

# Starting my Work with NCI

Tue, 02/05/2019 - 00:00

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Hi everyone! My name is Harshitha, and I am a sophomore studying Public Health on the pre-medical track. This is my first semester as a Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health intern, and I am beyond excited for this experience. I am currently working as a research aide under Dr. Clare Daniel for a project proposal regarding sex education in the Louisiana public school system. As someone who has experienced this school system from the 1st grade until high school graduation, I saw firsthand how hesitant faculty members were to utter the words "sex" or

“condom,” so instead they spoke nothing of it at all. I was forced to learn about sexual health through my peers and the internet, but after experiencing this method of education for myself, I understood that this should not be the case. I feel grateful that I can help with a project that has personally affected me and still continues to affect my community, along with thousands of other adolescents.

As of right now, I am helping Dr. Daniel collect and organize contact information for every public school in Louisiana that could be surveyed about the extent of sex education in their school and the school system as a whole. Additionally, I find it intriguing that so many strong and diverse – both culturally and academically – individuals come together in this program to work for rights that they believe in. As I progress into this semester, I hope to learn more about everyone’s projects and about the realm of reproductive rights and health as a whole!