

The second semester of my freshman year, my educational experience took a dramatic change. I felt I was a "good" student who applied myself enough to get As and Bs to not be a deficit theory that my K-12 experience in Long Island and Atlanta seemed to push. I knew I should get good grades, assimilate and be in honors courses but my reasoning was not yet confirmed for why and I was never engaged in the classroom and my community as I was after this semester. I took Honors English 2 with Dr. Fadem that semester, in the Spring of 2012. For the first time in a long time, I had a teacher, a Professor who began to help me understand the importance of not only reading the words in books, but reading the world around me. Meaning, my professor was teaching culturally relevant pedagogy, relating her class to our everyday lives while making me socially conscious. We read *Let the Great World Spin* by Colum McCann which influenced me to write a research paper on the inequalities of socioeconomic statuses in America. I always look at this research paper as a catalyst in my academic timeline because I began to understand evermore why I wanted to become an educator.

That same semester, Farin and Dr. Fadem organized "99 Voices for Trayvon Martin" which was the first panel I ever sat in on. I wore a hoodie to show my solidarity with the call for justice in Trayvon Martin's death and listened to the panelists discuss racial profiling and social injustices in my community. Little did I know this was not a typical panel, students made this panel take place, and students were part of this dialogue. The open mic sessions literally caused me to have tears in my eyes because my academic peers and I could personally relate to Trayvon's murder. This public dialogue that I witnessed, was the beginning of my enlightenment in being an activist of social justice. This social justice task force also inspired me into becoming part of the cohort of KCC Reads. Being a part of KCC reads allowed me to partake in the KCC reads cohort panel at, "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks: Annual Student Conference." I

helped raise awareness of the woman behind the HeLa cells. The African American woman who was invisible in the history of the HeLa cells, which were used to develop important vaccines such as; Polio, cancer meds, in vitro, gene mapping, and cloning. Even though I'm at Brooklyn College, I still participate in the program.

I also had the opportunity to participate in Suzanne Lacey's Between the Door and the Street with Dr. Fadem, Brittany and Zanib. Us with hundreds of other women discussing the most provocative issues facing women today was enthralling. Knowing that we were helping shape thousands of people walking around and listening to what we were saying, like bringing to light what is feminism, the feminism of poverty and more it was just sensational. At the time of Suzanne Lacey's event I had started my journey at Brooklyn College. This was an exciting step that also helped me realize the importance of being a social agent in the world around me. At Brooklyn College I was asked to present in a panel and because of my experience in KCC. I was so excited to spread the importance of bilingual education for emerging bilinguals and others. In addition, I recently read Pedagogy of the Oppressed and because of my civic engagement with Dr. Fadem I was able to digest Freire's work. When he writes about praxis, I saw the importance of my actions but realized the need to reflect more on my social activism. I noticed that Dr. Fadem fulfills praxis in her classroom spaces and beyond.

To further reflect I have a blog where I write poetry and prose about social justice. My educational journey has been so prosperous because of my civic engagement at KCC.

Another Poem

*To advocate for natural rights*

*For a race that of only one exists*

*But most only assume by the shade of my skin, my hair, my appearance, my shape*

*You can believe that discrimination isn't encrypted in our mind*

*Through our everyday life we always exclude*

*This is not another race poem or debate about discriminations. Invisibility exists!*

*Sometimes we close our eyes or say we love all.*

*Do we love all?*

*Is there a cure,*

*sounds unfathomable since not one can be pure.*

*I ask that we only learn more*

*Do not stay within your circle, expand.*

*Maybe change can come,*

*with a new plan...*

As a future educator My goal is to become an elementary educator, I aim to guide young scholars in my community. As an Afro-Latina as a human I feel it is my duty to help urban education programs grow into outlets where children can gain the skills to become; positive, versatile, critical thinkers. Regardless of a child's background or socio economic status: they are entitled to gain a promising, strong educational foundation that will inspire them to acquire a love for school. After receiving my B.A. I plan to continue my education in a Master's Degree program of either Education or Sociology. In addition, one of my long term career goals is to obtain my Ph.D in Urban Education, become a professor and teach future educators. Throughout my career, I aspire to help change people's lives for a positive more promising future. To change these lives I have to guide them to be social agents and read the world around them, to challenge the norm and relate their worlds with academia. It's amazing how I found myself through civic engagement and I am eager to help those who are lost in the myths of society.