



Justice League of Greater Lansing Michigan Reparations Scholarship Recipient — 2024

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What is your understanding of Generational Wealth?

Growing up I was raised by my mother who is Asian and Black. As much love and care as she always provided, there were things that we as a family struggled with. Unfortunately, my story is not unique to many other families like mine across the country. There are still lasting effects of slavery that impact the lives of many. For me personally, I saw this through the hard working determination of my mom always trying to make ends meet. As a single mother taking care of me and my four sisters, she always found a way to make sure our needs were met. Looking back now I was so clueless as to what was going on, and how stressful it must've been for her to be the sole individual responsible for the wellbeing of my sisters and myself. I used to think it was so normal that our lights often shut off and we'd have to get through the week using candles and flashlights. It took me a while to realize that those events were actually occurrences in my life where the difference in socioeconomic status based on race actually affected me.

I'd visit the homes of my white friends and see pantries with every shelf filled with snacks galore and fridges stuffed with the nutrition needed to help a child grow. It's not that I didn't have these things in my home, but that the accessibility and security that they would always be there wasn't. Systemic racism is a weight that is carried on the shoulders of every African American no matter where they're located. They can be born into a family of wealth, and still have the capacity to be discriminated against based on their skin color.

Black communities everywhere suffer at the hands of the government. They're known to have less funding in their neighborhoods and high rates of crime as well as drug abuse. I've witnessed firsthand what it's like to see the contrast between what is provided at a school with predominantly white versus their Black counterparts. Often students at white schools are given more opportunity to join extracurricular activities and educational help services. In Black communities, schools see less of these helpful opportunities. It's been reported through many news articles, blogs and sites that not just the students suffer but the Black teachers only see a fraction of the salary that their white peers do. It is sad to hear that this isn't something that only I have experienced. It hurts to know that there are people who are experiencing the same battles I have and worse, perhaps with no support. Although slavery has been abolished, we still see the lasting effects of the systems put in place as oppression on African Americans. As a Black woman I know I will continue to face these obstacles for the rest of my life. Though as long as I take them with my head high, I believe they can be overcome.