

Spring 2019

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY'S MINORITY PUBLICATION

Expressions



Bloom



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FRONT COVER AND PHOTO BY CHARLEE MOSS





INTRODUCTION

Expressions is East Carolina University's minority publication that strives to provide an alternative voice to address the experiences, concerns, and perspective of minorities.

As human beings, we endure many hardships that life throws at us. However, consistently in our society, mental health is often overshadowed because we bear witness to constant carnage, anger, and greed. While we are distracted by the outside world, internally we are fighting fires that never seem to go out. Therefore, this year's Expressions will focus on minority voices muted by a world full of noise. We hope to depict a blossoming from the pain that once held us back, while gaining the strength along the way from your journey to bloom.

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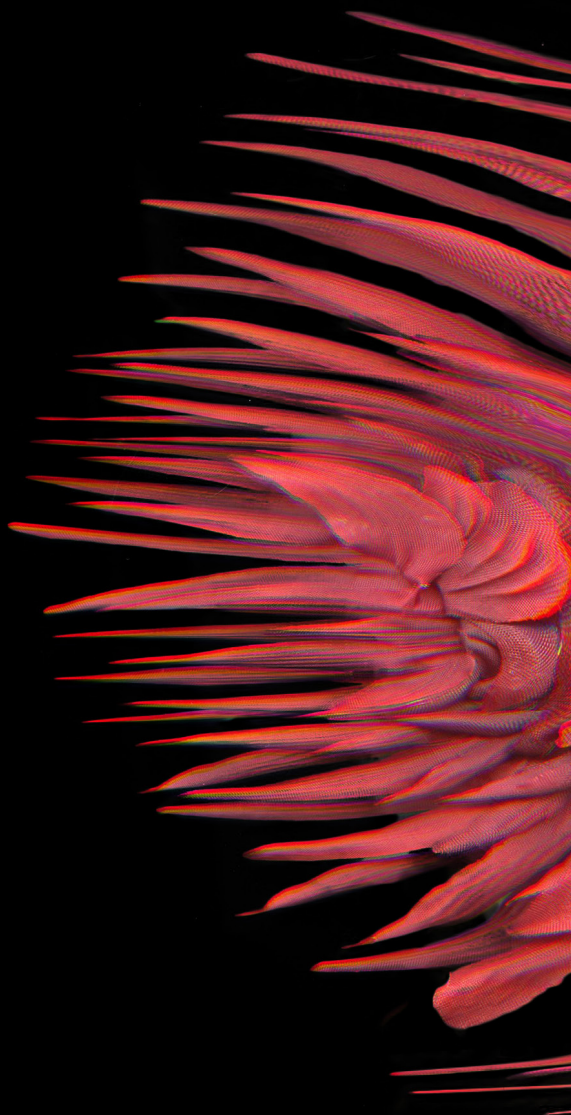
Sierra Williams

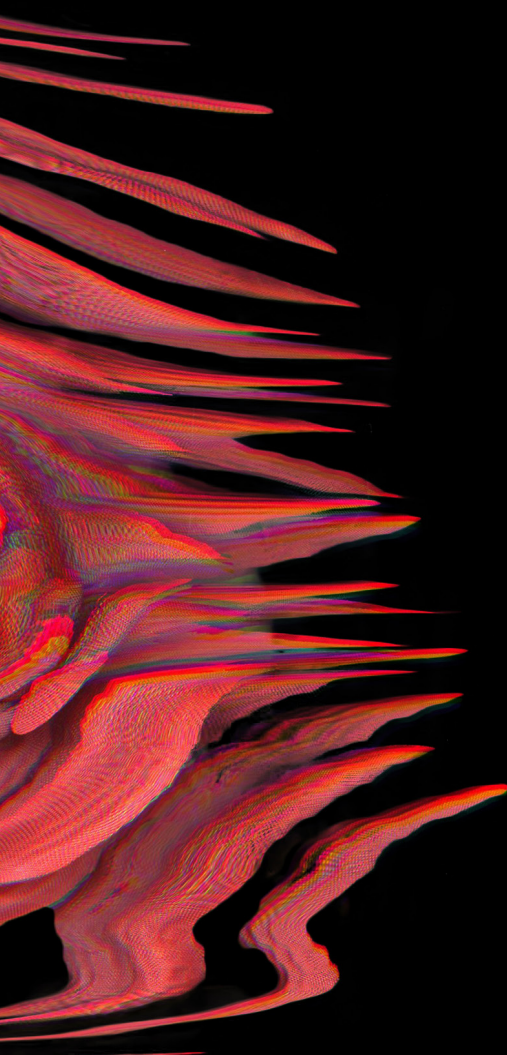
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PICTURES OF CHANGE

WRITTEN AND PHOTOS BY CARTER BROWNING

Trans people aren't photographed for the sake of portrait photography alone!

They are either depicted sexually or tragically without much room in between to exist.

I want to showcase trans people and gender expression in the way that trans people present themselves;

How they take up space in an environment where they aren't typically free to do so.



Focusing on how trans people dress, sit, stand, and move through a world where we constantly must prove ourselves.

Some of us are exhausted. Some of us are free.

Some of us are doing the best we can to get to a positive point with gender.

Not all of us are tragic, and there are far more of us than you think.

It is important that trans people can view others alike in a light that is neutral.

Hopefully, to serve as a precedent of support for one another.



BENIGN

ANONYMOUS

I call it my cancer because it seems like it will spread.

It is full of things that I cannot explain.

It withholds secrets that I do not even want to think about.

It holds my heart.

It crushes it a little each day.


It reminds my heart that it is in control.

It beats her and reminds her that this is not her body anymore.

It is the cancer's.

However, my lump in my breast is said to be benign.

But I'm not fine with the results of the tests.



I feel something urging more pain into my heart and I
know it isn't right.

But the doctors can't seem to see what I fright.

So, I just wait.

I wait and wait for my cancer.

I wait for him to slowly kill me in my sleep.

As if I'm his next prey.

My cancer.

My day.

To die.

THE BIG RACE

BY DELACEY SIMPSON

I KEEP RUNNING,

TIME KEEPS COMING

What if my past was the assassin
pulling the trigger on my future
and killing every one of my dreams

Keeping the attention of
every living thing on Earth

I KEEP RUNNING,

TIME KEEPS COMING

My past is clearly behind me,
but what if it wasn't?
Never ending
A lesson I can never master or control
as complicated as counting
each follicle of hair on your head

I KEEP RUNNING,

TIME KEEPS COMING

The one that's always there
Earth's heartbeat, ticking and tocking
From the beginning to the end

I KEEP RUNNING,

TIME KEEPS COMING

My past violently reaches out
pushes and shoves
even tries to trip me,
But I will not fall

I KEEP RUNNING, TIME KEEPS COMING

My breath fails, my heart pounds
I look back and see
birthday presents that came and went
money spent
clothes I can no longer fit
relationships lost
a capitalist society raising the cost
the dangerous road of technological control
Time keeps coming, that's its role

I KEEP RUNNING,

IT TAKES A TOLE

My past is pulling me and tugging at my soul
My future is screaming my name
and telling me there's more
Defeating my past is opening a new door

LET ME GO

YOU MIGHT ASK,

WHY RUN?

