



THIS SUMMER, BROWN SKIN WOMEN HOSTED THEIR 1ST ANNUAL INWARD BOUND: YOUNG WOMEN'S RETREAT!

The retreat welcomed four minority teens ages 16-19 from the Greater Hartford Area. After submitting applications to the Brown Skin Women's (BSW) website, the 4 teens were selected to attend the weekend. The mission of BSW's founder Carmen Veal is to empower young women in the community and to offer them opportunities for personal growth.

Carmen Veal leads by example. She often references the quote, "Be the change you want to see in the world." When asked about why she created the retreat, Carmen said, "I know what it feels like to have nothing. I relate to these young women and they relate to me. The highlight of my life, thus far, has been making a positive impact in the lives of others. It brings meaning to my work. I hope I can serve as a role model for these young women and that they too can create the wonderful life they deserve."

The 2014 retreat was spent at a beautiful lake house in New Milford, Connecticut. The retreat would not have been possible without Brendan Walsh, who generously donated his home for the weekend. This was the perfect setting for morning yoga and meditation by the water and healthy outdoor meals on the porch. The young women enjoyed their time away from city life.

Brendan comments, "After hearing from Sam about the goals of the retreat, I was thrilled to donate my house." I liked the fact that Sam, Carmen and Kate, the retreat facilitators, were putting in so much time to help young ladies from underserved communities. I was impressed to hear that the teens were motivated to learn things about themselves and from each other that would help them thrive. It's hard to be a teenager. From what the facilitators told me, the 4 young ladies embraced the weekend and learned a lot. I knew that my lake house would be a tranquil environment for the teen's introspection as they grapple with the difficulties of being a teenager today."

Youth attendees were provided the opportunity to bond and network with each other and retreat facilitators. The retreat focused on self-empowerment through discussions on topics like self-love, resilience, nutritious eating, yoga and meditation. The teens shared their future aspirations and had the opportunity to ask Carmen and the other women about their careers, businesses, and hobbies.

"This was by far the most satisfying and rewarding experience of my health coaching career thus far," comments Samantha Forbes, Certified Health Coach. "Menu planning admittedly was a bit stressful, not knowing if the kids would rebel but they were great! Preparing healthy foods, some of which the girls had never seen before and watching them enjoy it felt amazing. Some of the girls even took pictures of the foods they liked so they could find them at the store! Sitting down



together family style for each meal, talking about our food and a host of other topics was perfect for bonding, sharing and learning.

Thanks to the support of family and friends, retreat facilitators were able to raise funds to cover all expenses and offer this weekend at no cost to the young women and their families.

“I feel extremely blessed to have been invited to collaborate with Carmen and Sam on the BSW youth retreat,” comments Kate Hayden, Embodyoga Instructor. “Working with teens and teaching them yoga and meditation is my dream come true.”

This retreat was created by Brown Skin Women Founder Carmen Veal in collaboration with Certified Health Coach & Owner of The Cultivated Self Samantha Forbes and Yoga Instructor Kate Hayden. To learn more about Brown Skin Women’s other youth programs and the next weekend retreat, visit our website at www.brownskinwomen.com/youth.html.

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