

My name is Dannah Wilson. I am a freshman at the University of Michigan and I'm a proud Detroit. I know the experiences that I've had and lessons that I've learned from them, even also from my mistakes, that I can kind of guess when I need to speak up, when that needs to be, when it doesn't need to be, and what language do I need to use? I'm more than the identities that I have, I've always been told and taught what it means to be a woman, what it means to be a Black woman, what it means to be Black as well, and also what it means to be poor and come from these communities. My gap year really gave me that opportunity to strip those away and just say no, what does it mean to be a person? A person with feelings and a person... and I would be able to be more patient with myself and it also helps me to love myself, and also other people.

Just this year alone, I've probably had 5 friends that were killed. My friend who passed away a couple weeks ago, he was in college in Alabama and he's from here and he was at a gas station. I can name a number of things that he did right. In that it seems like he wasn't, he shouldn't have been the one that experienced that, he shouldn't be gone, but that reality is so real... and there's a strong disconnect about what we get in classrooms versus what we see at home... and I want to educate on that, and also educate the people who don't know that and the people have the power to change that - and be able to be, not necessary on common grounds with my peers, but for them to be free and also realize what I've learned that they are people first.