And I'd answer, to pass my past

YOU MIGHT TELL

ME TO TAKE A BREAK,

But I just can't stop my legs
from swiftly speeding on

I will pass my past,
I will pass my past,
I just gotta keep moving along
Passing my past and realizing it's me
I am the assassin
I am the one tripping myself over and over
I am the one I see when I look back,
yanking and jerking the soul out of my body
Let me go?

LET IT GO

BEAUTY *Beauty* Beauty BEAUTY **Beauty**
Beauty Beauty *Beauty*
 BEAUTY *Beauty* BEAUTY Beauty
 BEAUTY *Beauty* Beauty BEAUTY **Beauty**
Beauty Beauty *Beauty*
 BEAUTY *Beauty* BEAUTY Beauty
 BEAUTY *Beauty* Beauty BEAUTY **Beauty**
Beauty Beauty *Beauty*
 BEAUTY *Beauty* BEAUTY Beauty
 BEAUTY *Beauty* Beauty BEAUTY **Beauty**
Beauty Beauty *Beauty*
 BEAUTY *Beauty* BEAUTY Beauty
 BEAUTY *Beauty* Beauty BEAUTY **Beauty**
Beauty Beauty *Beauty*

Photo by Kate Francis





THANK YOU LETTER

WRITTEN BY ANOTHONY SOHAN

Only if you knew how many nights I stayed up crying.

Only if you knew that, without you, I felt like dying.

You make me feel so cliché;

Just another black kid with no dad, walking around looking all sad;

Like why can't I have the family all my friends have?

I tried to never show my emotions, but depression got the best of me.

Cutting up my wrist and hoping it was the death of me.

Death seemed like an escape and a way to be free.

The only thing that kept me here was seeing my mom asleep,

Thinking how hard she works to keep some shoes on my feet.

Watching her flop on the couch because work had her beat,

Without her here, there would be no me.

But, without you, part of me never feels complete.

Graduation day came, and I finally said I did it.

You never showed up, so I guess I wasted a ticket.

Everyone was so happy to see me finally make it.

People asking to take pictures, but I was so sad that my smile... I had to fake it.

People crying tears of joy when I was crying tears of pain.

The fact that you didn't show up was driving me insane.

Had me thinking, what if I just

opened a bottle and drank away the pain?

People always told me that you were the one missing out,

But no matter how much I agreed, I always had a little doubt.

Thinking why don't you love me, am I really that bad?

Why would you have me, and not want to be my dad?

As I got older, you told me that you were coming back into my life, I was so excited that I stayed up all night.

I was so happy to know you were going to be by my side,

But everything turned to hell when I realized it was all a lie.

Back down the road to depression, Things got so tough, I lost my faith and my belief in heaven.

Started to feel alone and never let anyone in,

Built my walls so strong that an army couldn't get in.

My Anger built up more and more. Told myself, if this happens again, we're going to war.

Wanting to just pull a trigger and watch you drop to the floor, But what will that solve?

You were never there for me, but you turned me into who I should be.

Showing me that everything a man should be is inside of me.

Showing me that everything a man should be is not you.

And, for that, I thank you.

PHOTO BY JULISSA PONCE



I AM NOT AFRAID. ARE YOU AFRAID TOO?

WRITTEN BY TORY ROSE

I am afraid.

Afraid that my mind will
always drag me down.

Afraid that one day I will become lost
and
never be found.

I am afraid.

Afraid that I will never reach my
dreams.

Afraid that one day I will be reduced
to
hearing nothing but my own screams.

Can you feel my fear?

Can you feel the fear radiating off of
this page?

Can you see me, in your mind's eye,
writing this poem in my own mental
cage?

Does your hand shake when you lift
your

finger off of this page to take a
breath?

Just as mine did when writing this
poem,

dealing with thoughts of death?

Are you afraid, too?

Can you help me,

Help you?

Have you ever crossed your heart and
crossed your fingers?

Hoping, praying, that no one lingers
long enough to question you, why?

Why you do the things that you do,

Even though you know that they think
it too?

Let me help you,

Help me,

Help you.

Do your eyes glaze

As you look into the haze

Of a river, a bridge, the end of the
world?

Do you wish to see the lonosphere,

Looking back through eons, of eons, of
eons?

Do you wish to be nothing but ions too?

Let me help you,

Help me.

Do you ever dream of a world beyond
the

stars, beyond the stares?

Below to the ground, never to be
found?

You don't care, that they care,

But I care that you care.

Can you help me,

Help you,

Help me?

PHOTO BY KATE FRANCIS

VIOLATED

BY SIERRA WILLIAMS

A pure soul walking within the walls of a sinful world

Heart, Mind & Soul

The three things her father instructed her to protect

The three things that were her only responsibility

The three things that were stolen from her.

HEART

"LOVE"

A PRECIOUS WORD,

A POWERFUL WORD,

A TRICKY WORD.

A word that was used as a way
to protect her feelings in his.

Her friend, her boyfriend, her
first love.

Caught up in what being *in love*
is, her father's words slip out of
her head.

"If you really love me, then you
would....." A pure soul walking
within the walls of a sinful
world. She was a virgin, but she
loved this man.

She lays there,

Her innocence now exposed to
him.

He smiles, calls her beautiful.

Then smirks like a lion that just
caught his first meal.

He pushed, slammed and forced
his way into her.

She screamed, cried, told him to
stop. Asking herself at the back
of her mind,

"Is this love?"

She fights back, but now in a
situation that she can't get out
of. He's on top of her, telling
her that he loves her as tears
are rolling down her face....

"Love",

A PRECIOUS WORD,

A POWERFUL WORD,

A TRICKY WORD.

MIND

"If you really love me, then you would..."
 She lays there,
 Starring at the ceiling,
 feeling paralyzed, crying at
 the sound of him snoring his
 way into a deep slumber.
 Like most females, she tries
 to forget, but how can one
 forget such a brutal
 experience even after he no
 longer is in communication
 with her. "Hit and Quit" type
 of situation. Her mind now
 belongs to depression and
 loneliness. Having to walk
 among her peers with no
 clarity to the absence of her
 abuser. With her innocence
 stripped away. With her
 smile that is now a forbidden
 feature on the canvas of her
 lost face.

