

Working with Women with a Vision

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The past month at WWAV has been an incredibly valuable experience in which I've learned more about the women of color who have shaped New Orleans and in the process, more about myself as a person. The work I've done so far has focused on closing the gaps that often exist in feminist literature so that the young women of color in New Orleans can know that they are not alone in their life experiences, that their lives matter, and that they can choose to follow in the paths of the women who came before them as well as blaze their own trails in their personal fights for justice and equity. For about three weeks I have been speaking to Black women in New

Orleans, sifting through media, and scouring the resources of libraries and research centers to bring to light the stories of Black female-identifying people from New Orleans who have contributed and still are contributing to the betterment of their communities within the city. This effort is part of a larger project that celebrates Women's History Month (March) and seeks to educate young New Orleanian women of color on the work that other women who look like them have done to fight against and dismantle unjust systems of oppression that directly and indirectly relate to reproductive rights.

The conversation this project seeks to start is one that is crucial if we are to make progress in the field of reproductive rights and resolve issues such as reproductive health inequities across all identities. Because the fact of the matter is, different women face different challenges that affect them daily and in turn shape their reproductive health. We currently live in a country where although many of us have the same rights on paper, those words aren't reflected in our everyday reality. The way our various identities intersect determine not only the state of our reproductive health, but also whether or not we receive justice when our rights are violated, and even how we define terms such as "reproductive health" and "reproductive justice." The experiences of all women are valid and important, and must be treated as such if we are to truly make progress.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to move forward with this project and hear the stories and ideas of the young women who will create our future as they learn from the women of our past and present whose accomplishments have too often gone unrecognized.