

Intersection of Civic Duty and Reproductive Justice: My First Weeks as a NOAF Intern

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Last year I happened to be walking down McAlister and saw a modest table labeled “New Orleans Abortion Fund.” I’d always had a passion for reproductive justice, but with the recent politics I was feeling, well, defeated. I ended up talking with Amy Irvin for quite some time about NOAF and the work they do. I began to feel inspired again, almost revived, and I wanted to make a difference as soon as I could. I took all of the flyers and reminded myself day after day to get involved. I was already a

clinic escort at that point but I knew that NOAF was a special organization.

Fast forward to this summer. As the dog days of summer rolled through I lazily scrolled through my social media and noticed Dr. Daniel had posted something about a Reproductive Rights and Health Internship. Albeit I was worried about my qualifications, I'm an engineering major, and my schedule, I knew that I should at least try (What's the worst that could happen?). A few weeks later, Amy called me for a phone interview and here I am, NOAF's Community Canvassing Intern.

To say I was apprehensive was an understatement. I had never canvassed before nor worked with a nonprofit. But after my first few weeks I can say with confidence that I love it. My main project is putting together canvassing events during the week of early voting in October and the day before the election in November. It's no surprise that the primary election (Nov. 6th) is crucial this year, and our goal for canvassing is to get people to the polls based on the terrible statistics for Louisiana women. In fact, our catchphrase is "Louisiana: The Hardest Place to be a Woman" because, well, it is. In terms of abortion access, something I've learned much about since starting, there are only 3 abortion clinics in the entire state, which means 97% of LA women living in parishes without a clinic.

There are many more restrictive, inadequate laws in place to keep Louisiana difficult for women, which is why voting is so important. Change only occurs when we want it to; democracy is in the hands of the people. In these first weeks I've met a ton of amazing, dedicated people and I can't wait to meet many more. I'm excited for NOAF Get Out The Vote (GOTV) canvassing and the change that we can bring.

Image shows yours truly (in the vulva and on the right) at NOAF's 5th Annual Sex Ed Bingo at Bayou Beer Garden. Safe to say we got some interesting looks from others at the restaurant.

****Any interested in canvassing please email me at intern@neworleansabortionfund.org**

And remember, #GeauxVote!