IN HER MIND:
 LONELINESS
 NOT GOOD ENOUGH
 UGLY
 WORTHLESS
 UNDER APPRECIATED
 BETRAYED
 MANIPULATED
 USED
 ABUSED
 NEGLECTED
 CONFUSED
 DEPRESSED

Just a few words to
 the many thoughts in a
 female's head. Replaying
 the night in her head like
 a broken record that can
 never get to the next
 song. She walks around
 this world incomplete,
 empty, alone.
 A Lost Soul...

SOUL

She goes day by day, hoping that the
 next day will get better, but soon she
 realizes that her days are just like the
 days before. It's like she no longer has
 life in her. Yes, she is physically here, but
 mentally, spiritually, emotionally and
 sexually she is lost.

"A lost soul, floating within the walls of a
 sinful world...."

Every time you lay down with someone,
 a soul tide is born. A bond is formed. She
 will never forget what her "lover" did
 because her soul will not let her forget.

IT TAKES TIME TO HEAL A
 WOUND
 IT TAKES TIME TO COVER UP
 A SCAR

IT TAKES TIME TO FORGIVE
 IT TAKES TIME TO FORGET

As a woman who has been through a
 traumatic experience, her time to heal is a
 valuable one, a precious one.

A TIME THAT DETERMINES IF SHE
 WILL REGAIN HERSELF AGAIN, OR
 CONTINUE TO BE LOST.

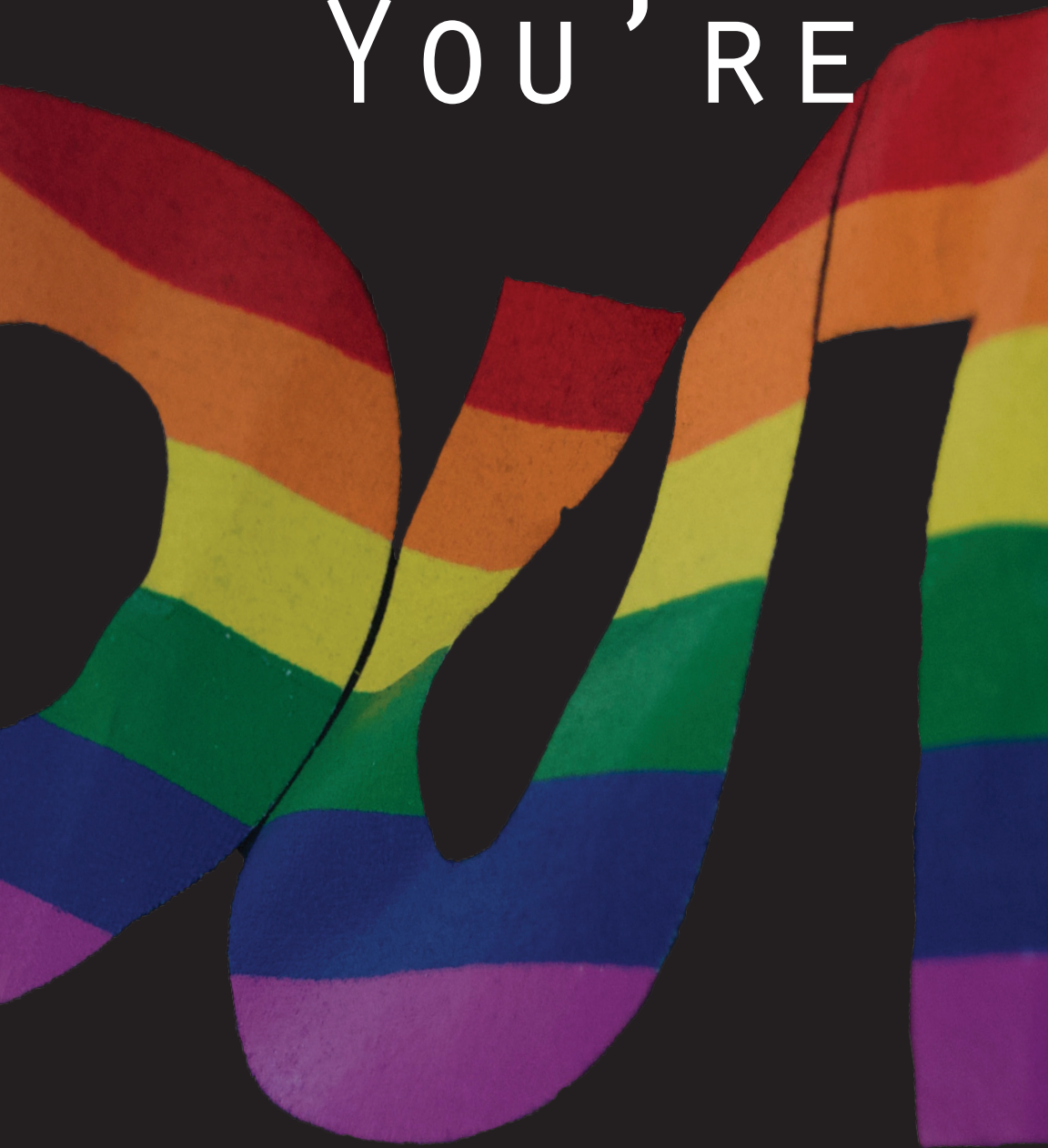
"A lost, pure soul walking within the walls
 of a sinful world..."

LOVE *Love* Love LOVE **Love**
Love Love *Love*
LOVE Love LOVE Love
LOVE *Love* Love LOVE **Love**
Love Love *Love*
LOVE Love LOVE Love
LOVE *Love* Love LOVE **Love**
Love Love *Love*
LOVE Love LOVE Love
LOVE *Love* Love LOVE **Love**
Love Love *Love*
LOVE Love LOVE Love
LOVE *Love* Love LOVE **Love**
Love Love *Love*

