

Alicia Jones

“A Mother, an Activist, a Global Citizen”

A global citizen is one who recognizes that people are stronger together and can see the limitations of trying to forge their path alone; global citizens can see that borders of countries are arbitrary and meant to be crossed, not strengthened. A global citizen recognizes that social issues such as poverty, violence against women and children, war, drug addiction, lack of access to healthcare, unemployment, and mass incarceration disproportionately affect some people more than they affect others, but that they have a negative effect on everyone in some way. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly; a global citizen recognizes that the myriad of social issues people face or do not face depends entirely on where on the globe they were born- and that with a different stroke of luck or a different random combination of genetics, they could have been born elsewhere. Citizens of underdeveloped or poor countries deserve the same rights, freedoms and opportunities that citizens of more fortunate countries are granted. People across the globe are affected by issues that are totally beyond their control and that is the number one reason why I believe we should all strive to be global citizens.

I have been committed to global citizenship before I even had the words to describe the fire I felt in my heart. From a young age, I have been devoted to activism and have felt compelled to stand up for and stand with disenfranchised folks. I have been engaged politically since the first anti-war protest I ever went to- the “No War for Oil!” march held on February 15, 2003 in NYC. I graduated with my associate degree in human services from Suffolk County Community College in 2014, and I am currently a sociology major with a concentration in psychology and will be graduating with my bachelor’s degree this May. I plan to spend my life working in the public sector and helping people acquire the tools they need to live their best

lives. I'm in the sociology honors program and currently working on a thesis paper under the advisement of Professors Cathy Marrone and Michael Kimmel; I am doing research on how the socialization of young boys negatively impacts them as they grow into men. I have chosen this research topic because I believe that it is an under-studied and misunderstood topic in America and abroad; and by contributing this research to the field of gender studies I hope to possibly spark at least one person to think differently about the way that men and boys are understood. I speak to everyone that will listen about how gender equality will never be achieved unless men and boys are brought into the conversation.

I believe that becoming a global citizen first begins at home. As a single mother/full time student/part time employee working with the developmentally disabled and raising three young boys, I don't have the time or resources to travel abroad to help set up relief missions or do work in other countries- so I focus my efforts where I can. My personal devotion to global citizenship has changed direction since becoming a mother. My sons are swiftly growing into young men and I believe it is crucial for them to be immersed in a lifestyle that will allow them to understand that developing empathy for other people and making friends across racial and class divides is tantamount for being a good human being. I bring my sons with me to various political meetings, workshops, protests, and marches. Modeling inclusive lifestyles for the next generation is of the utmost importance if we want to continue to see a positive shift toward a more understanding world.

This past year, I was part of the organizing committee for the recently formed Suffolk County chapter of the Nationwide Organization, Democratic Socialists of America. Each chapter focuses on issues close to the region in which its members live; in Suffolk County, we are working on making public transportation more accessible to all residents of Suffolk County.

Residents of Suffolk County are in a unique position to help model inclusive public transportation frameworks for other communities to follow; Suffolk is one of the most racially and economically segregated areas in the United States due to the redlining practices and car dependent lifestyle forced upon the area by Robert Moses. Ensuring safe and reliable transportation for folks who need it is a step toward helping them become more financially secure.

Committing to global citizenship in the current unsteady political climate of 2018 America is especially crucial as the ruling administration is seemingly devoted to the maintenance of the outdated and exclusionary ideals that this country was founded upon. I think that it is easier for people to turn a blind eye to the things they don't believe affect them directly. I believe that remaining locked within segregated communities is especially dangerous because it causes people to be looked at as "others" and negates the common human experience we all share- regardless of what our ethnicity is. By consciously reaching across various geographic, gender, class and ethnic lines to befriend people who are different than us, we learn and grow in so many ways- more so than by reading any textbook on earth. As the great dissenter, Oliver Wendell Holmes, once said- "A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."