunch at Little Park overlooking the Hudson River. It was nice to have that time to reflect as a group on our time together. I enjoyed the many opportunities that Feminist Camp allowed me to experience, and I am thankful for the ways I have grown as a person because of it.