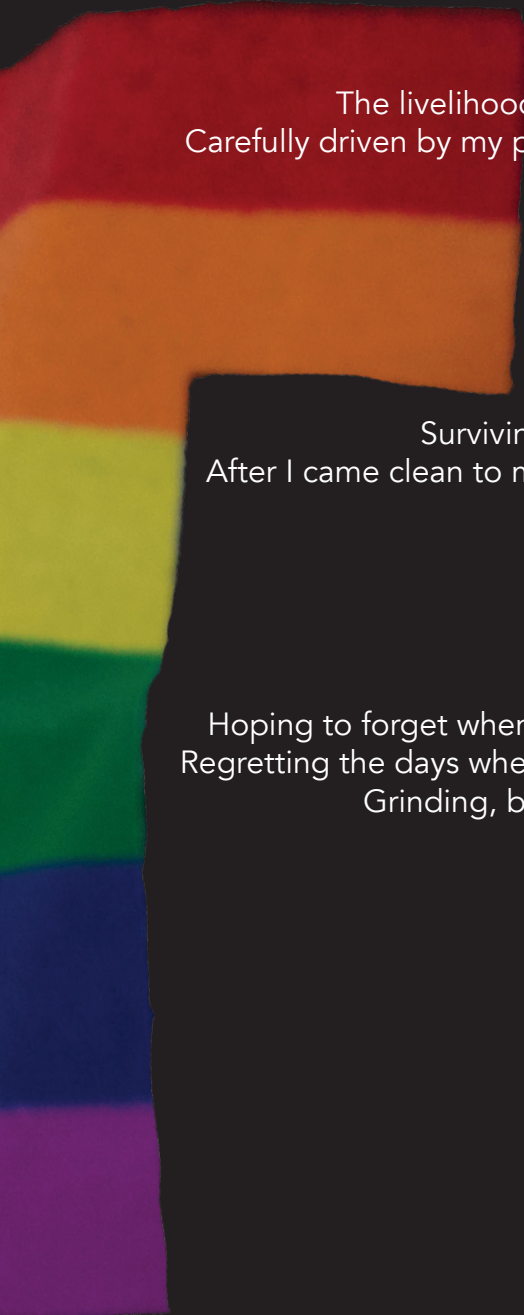
Photo by Charlee Moss



THREE
STRIKES
YOU'RE



WRITTEN BY JAHAD CHRIS CARTER



My skin enriched with Melanin
The livelihood I own stalked like a thief in the night
Carefully driven by my predecessors who fought off Jim Crow

BLACK

Most of my life, I lived a lie
Surviving years of torment for being different
After I came clean to myself, I felt the weight lift of my chest

GAY

Hoping to forget when my family didn't have a place to stay
Regretting the days when I did not have clean clothes to wear
Grinding, because everything I own is on the line

POOR

FROM ONE HEART



TO ANOTHER

WRITTEN AND PHOTOS BY RYAN CARSWELL

Dear me at 13,

The news you got yesterday was tough, to say the least. I know that you are probably feeling a thousand different emotions right now. Shock, anger, frustration, betrayal, and of course, fear. I know that you felt like your walls came tumbling down as the doctor gave you the news that you'd be going back into the operating room. I also know you didn't show that you were feeling any of this. You put on a strong façade, hoping and praying that it would keep mom from crying.

You're probably going over it all in your head. It was obvious that you needed that first surgery - you were born with Tetralogy of Fallot. That requires immediate action to save your life. Then there was the surgery from a couple years ago, the one that served as an update to the first. How long did they tell you those two cadaver valves would last? For 10 to 15 years, right? If that's the case, than why the hell did one fail in only two?

All of these questions, flood through your mind. With each answer, another slamming door, another dream wasted. You will never play football like your best friend. You will never join the army like your grandfather. You will never be a cop like your father. As you reflect on all of the things that never will be, you curse the world underneath your breath. In an instant, all of that sadness and disappointment turns into rage, and you look to God asking, "How could you do this to me?"

You can't show it. You have to bury it deep down and get used to that mask of indifference. You need to be strong for your mom, your dad, your sister, and all those who love you. This is just as scary for them as it is for you, if not more so. You owe it to them to keep a positive demeanor, to look this obstacle in the eye and smile. Radiate strength, so that others around you might feel strong.

For all those times that you find yourself feeling angry, I have some tough love for you, old friend. The world doesn't owe you shit. That's right, not a damn thing. It doesn't owe you fame, fortune, love, or time. It didn't owe you yesterday, it doesn't owe you today, and it sure as hell doesn't owe you tomorrow. With that in mind, I also want you to take some time to accept the fact that many others have it way worse than you. Think about all of those little kids at St. Jude's right now. Can you really imagine what that must be like?

Knowing you're ill, and that there may or may not be a way to cure it? Many of those kids have spent much of their childhoods in that hospital. Compare a childhood like that to the one you were given: playing neighborhood wide games of manhunt, going to school, fishing the Roanoke at dawn, and having sleepovers with your best friends. Go ahead, compare thirteen years of that to thirteen years of living in a hospital, and tell me that the world owes you more.



Look, I'm not saying what you're feeling right now isn't justified. It is. But I think it's good to put it into perspective. Right now, you are standing at the bottom of a mountain, and can clearly see the summit. That summit is this surgery, and that replacement mechanical aortic heart valve? That will last a lifetime. The summit isn't what scares you, it's the hike. You're afraid of looking ahead to that day, June 17th, and wondering if you're going to get the days after it. You dread the days in which the extended family comes down; seeing the worry and concern on their faces. You're worried that you aren't going to be able to keep up that façade of strength for long. Take a deep breath.

As you inhale, I want you to allow that fear to take over. I want you to imagine that June 17th is the last day that you have here. I want you to think about how much time you have between now and then. How will people remember you? If you aren't satisfied with that answer, then figure out how that can change between now and then. I want you to feel your failing heart beat beneath your chest and come to terms with the fact that this could be it.

Now exhale. As the air flows out, your fear should fade away. Every bit of it should fade away like water cupped in your hands. As that fear fades away, I want you to replace it with something different: determination. Looking ahead to what is going to happen; everything from

the catheterization, to the pre-op appointments, all the way to June 17th, and feel that determination course through your veins. Turn that anger that you've been feeling into something different. These surgeries- the scars on your chest- they won't define you. You are going to walk into that hospital, and you are going to walk out. As this determination burns through you like a raging wildfire, you will start to feel indestructible. Eventually, it won't be hard to radiate strength because you aren't faking it anymore. The smile on your face is no longer a mask, it is who you are. You're going to look up, and notice that the town seems to have its eyes on you. All of those who love and believe in you, their individual flames will contribute to the wildfire.

If that isn't enough, I am here writing to you now to tell you that you're going to make it. It's going to be a long, hard, uphill battle, but you will survive. You are going survive June 17th, and the days that come after. You will walk into that hospital, and you will walk out. The time spent inside will be just as much a part of you as that scar that splits your chest.

The mechanical heart valve is going to cause your heartbeat to sound different. It will be this quiet, but relentlessly audible ticking that never stops. It's going to take some getting used to, at first. I mean, being able to hear your own heartbeat is a strange phenomenon. Eventually, it will become one of the most relieving sounds that you can hear as each tick



is a reminder that you're still alive.

