

Nathan's Project Reflection

Working on this community project affected me on many different levels. Although it may sound cliché, it is hard to find the words to convey how meaningful participating in this project has been for me. As a member of the transracial adoptee community myself, it was therapeutic to be able to connect with others who share similar life experiences as myself. Yet, despite our commonalities, we all color and shape the adoptee community in different ways as well.

Although I am almost embarrassed to admit it, before this community project, before this semester even, I had not given a whole lot of thought to the multiracial community. That is not to say that I was completely unaware of it, some of my best friends are multiracial, I had just not actively thought about it. This class has really opened my eyes to the way our society views issues such as race, ethnicity, culture, and identity. Furthermore, this class has helped me to view how individuals, especially multiracial individuals, negotiate their sense of identity and belonging within the various communities.

I had never associated the adoptee community with the multiracial community. Before this community project, the ideas of multiraciality and adoption never entered my mind simultaneously. It was an eye opening experience to talk with members of the adoptee community who are multiracial as well. Whether you are a member of the multiracial community or adoptee community, either a monoracial adoptee or a multiracial adoptee, the shared experience of being raised in a “blended” family seems to be a commonality that brings everyone together. In my interview with J, a multiracial member of the adoptee community, I learned not only about the community, but myself as well. J and the people he associates with are fairly unique; they do not place as much emphasis on race like the rest of American society. In my interview with J, in trying to establish his understanding of race, I found it somewhat difficult. Trying to balance the delicate line of not offending him or imposing my beliefs on him, while still meeting the requirements of the project, was not as easy as I had originally thought. I often found myself thinking, granted I kept the thoughts to myself, “how can he not feel or think the same way?” It was in these moments that I realized how greatly I myself have been affected by the way American society views race. I like to think that I am more aware and sensitive to racial issues because I am a member of the transracial adoptee community. However, I found myself getting mildly frustrated when J would not categorize himself.

This community project, and the entire semester, helped me to think in a lot of new ways. It also, however, prompted me to revisit certain issues that I thought I had settled long ago. What does being adopted mean to me? Did my

birth mother really love me? Where do I "fit"? These were just some of the questions that were raised for me throughout the semester. I am not sure that I have the answers to these questions, although I feel I have a much better understanding of them than I previously did. And I have realized that I may never have the answers to all my questions. But I think it has been important for me to realize that it has taken a lot of courage to revisit these questions, as painful as it may have been to do so.