

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEW JOURNALISM INSTITUTE IN JACKSON TEACHES COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO REPORT ON REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

JACKSON, MISS. — The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects, a non-profit organization in Jackson cultivating spaces of solidarity for southern Black girls through programming and research, and Fahrenheit Creative Group, LLC, a Black-owned marketing communications firm also based in Jackson, recently launched the Ida B. Wells Democratic Journalism Institute, a 12-week program that seeks to deepen and broaden the narrative about reproductive justice in Mississippi. The program connects emerging and seasoned journalists with interactive learning opportunities to strengthen journalistic principles and deepen their knowledge about reproductive justice.

The Institute, funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, meets weekly for virtual learning sessions led by guest speakers on topics around journalism and writing fundamentals and the media's impact on society, using the reproductive justice framework as its foundation.

Reproductive justice is a topic that impacts more people and their lives than they realize, Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects Founder and President Natalie A. Collier said.

“RJ is so often reduced to access to abortion or not, which is certainly a reproductive justice health matter, but it alone, even in the ways we polarize it, does not speak to the complexities and comprehensiveness of reproductive justice matters. Just about everything, in one way or another, is an RJ matter,” Collier said. “Using reproductive justice—most simply, the decision to parent or not to parent and how—as a framework can and, in many ways, *should* inform the considerations for the ways we approach any other matters about which we want to report, from economic justice to racial justice, education equity to climate justice. All of that is reproductive justice.”

On Feb. 20, the participants—high school and college students and community advocates based in Mississippi, six in all—gathered online for orientation led by LaTanya Lane, Special Projects Editor at the Lighthouse.

“Many of the participants are Black and all the participants in the Democratic Journalism Institute connected with the program through their love of writing and story sharing,” Lane said. “I hope during their 12-week journey they begin to see what a career in journalistic writing might look like and how they could pursue it.”

In the latter half of the program, professional journalists will join the cohort as participants. The entire group will produce reproductive justice-centered work about their local communities. They’ll present their final projects to a panel for feedback.

“It isn’t fun or popular to tell stories that center the real issues that affect Black women and families, so I hope each of the participants gains the type of courage they need to do whatever it is they need to do in their individual space,” Fahrenheit Creative Group Founder and Principal Jason Thompson said. “Whether that’s to tell their own story or to be courageous enough to stand up for the stories that aren’t told in the places they work, live and learn.”

To learn more about the Democratic Journalism Institute and its participants, follow the Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter at @luvblkgrls. For more information on the Lighthouse and Fahrenheit Creative Group, LLC, visit www.loveblackgirls.org and www.fcgworks.com, respectively.

About The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects

The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects is a non-profit organization in Jackson, Mississippi, whose mission is to be a revelatory, unflickering light for Black girls and young women in the southeastern United States through focused programming and by creating spaces of solidarity and safety for them.

The organization takes a holistic approach to leadership development for Black girls and women through a consortium of projects. The projects are avenues by which Black girls are centered, from the research agenda to the programming, board room to legislative halls. The Lighthouse’s primary goal is for Black girls’ and women’s homes and communities to be places where their safety and freedom are welcomed.

About Fahrenheit Creative Group, LLC

Fahrenheit Creative Group is a Black-owned, full service marketing communications firm in Jackson, Mississippi. We work closely with our clients to develop and deliver

strategic communications plans and powerful, creative designs that support their missions, amplify their work, and produce meaningful outcomes.

We firmly believe in equity, justice, community, and learning, which is why we strive to practice and promote those values in our offices and advance those ideals through our work.