As time goes by, you'll remember this moment. The day that you accepted fear and allowed it to motivate you. It will reverberate through your mind every day, from here on out. One day, in the not so distant future, you'll see just how different you are because you made that decision. Looking back on this moment, you'll come to realize just how truthful Lincoln was when he said, "A man is only as happy or as sad as he chooses to be." I know the future is foggier than ever before, but you have to believe in it. Believing in tomorrow makes today far more enjoyable. You don't get to choose how your story begins or how it ends, but you do have some say in what happens in the middle. This surgery is just a chapter in the grand story that is your life. It is going to be lined up with the other chapters that have yet to come.

You're going to join the marching band and love it so much that you're going to forget about all of those other things that you wanted to do but couldn't. You're going to continue with your career in scouting and learn what it means to be a real leader. You're going to fall in love for the first time, feeling your heart ride that rollercoaster of emotion.

That love is going to forever be a part of you. With that, you're going to get to know love's bastard brother, heartbreak.

There will days where you seem to rule the world, and days where your walls come tumbling down. Each crippling failure will further cement what I told you earlier into your brain: the world doesn't owe you shit. Each time you taste the sweet flavor of victory in life, it's going to be all the sweeter, because of what you had to go through to get it. You're going to get stronger, too. By the end of high school, you will be able to do more pull-ups and bench press more weight than some of those football player friends of yours.

My friend, know that the road ahead is long and shrouded in darkness. It is a path that you did not choose, but was chosen for you. Take one last look around before you step out into the light, and look at those who love you. You're going to make it for them. You're going to survive for them. You're going to be a symbol of hope for them. For even if we have nothing, we have hope. Now go, take that first grand stride to greatness with reckless abandon.



HERE I AM

WRITTEN BY TORY ROSE

PHOTO BY KATE FRANCIS

Here I am pretending to write,
To fight,
Maybe I am,
Maybe I'm not.
Respectively.
I want to get my way,
Maybe that's the reason that I'm so
behaved.
And yet, it feels like something more,
Like more than a torturous chore
That I do just to be needy,
Just to get....
Attention.
I've let so many people get in my head
That I blame myself for my mental health.
I've been inside my head for so long that I
do not remember how it felt,
To be normal.
They say that normal doesn't exist,
But I believe that something beyond this,
Does.
And yet I will never be it,
Because I insist on behaving this way,
I insist on explaining my actions to myself
Within my own brain,
When I can simply,
Stop.
Or can I?
Can I stop something that is not in my
Control?
Can I explain how I cannot control what
Others can control?
I cannot.

I cannot
Resign.
I cannot sign my name to an adjective
that
Is not me.
I cannot give that kind of control to those
That wish to see me fail.
I am the saboteur.
I am the sailor,
Clinging desperately to the sails
Over the wails
And the wails of the wind and sea.
I am the ocean,
Crying, Crying out:
"Let me win, let me win!"
I am the boat,
Stuck between these two;
Between the dark and the darker.
For when one looks up,
They see sunlight,
When I look up, I see wind, rain, cold
And pain.
When I look down, I see wet and dark,
Cold and mystery.
How will history replay this event
If I've decided that the mystery is better
Than the pain?
What if I'd rather take a chance, then
Continue with this waning dance?
What if,
My solution is dissolution?

Dear Little Girl

Written by Mena Lofton

Dear little girl with the pigtails
Dear little girl who is not enough
Dear little girl who could never
 be class president
Dear little girl who could never
 be strong enough
Who could never be the leader,
Who could never be pretty enough,
 Thin enough,
 Smart enough,
 Good enough,
 Brave enough,
 This is Enough!
 Enough!
Dear little girl who is simply a girl...
 You...
Are more than Enough.

Photo by Stevie DupreeParker





Down to the Real You

Written by Devin Raines

Beauty is something we all possess

It doesn't pick one over another

Not really in how you dress

But in how we treat each other

Make-up is all superficial

It gives off no magic power

Does the brand make you official,

If your personality begins to sour?

Even though it's a cliché to say,

That it's what is inside that counts

The real you will brighten a rainy day

So never hide yourself on any account

Don't listen to what people tell you

That you aren't as pretty as you are

Because it's time for them to get a clue

You were always as radiant as a star

Photo by Joshua Clark

[illegible]

Photo By Charlee Moss





Master Piece

Written by Kierra Garrett

This is for my grandmother,
creator of life
who sacrificed her fragile frame
to carry this country in her womb
only to be excluded from their notions of perfect pictures
on account of her imperfect figure.

This is for my mother,
tower of strength
who abandoned her own identity
to carry this country on her back
only to be considered inferior by those who built legacies
on her foundation.

This is for me,
pillar of hope
who learned to master peace
to carry this country in the palms of my hands
despite the fact that it had turned its back on us
even after all we've done.

This is for my daughter,
agent of change who will remember our struggle
to carry this country into a better tomorrow
and persevere
regardless of the obstacles that lie ahead.

To you:
Don't let them turn their backs on us.

Build a legacy.
Paint a better picture.
Create a masterpiece.

Modeled by Seanta Baker

Royalty

By Sierra Willams

Dear Queen,
Look in the mirror,
and tell me what you see

Hair

Soft Curly Straight
Wavy Kinky Long
Short Real Or fake

Eyes

No one knows the struggle you go through behind closed doors, making sure that your hair is always presentable for the public. Some hair textures take 30 minutes to do, some take hours, but nonetheless your endless efforts to please yourself, men, females, and the public eye will never go unnoticed

So many backgrounds, so many pasts.
Your eyes have seen some of the most horrific moments and some of the most beautiful scenes. Don't be discouraged of your past because it only makes you the strong woman you are today. Being able to forgive the past but never forget, with a mixture of the present, it's the perfect recipes for a successful future

Lips

Soft Thick Thin
Big Small Medium

MY VOICE WILL
BE HEARD!

Although you may be kissable,
your voice is what captures
everyone's attention.

Speak out! Shout! Scream!

Let your opinions and thoughts be heard
Once you understand that your voice
matters, then no one can ever shut you
up. Not a man, a friend, a dog, or a
damn tree.

Smile

A small fragment of your face that carries a big responsibility.

It's what brings life to you and warmth to others.

Your smile is simply yours! Even when you go through the toughest times of your life, it's always there to cover up your pain from the public eye. As soon as you get your life together, your smile shines even brighter.

