REST, RESISTANCE & RESILIENCE DURING COVID-19

A ZINE:
with stories and artwork from the YWCA Advocacy Program on challenging "productivity" & "business as usual" during this global pandemic, and the importance of centering self & community care.
Rest, Resistance & Resiliency During COVID-19: A Zine

“Activists fixate on the future: impatient for the world we want to see. We know time is a finite commodity, so we pressure ourselves to make the most of it. But we commodify ourselves in the process.” - Janey Stephenson

In the face of societal pressures to achieve "perfection, progress, & productivity," rest and resiliency are often overlooked and dismissed. But many social justice advocates have insisted that rest plays a crucial role in challenging capitalism, racism, and white supremacy culture, and is vital to the sustainability of our movements as well as in the revitalization of our collective humanity.

White supremacy is defined as a system that upholds whiteness as superior, historically through the exploitation and labor of Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color. While rest is essential and fundamental to any healing process, we acknowledge that access to rest is a privilege, especially for marginalized communities who are forced to work and engage in the US within systems that equate one's value with their productivity, and where engaging with such systems is necessary for one's survival.

Under capitalism, if one is not seen as "improving" or making "progress," one is often seen to be "failing." Exploitation of one's labor and time is often assumed as "normal," "appropriate," or even "justified." Moreover, when marginalized communities are met with different forms of systemic and interpersonal violence, resistance is often not presented as a 'choice,' particularly for those who have to fight back because their lives depend on it.

When growth is fetishized and everything is made to seem urgent, those of us who are used to resisting out of survival may overlook the red flags and warning signs coming from our own minds and bodies. When constantly forced to fight, we become tired and burned out, not only physically but also psychologically. In the work of advocacy and grassroots organizing, we remind ourselves that we are not simply outputs of a system that inherently values the labor and humanity of some over the rest.

We urge collective action around holding ourselves and each other accountable. We reject individualist approaches to address the inequities and oppressive structural conditions of our society because we are stronger together rather than divided. In order to resist forms of persisting violence, we must also reconnect with rest, with the reality that we need space and time to process. To grieve. And to heal.

Rest looks different for everyone. Rest can mean for the self or for the collective. In a way, rest is a form of true resistance to harmful conditions that we may take for granted. Rest is a time to prefigure a new world and to restructure what has not worked before. To build the world we know is possible, where justice and freedom exists for us all.

With this ZINE, we invite you to rest with us, even for just a moment.

In Solidarity & With Love,
The YWCA Berkeley/Oakland Advocacy Spring 2020 Cohort
Pardon the Interruption, by Audrey Sayer
Advocacy Program Member
burn out//self care

numb
toiled and tired
chasing, chasing, chasing
for what?

feeling nothing
holding my breath forgetting the act of
breathing
blurring

my
hope-
full
empty

stop your pretense
of being Atlas
the weight in your heart
shackles on your body
incessant waves of residue and cries of pain
from earth

listen to yourself
in, out
breathe – in, out
what love can you give
if you let love slip in the mirror
touch reality
feel your face
remember
the trace of your body,
the history of your struggle
led you to where you stand
in your entirety
embrace

(my arms wrapped around me).
No to Sinophobia, by Maryam Khawar
Advocacy Program Member
into the void, by Tavi Carpenter
Advocacy Program Member
WAYS I Thought I'd Stay Busy...

But I'm actually...

NETFLIX

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Healthy Eating

Taking care of Kitties

Acting

Sleeping

Zoom

Work=

Dance

Become DIY sewing expert

Start flower garden

But I'm starting to realize it's not what you do but how you are...
Recipe for a delicious quarantine:

blend 2 cups of lethargy,
3 tbsp of intermittent stress,
and 1/2 tsp of a bad sleep cycle.

add 3 fl oz of uncertainty,
6 cloves of restlessness,
and 1-2 tsp of fear (optional).

garnish with 2 awkward Zoom meetings,
1/2 tbsp of being too alone with your thoughts,
and a pinch of anxiety-induced baking.

at last, let it rest,
and add as much self-forgiveness as needed.

