

Meet Janay.

Promising Futures Engagement: 2011-2012 peer educator

High School Alumna: School without Walls, Class of 2013

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Poem 1: Experiencing Identity

<i>It Just Happens</i>	
<p>I am African American I have more African American friends Never limited to that When you go to a HBCU You get all these ideas of your culture that you never had before People coming from this part of the country People coming from that part of the country You have your opinion Listen to other opinions "Hmm. I kind of see it this way." You analyze what you already thought Compare it to somebody else's Maybe you have a different opinion Not the original one you had Makes you think It can be positive</p> <p>At one point Everybody has judged somebody When exposed to different people, different situations You don't understand You talk to people You open up your mind Become less judgmental</p> <p>The way I perceive people has gotten better Opened my eyes a little more Being a peer educator I dealt with so many different people Didn't have the same background as me Though we were both urban youth They are different from me</p>	<p>What I was doing They saw I would talk about it "Oh really, that sounds kind of cool" I enjoyed being a peer educator People found out</p> <p>When I was with other peer educators Everybody got along They had a good time They like what they were doing They liked new information Being able to tell it to other people</p> <p>Whatever you say to other people Somebody might pick up on it Tell somebody else</p> <p>Get thoughts out there Do stuff on your own Seminars at your school Spread information to other youth Be outgoing Gonna have to deal with people Make the information relatable for your peers Not always seriousness Have to entertain them somehow That's where the funniness comes in</p> <p>Whatever my interest I shined and stood out Before I realized it I was into science At the chemistry club meetings</p>

<p>Sharing knowledge with each other We can still connect</p> <p>I like interacting with people Share knowledge with others We talk about sexual health, violence, sexually transmitted infections Warning people Handing out condoms It's natural I don't think about it Just happens Being a peer educator Was for me Became a part of me</p>	<p>I'll bring out health tips That part of me comes out Takes over At the right time Comes out naturally Helped me figure out what I want to do with myself My career</p> <p>I talk comfortably Love socializing Making cookies To share</p> <p>I'm colorful That's just who I am</p>
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Poem 2: Reclaiming Identity

<i>I am Definitely an Urban Youth, You Know?</i>	
<p>D.C. Capital of our nation Crime and politics Statistics show more dense areas Have more crime and diseases Handful of information based on your area There's that many different people in this one area</p> <p>Growing up in D.C. A city kid Influenced by the city life The city always has something going on Positive and negative With things I have seen growing up You are exposed to that</p> <p>I am from the same city as a lot of other people Our experiences within the city was different Because of how we saw crime Diseases that would spread Issues we have only in the city How you deal with something is different Different from the suburbs and rural area Not even limited to crimes</p>	<p>Went away to college An African American at a HBCU More self-aware of my culture As opposed to back in middle school, high school</p> <p>Sad thing about getting older Things get way more serious, for some people People turn into race issues Candy turns into drugs Juice turns into alcohol That's the issues we face As urban youth Things you never think about when you're younger Trying to get through school Enjoy friends and life People be like, "Hey, you are just overthinking it." I do this quite often</p> <p>Most people When they hear urban Relate it to city or African American For whatever reason Kinda what society throws at you Don't really think about it as race</p>

<p>People in rural areas driving when they are nine years old I don't even know how to drive yet</p> <p>In a diverse city like Washington, D.C. I am considered an urban youth There are so many urban youth We're all different races Different issues separate us Something we all have in common Crime Whether victimized by it or not It's the perception</p> <p>With all the violence towards African Americans Society, it's pulling in different ways One group like "Oh nothing bad is going on. These are just random happenstances." Maybe if they weren't so urban Maybe if they weren't this, weren't that Whole other group like "That's not what the issue is about" Makes you think for your own</p> <p>When I was younger Never saw things as Black, White, Hispanic As I got older You see how you're different than everybody else Start socializing with certain people based on that</p>	<p>But like, sheesh is this what society wants to me to think about it as? Heavy in social media, the news With the gentrification going on within D.C. When I write papers and whatnot They say urban These articles are talking about black people, the Latinos</p> <p>As far as urban youth What does that mean to me? Had to really think Hadn't necessarily heard that term before When I hear urban I think of city City life I don't think of race I am still a youth Makes sense that I'm one</p> <p>Yea I'm definitely a part of urban youth Urban youth are shaped by their environment How I perceive things How I talk Book smart. Street smart Smart in some type of way I don't feel smartness is limited to books It's how well you take care of yourself At the end of the day It has so many levels to it Honestly All of that is part of me being an urban youth</p>
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Poem 3: Shifting Identity

<i>Always Doing Something</i>	
<p>I see myself as outgoing Not what I used to be Especially since high school Used to be really shy I have gained confidence in myself Over the years</p> <p>As a peer educator You're knowledgeable</p>	<p>Doing a lot of things Community service, sports, classes Find me in the lab The library The chemistry club Giving tours around campus Even now in college Always doing something Pre occupied</p>

<p>Able to connect with people Someone can really look up to you You are doing something right You are doing it differently than other people would Why else would people look up to you? People feel comfortable talking to me They saw what I was doing Wanted to become peer educators themselves Friends see you as a cool person At the same time Busy Busy bee</p>	<p>Not just sitting around doing nothing Actually going out to make your community a better place</p> <p>Got a lot of support From family From professors Knew it was a good cause Not something I have to do I like doing it I am doing it They are supporting that idea</p>
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Poem 4: Being a Change Agent

<i>You Want To Do It</i>	
<p>Being a peer educator It's not a requirement You don't get paid for this You're doing this out of the kindness of your heart You want to do it You like doing it You obviously care</p>	<p>To be a peer educator You have to have smarts Attain new information Tell them information you think that they need to know I love helping people Being able to get someone farther than they are That's me</p>

Poem 5: Reflection

<i>Mental Support, Actual Support</i>	
<p>Being an urban youth Helped me Perceive myself as someone who wants to get out there Do a lot of things Not saying that people from other neighborhoods don't</p>	<p>If there's an event Mom or dad Will say, "I am proud of you. I like what you're doing." Would go Take me to it Anything that could help out with the cause Definitely be on board</p>