Empowering Community

Jordan Perry MC ’21

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After taking the course Sickness and Health in African American History, Jordan Perry MC ’21 was inspired to seek a summer internship with an organization championing the health and wellbeing of the African American community. An environmental studies major focusing on human health and reproductive justice, Jordan was excited to find the Los Angeles-based organization Black Women for Wellness (BWW).

“BWW stood out to me for many reasons. The holistic approach they take toward empowering black women and young girls was refreshing,” Jordan says, referring to the organization’s array of programming and wellness initiatives. “I wanted to be part of their mission and felt I could learn a lot about coming up with creative solutions to confront structural issues in the community.”

A Domestic Summer Award (DSA) enabled Jordan to pursue the eight-week internship. A component of Yale’s financial aid program, the DSA provides students with a $4,000 grant to engage in otherwise unpaid or underfunded work at a nonprofit or similar organization in the United States.

At BWW, Jordan created an educational pamphlet for beauticians informing them of ways to reduce their exposure to toxic chemicals often found in black hair care products. Her internship culminated in leading “Curls and Conversation,” a workshop for women to trade advice on finding safer, healthier alternatives for themselves and their clients.

“I want to do more in environmental and reproductive justice,” explains Jordan. “The DSA made it possible for me to spend the summer with this incredible organization. From outreach and engagement to meeting with partner organizations and local leaders, I learned firsthand what it takes to make meaningful change in the community.”

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