Skin

Black White Yellow
Tan Brown Purple
Green Blue Red

As women of the many colors of the world, we are responsible to unite as one and lift each other up within our sisterhood. We are all Queens, walking in this sinful world finding ourselves, finding our thrones, finding our Queenoms. So why the competition? Why such hatred? Why can't we give women compliments and actually mean it? Why look down on individuals? Does it make you feel higher or more powerful than others? Nah sis, your hatred to other women only makes you as ugly as your comments.

WE ARE SISTERS, WE ARE ONE.

We are still dealing with that fact that some men
feel as though we don't deserve a six-figure salary.....

so why are we hating on each other again?

Paradise

Your most prized possession
The little you that lets you know
when it's time for...
The weakness to a King
Your pleasure box
Your greatest pain one time a
month
The one thing that taught us to not
have control.

Be cautious and aware.
Be smart and safe.
Whoever you let enter the gate of
your soul, make sure they are
worthy of it.
Do you sis, drink your water and
live your best life but never a messy
one'



Bloom

Written By Tayla Berry

Dear Black girl,
Token black girl
Favorite black girl
Black girl that is
okay to be friends with
But not date, marry,
or create a life with.
Black girl that acts too white
Has too many white friends
Black girl that doesn't
act BLACK enough
Black girl who fights her identity
Black girl that is ashamed of her hair
Black girl that just wants to fit in
Black girl that is
Too *skinny*
Too *fat*
Too *loud*
Too *strong*
Too *hard*
Too *tough*
Too *handicapped*
Too *independent*
Too *driven*
Too *focused on their career*
Too *queer*
Too *emotional*
Too *passionate*
Too *spiritual*
Too *natural*
Too *different*

Too
Two
To
every Black girl
that understands you.
That has to be Twice as good
to get half.
To you black girl,
Your black is **Wonderful**.
Your black is **Powerful**.
Your black is **Lovely**.
Your black is **Beautiful**.
Your black is **Rare**.
Your black is **Woman**.
Your black is **God**.
Your black is **Gentle**.
Your black is **Revolutionary**
Your black knows that
It doesn't have to compete
with others
For the sun.
For light.
For greatness.
You are already great.
You are your own flower.
You bloom regardless,
Black girl.

Photo By Earl Curry

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Photo By Kate Francis

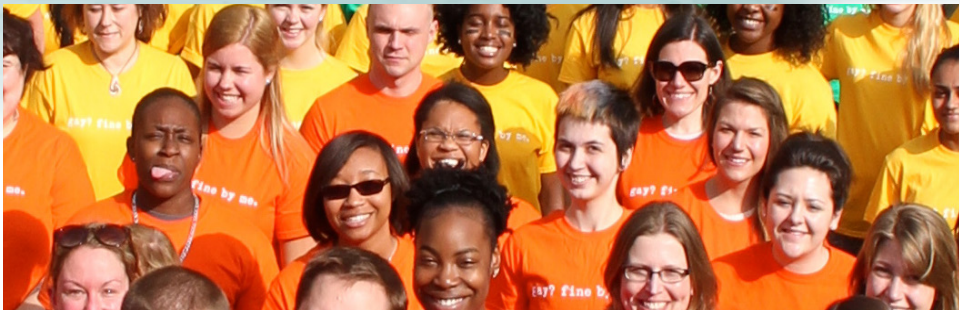


Blooming Resources

By A Brief History of the affluence and acceptance of LGBT at ECU

By Jahad Chris Carter

The LGBT Resource Center in Brewster B-103 serves as a safe haven for many queer and allied students on our campus. Every year, many students come to see the resource center as a home away from home that offers a family of peers who are no stranger to the struggles queer folk face. After many years, the LGBT community will open a few LGBTQ Assistance Center alongside other student organizations. The center not only will receive a huge makeover, but it will also foster in a historical achievement for the growing LGBT community here at ECU. At the same time, the organization that is most known for their famous "Gay? Fine be me" shirts will now have a Blooming presence and prominence on our campus. With the help of a few students, we will breakdown the love, the experience, and the history that makes the LGBT Resource Center what it is today. Also, what it took to get there and how it left the door wide open to pave the way for the future.



Every year many students come to see the resource center as a home away from home that offers a family of peers who are no stranger to the struggles queer folk face.

Hannah Myers, a senior double major in Political Science and Communication, says the current LGBT Resource Center has been a "home away from home". After sitting down with Myers in Brewster, she shared a great deal of her truths and how the center has helped her to find them. Like many other students in the LGBT community, Myers realized that she wasn't quite like everyone else at a very young age. She says, "I remember growing up in a single parent household when all of my friends started to have crushes on guys, and I started to accept that I liked girls". Myers went on to talk about her childhood before she touched on the topic of how she came out to her mother. Myers jokingly told a heartwarming story about her thirteen-year-old self gaining the courage to live up to her true identity. While they were in the same house, Myers wrote her mom a Facebook message about her feelings towards girls. Hoping that her mom would read the message before the night was over, Myers made her way upstairs in fear of what she might wake up to in the morning. Myers said her mom replied with, "a very supportive and loving message, but ended her response that my best friend could no longer sleep in friend could no longer sleep in the same bed as me". Myers and I laughed, and I asked her, "How has the LGBT resource center impacted you in any kind of way?" Myers expressed that, although her family was mostly supportive, she still wasn't very comfortable with her sexuality.



"I remember growing up in a single parent household when all of my friends started to have crushes on guys and I started to accept that I liked girls."

She found out about the resource center her freshman year after a fall welcoming social. She stated that, "When I began to come into the office, and people started learning my name, it made all the difference." Finding all of her best friends at the center, Myers believes that the people in the office are completely dedicated to the betterment of any student that walks into the resource center. She stated, "one day, I came in here and I was freaking out about a test and then someone sat me down, made a pot of coffee, and helped me study for it." Myers felt that her experience with the LGBT Resource Center has truly helped her fully come to terms with who she was, who she is now, and who she will become. Myers's experience with the LGBT Resource Center is similar to other students who may feel different from the rest of the world. No matter if you are gay, trans, bisexual, black, white, or orange they are always there to support you.





Photo by Kate Francis

The LGBT Resource Center also serves as a hub for students who are currently transitioning and those who have bravely made the leap to the other side. Ashten Shope, who at the age of twenty began her transition into a woman realizing how different she was at a very young age. Shope explains "I knew I was different during elementary school, but of course at that age you don't really understand gender and don't really identify yourself or your sexuality." Like many other trans people, internally Shope noticed that the gender she was born with didn't quite match. However, she didn't fully understand her identity until years later as a teen. Shope felt that, "When I started going through my first round of puberty in middle school, I began to realize that there was a true disconnect." Once she began high school, "I struggled with understanding that since I was born a male and having been attracted to men, how do I rectify my sexuality along with the discrepancy of my gender?" Personally, Shope is a beacon showing the inner and outer struggles that trans people often have to go through in our society; enduring a constant tug of war with societal expectations and the need to be her true self. However, Shope has now officially transitioned into a woman and is living the life that she's always wanted.