Recipe for a Delicious Quarantine, by Darice Wong
Advocacy Program Member
MISSION & VISION:

At the YWCA, our vision is to support young leaders to develop the tools and resources they need to advocate for themselves and to build collective power in their communities. To fulfill the YWCA's mission of eliminating racism and empowering women, it is critical that we are working to support full access and engagement for women and girls of color in our communities. When we center and follow the leadership of women and girls of color, and uplift the legislative priorities and solutions to the problem from those most impacted, we can more meaningfully engage in the struggle for access, equity, and collective liberation.

As part of the YWCA Berkeley/Oakland, the YWCA Advocacy Program supports our young leaders to develop their grassroots organizing skills, strengthen our collective voices as advocates for social justice, and engage in advocacy efforts around issues we are passionate about and/or directly impacted by.

ADVOCACY PROGRAM SPRING 2020:

We began our Spring 2020 semester with two weeks of orientation that included a YWCA cross-program training titled, “Creating Affirming Spaces for Queer & Trans Youth,” to continue to deepen our work and center racial and gender justice across the organization. We also engaged in community building with one another, creating community agreements for how we would collectively engage with one another in the Advocacy Cohort. We also read foundational documents, such as the Movement For Black Lives Policy Platform, that serve as a foundation for how we show up and engage in advocacy initiatives throughout the program.

This semester, our YWCA Berkeley/Oakland Advocacy Program engaged in political education, legislative research, workshops on voting rights and on how to conduct voter registration drives, as well as community action in support of community members incarcerated inside California prisons and jails. We began by discussing the history of voting rights and voter suppression in the United States, focusing on how marginalized communities - including incarcerated individuals, undocumented people, unhoused folks, and communities of color - have been excluded from our democratic process. We then learned about current movements to restore voting rights led by and for impacted communities. We also conducted bill research and prepared presentations on California legislation in alignment with the YWCA’S mission to advance racial and gender justice, meeting the criteria as outlined in the Movement for Black Lives Policy Platform. In addition, we partnered with Berkeley City College’s student organization on civic engagement for their voter registration event, “Voting - It’s a Vibe,” where we helped register thirty new registered voters, including thirty-five people who signed Pledge to Vote cards for the CA primaries in March. Later in the semester, we supported Initiative Justice’s initiative to expand access to rehabilitative programs for their incarcerated members inside CA prisons and jails by entering data and surveys filled out by their inside members, in order to encourage more just and comprehensive policies that would expand access to programs that support individuals in being able to earn time off of their sentences, and to bring people home.

INSPIRATION FOR THIS ZINE:

Due to COVID-19 and the shelter-in-place decree ordered by Governor Newsom in mid-March, we moved our program online to host weekly Zoom meetings every Friday as a way to hold space, share resources, and engage in ongoing advocacy efforts. With this shift, we wanted to acknowledge the barriers and impacts that COVID-19 has presented to all of us. We collectively decided to focus the remainder of our program on challenging “productivity” or “business as usual,” by openly discussing the importance of self and community care as antidotes to the harms of white supremacy culture and capitalism. We drew inspiration for this Zine from SHIFT’s webinar titled, “Challenging White Supremacy Culture Though Rest.” We centered our final project around this theme, and are proud to bring you are zine titled, “REST, RESISTANCE, AND RESILIENCY DURING COVID-19!”

*To learn more about SHIFT, Shifting Culture’s work, visit their website @ https://www.shiftingculture.co/

*Our use of “girls” and “women” is inclusive of all cis and trans women, non-binary, gender non-conforming, gender queer, and any female-identified folks.
To learn more about the YWCA Berkeley/Oakland and all of our programs:

Visit our website @ www.ywca-berkeley.org.

Follow us on social media for up to date information and ways to plug in!

@ywcaberkeleyoakland
@ywcaberkeley
@ywcaberk

Sign up for our newsletter @ https://bit.ly/2z1scO0 to see us in action and get involved!

If you have any questions, or want to get in contact with us, email info@ywca-berkeley.org or call (510) 848-6370.
THANK YOU!