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SHARE A VISION

Joshua Francois

We can decide where we go from here as a community together with a mutual destiny. If we believe our destiny is mutual, is interconnected, we can decide wherever we want to go. I think it all comes down to intention.

“A community of we” could emerge from a truth and reconciliation process that begins to heal intergenerational trauma experienced by black people, indigenous people and people of color. There must be drastic policy and culture change that over-invests in the health of black people, especially black women, girls and femmes—people who express themselves in the world as “feminine” regardless of sex, gender or sexual orientation.

When I say “health,” I mean complete physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, political, economic, environmental and social well-being. It is time for new leadership in every facet of our community—in government, nonprofits, business, foundations, health, education, employment, development, arts, housing and policing. Above all, “a community of we” requires a shared vision that is arduous and intersectional to create the greatest change possible for the future of the greater Pittsburgh region.

New Voices for Reproductive Justice contributes to creating more of a sense of “we” by boldly confronting race and gender oppression for black liberation and centering the voices, experiences and leadership of black women, femmes and girls. We address issues from sexual and reproductive health to LGBTQ+ rights, health care access, environmental justice, and ending gender-based violence and mass incarceration. Our long-term strategies include leadership development, community organizing, policy advocacy and culture change.

New Voices is excited to create physical spaces for the black women, femmes and girls we serve in the three cities where we work—Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Philadelphia—with our national headquarters opening in Pittsburgh early next year. Our standard, our bar for success, is human rights for all people, period. That’s the place where we must start to create “a community of we.” That’s the baseline.

— Interviewed by Elwin Green