At the same time, that doesn't mean that her struggles have completely subsided, they only transitioned along with her. Shope says, "I don't experience a lot of the issues anymore with being trans, however the issues I face now are from being a woman." Me being surprised asked, "How's that?" Shope replied with "Soul Crushing!" Shope elaborated by saying, "there are limitations culturally on women that I did not experience previously until after my transition. Those limitations really percolating down all areas and avenues of my life." She continued, "with the simplest example being me having to rethink going to the grocery store depending on how late it is." In Shope's words, "There is an added layer of complexity because I am a woman in the LGBT community." Shope is not alone when she says this, the added societal struggles the trans people endure on a day to day basis goes often unnoticed. Moving on to the impact of the LGBT Resource Center on her life and transition. Shope beautifully says, "They offered me community especially in my awkward in-between stages during my transition. They were the people who brought me comfort, acceptance, and resources. They gave me contacts of people to help me navigate this new world and brought me in contact with other trans people who I

ECU LGBT Timeline

1978

November 14th

Center, they also gained more responsibility regarding the upkeep of the center. Including the cleaning of shelves where Dale, similar to the movie "National Treasure", discovered something miraculous. Instead of gold, ancient artifacts, or pieces of the Magna Carta. Dale uncovered, "the original constitution and amended constitution of the then student organization BGLAD (Bisexual Gay Lesbian and Allies for Diversity)." For those that don't know, BGLAD was the previous student organization that once fostered the growth of the LGBT community on our campus through the late 90's and 2000's. Dale, for three years diligently worked to uncover more and more information on past LGBTQ organizations that extended to the late 1970's. Currently, Zach Dale is still working on the information for their graduate thesis and provided a timeline of significant events; beginning with a time when our campus was not so inclusive towards LGBT students. To the present, where we are currently anticipating the opening of the brand new LGBTQ Assistance Center.

[illegible]



1979

February 12th

The publishing of the suicide letter ignited a resurgence in the queer community. Mainly, the community sought to gain acceptance and the ability to assist in supporting students who were in the same shoes of the writer from the anonymous suicide letter. Seeking institutional support, the queer community aggregated on ECU campus to formulate a club. So, on this date ECGC (East Carolina Gay Community) drafted a constitution and it was approved by SGA and was formally recognized as a student organization.

1980–1987

Fall

This time period marked the significant struggles that the LGBTQ community and organization have endured. With the apparent success of ECGC being recognized as a formal student organization, came backlash from the surrounding student community. First, The Newman Catholic Center once served as a hub for queer folk in the community back then. Not to mention, the Newman Center was located adjacent to then fraternity house TKE whose members were heavily catholic and religious. The fraternity brothers implicated many discriminatory tactics that included burning of property on the front lawns, vandalism, and screaming various discriminatory expletives. Second, along with the retirement of an ECU advisor for the club in 1985 (It is required that student organizations have an advisor sign off on the organization), the group ECGC released its last advertisement in 1984. Lastly, the AIDS crisis hits several parts of America and is presumed as the "gay disease." The impact was significant to the queer community in Eastern North Carolina. After these three significant events, the group struggles to remain afloat with the leaving of a key member of the organization and significant backlash from the surrounding community. ECGC seemed to have vanished from campus in 1986 and was mentioned for the last time in student publications in 1987.



1992

June 7th

As way to begin a new form of support for queer students since the previous events, BGLA (Bisexual Gay Lesbian Alliance) was created. BGLA was a discreet support group through the counseling services that internally and confidentially focused on LGBT students. The counseling service began to transition to an outreach and public student organization. However, after an attack on a queer student took place on campus the group reverted back underground as a discreet and confidential counseling service.

1994

April 20th

A new group called BGLAD was orchestrated to re-assert the queer community's prominence on campus. On this date, the group's constitution was approved, and the group was formally recognized as a formal student organization. Highlighting the group's hard work to remain as an organization that accepts those who are turned away from the world.

1997

April 10th

An ad titled "Another way out" was published in the student led newspaper. The ad attempted to persuade queer folk that their life choices could potentially lead to negative and sometimes deadly circumstances. With a man proclaiming that, because he was gay and was intimate with a man, he contracted HIV. At the same time, a woman was proclaiming that she didn't truly have feelings for women. That she instead was searching for someone to fill the void that was left in her heart. BGLAD was rightfully so offended and questioned the staff for the editorial decision for publishing the ad. In response, the newspaper allowed a two-page spread that advocated for queer students to join their group, further cementing their presence on our campus.

"Growing up, there were men who caused me pain. Then I met one who brought true healing."



For information on another way out, give us a call.

There is another way out.



1-800-236-9238
www.anotherwayout.com

"I won't dare tell anyone after a teenage boy approached me sexually. Of course, at four years old you're afraid of getting in trouble...so you go silent. But inside the pain of that moment your body didn't feel pretty or even neutral. I could special attention from my dad to make everything all right. But I couldn't tell him why. I didn't know when to do with men...they just kept hurting me, so I rejected them. I began to think, being feminine meant being weak and vulnerable. I became a survivor. As a teenager, I found myself having crushes on some of my girlfriends. Once in college, I pursued my growing attraction for women. But as a lesbian, I found that I just need someone I could grieve up with other women out of emotional dependency rather than true love. This told me something was wrong. That's when I called Louis Chiles to fill the void in my heart, the old. Then he told me to wait, being people who helped me see the underlying needs that drove me to a hidden identity. If you're looking for real love, and need to talk with someone who opens, start by asking him. He can make the difference in your life, too."

2011

Fall

The LGBT Resource Center was opened and served as a hub and home for students who belonged to LGBT community. This is a great achievement for the community because a safe place where students could seek friendship, resources, and support was created. The Resource Center was a tremendous step in the right direction for queer folk. However, the current center is located in Brewster, while many student organizations are located in Mendenhall Student Center. At the same time, as the group's prominence grew more and more, the office has become sometimes overcrowded. Leaving some to believe that although the university provided the long sought institutional support, they also metaphorically stuck the community in a closet that was secluded away from the rest of campus.

2019

Spring

The community has endured many setbacks and triumphs through the history of the LGBTQ's prominence on campus. All of the events that took place before next semester's grand opening has led to this moment. Showing the blossoming of a minority group that has come a long way over the past forty years to achieve a front and center LGBT center, institutional support, and a pervasive and prominent safe haven for queer and allied students. The new center will forever serve as a precedent through its operation, of the struggles that past queer students had to go through to reach this point of confirmation and solidification of their importance and presences on this campus.



