

Wrapping Up My Year At IWES

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Wrapping up my year-long experience at the Maternal and Child Health Division at the Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies, I'm grateful for the opportunity to have participated in the research project My Body. My Voice. My Baby. My Support., from transcribing interviews to developing literature to share the results of the study. Starting at IWES while the project was in its preliminary interview stages allowed me to follow along with its progress and to begin to see the final product of the research study during my last couple of months with the organization. In fact, a couple of my goals that my internship supervisor Meshawn Tarver and I discussed going into this

summer period were related to the final stage of the study, or presenting the research findings to the community. The first paper I worked on this summer was a focus group report, specifically to present the findings of the interviews discussing experiences with breastfeeding to the NOLA maternal and child health community. I then worked on creating the first draft of a journal article to publish and present our findings relating to breastfeeding experiences to the larger maternal and child health community. Accomplishing these two goals this summer allowed me to improve my academic writing skills and participate in educating both the New Orleans and general community about barriers birthing individuals face when attempting to breastfeed. Additionally, I was able to present a tangible product that encompassed the skills and knowledge I have gained through this internship.

Coming into this internship last August, I knew very little about the maternal and child health community in New Orleans and even less about the barriers that birthing individuals face when seeking support and education during the birthing process. While my work this summer mainly focused on barriers birthing individuals face when breastfeeding postpartum, I've learned a lot about other aspects of the birthing process, including issues with access to resources, communicating with healthcare providers, and education about birthing options. Working at IWES has been a large part of my sophomore year at college, and I hope that after my semester abroad, I will be able to once again work with the organization or the NOLA maternal and child health community as I continue through my undergraduate career at Tulane University. Thank you to Meshawn and the rest of the MCH team at IWES for such an amazing experience this past year, and I look forward to connecting again in the future!