

Ending My Summer at VAYLA New Orleans

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After interning remotely with VAYLA New Orleans, I have certainly learned a lot. While I didn't expect my first reproductive rights internship to be entirely online, I learned to adapt to unforeseen challenges, from technical difficulties on Zoom to becoming stir crazy during lockdown. Despite any number of challenges, I was able to grow as a reproductive justice advocate. I created infographics for the VAYLA social media that outlined self care practices, intimate partner violence, and gender

pronouns. I also got the chance to do work for a younger audience than usual, because our social media audience was intended to be for middle school to high school aged students. Our reproductive justice team also collaborated on Ginger Roots, a storytelling event that served as a safe space for young people to share their “first time,” including first dates, first kisses, and more. This storytelling event was a great success. Personally, I realized that storytelling can be a very healing experience. After Ginger Roots, we reflected as a team and brainstormed topics for the next storytelling event. It felt great to leave an impact on VAYLA that was not limited to this past summer. Furthermore, I feel like I’ve left a lasting impact on this nonprofit organization through our development of a reproductive justice youth program. Our curriculum is intended to be used for New Orleans youth once the ongoing pandemic has become less severe. Overall, my experience with VAYLA New Orleans has given me the opportunity to do amazing reproductive justice work for my community, and I can’t wait for my next internship with Newcomb Institute.