Letter From the Editor

At very young age, I knew that the world we live in wasn't all daisies and roses. It was extremely rough for me growing up as gay black male in several different impoverished areas. To me, it seems as if the life that I live now was neither imaginable nor attainable to my younger self. Looking back on the various obstacles that I had to overcome just to get to college and obtaining the opportunity to better my life. Day to day I struggled in school, with my family, and with my true identity. Metaphorically, my struggles felt like the dirt that covered my every waking breath hoping to permanently keep me in the ground. However, internally I fought to stay alive and rationed every little bit of hope that I had. As I kept pushing, I learned the true meaning to the saying "there's always a light at the end of the tunnel." Personally, this year's Expressions, titled *Bloom*, embodies the evolution and the grit that it takes to pull yourself out of any struggle that comes your way. Although, each submission is vastly different from the other, in retrospect you can see the bigger picture that the publication paints.

In the beginning, the pieces are a bit harder to swallow with no true idea of what is to come as the publication progresses. From my experience, you never truly know the depth of your struggles and why they occur. At the same time, as the obstacles I faced got progressively worse I became even more confused of what was to come. The first half of the publication to me symbolizes the struggle and the confusion that comes along with it.



However, towards the middle, the publication begins to shift to a more positive and lighter tone. This represents the process of truly learning who you are and your will power to overcome the obstacles that stand before you.

The second half to me is the true meaning of blooming from something difficult. Showing that whatever you're going through doesn't always have to be your end. No matter if you are gay, straight, trans, bisexual, a woman, a man, black, white, yellow, or red you aren't immune to struggles. At the same time, not everyone has the will to truly face the problem and hopefully this publication can help. My definition of Blooming is a verb that depicts growing from the dark corners of life, striving to uncover the dirt in order to get a true sense of the light at the end of the tunnel and hopefully you all enjoy it!

Jahad Chris Carter



Thank You

To our contributors

Thank you for being open with your stories and struggles. We all are truly appreciative of all of you. We are thankful for the courage it took to let down your walls and be a part of something like Expressions. Without you guys, we would have never been able to create something so special.

To Terrence Dove

Thank you for your guidance and honesty as we were creating this publication. You really helped us as we were crafting the idea of Bloom. Without you, none of us could say this publication would be where it is today.

To Annah Howell

Thank you for always being there for us whenever we need you. Your assistance during the production of the magazine has truly helped us tremendously.

To Julie Roman

Thank you so much with your help with everything. Your kindness and generosity has truly meant a lot to all of us.

To the Agency

Thank you guys for the hard work that you all put in to build a relationship with our community, readers and our peers. You guys truly help us Express ourselves with this publication.

To John Harvey

We not only thank you for your leadership and guidance this semester, but we thank you for your years of service with student media. We will truly miss you when you leave Pirate 1 Media.

To our readers and supporters

Thank you guys for supporting our publication you guys are the reason we've worked so hard. Every day we were motivated by you guys to put out a publication that you all could enjoy. And we hope you do.

To our lovely Interns Devin and Carrie

You guys have helped out around the office so much. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the cause of putting out a good publication. It would not be as special without you guys!

Staff Biographies

Camile Young



General Manager

"I am a senior double major in Photography and Journalism from Gastonia North Carolina. I have been with Student Media now for four years, it has been an amazing experience. I hope to one day work for a news or magazine organization in investigative photojournalism and eventually travel across the globe. Working with the Expressions staff has been a wonderful experience and seeing the publication come to life is an amazing achievement."

Charlee Moss



Photo Editor

"My major is Art with a concentration in Film and Video Production. I enjoy photography, cinematography, and editing. I am the Photo Editor for Pirate Media 1 Magazines. What I liked most about working on *Expressions* was seeing the various submitted content. Since most photos were submitted, I got to see people's interpretation of this specific publication, "Bloom", and what it means to them."

Sierra RaeLynne Williams



Copy Editor

"I am a Junior, currently majoring in Journalism from Charlotte, NC. My dream job is to become a professional magazine editor for a company such as *ESSENCE*. Being able to read people's past experiences, their hurt, how they feel about themselves when they look into the mirror, how society views them and how they view society all in an artistic way was the highlight of working on *Expressions*. With every story and poem, each submission lead to the blossoming of real world issues that are overlooked daily."

Katie Church



Design Chief

"I am a senior concentrating in Graphic Design from Youngsville, NC. This is my first year with the magazine, but I had previously worked with student media as an Electronic Music DJ for WZMB. I have many different interests outside of design including singing, dancing, songwriting, and Sales. Post graduation I hope to continue growing as a designer and one day open a business. "

Erin Flynn



Graphic Designer

"I am a 20-year-old, Junior, History Education Major for the Secondary Level, from Raleigh, NC. After changing my major from Graphic Design and Art Education, I was missing the aspect of art in my life. I have been taking art classes for thirteen years. After I joined the Magazine Division of Student Media over a year ago, I gained that part of my life back. I have worked on *The Hook* and *Expressions*, loving every moment."

Brandon Miles



Graphic Designer

"I am a Graphic Design major in my senior year from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This is my first year working with Student Media. I like working with a team that supports each other. *Expressions* gives me the creative freedom to explore new and interesting aesthetics. To be able to create a cohesive conceptual magazine is a dream come true."

Multicultural

If your multicultural organization is not listed,
please contact expressions and we will feature you in the next issue.

African Students Organization (ASO)

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Twitter: @ECU_ASO

Asian Student Association (ASA)

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Twitter: @asaatecu

Black Students Union (BSU)

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Twitter: @ECU_BSU

Caribbean Students Association (CSA)

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Chinese Student and Scholars

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East Carolina Native American Organization (ECNAO)

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Fashion Above Modern Expression (FAME Modeling Troupe)

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German Club

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Hillel at ECU

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Indian Student Association (ISA)

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Iota Nu Delta Fraternity Inc.

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National Council of Negro Women

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The New Woke

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Society For Women Engineers

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Student Association of Latino Spanish Affairs (SALSA)

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Women Organization for Minorities Achieving Now (WOMAN)

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Word of Mouth

President- Noah Lee
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Expressions is published once a year by East Carolina University students at the Magazine Division Office, Self-Help Building, Second Floor. Greenville, NC 27858.

Opinions expressed herein are those of the student contributors and DO NOT reflect those of the faculty, staff, administration of ECU, Student Media Board nor the University of North Carolina System.

Submission Guidelines

Expressions is currently accepting submissions for our next issue. Contributions can be any illustrations, poems, short stories, photographs or non-fiction works. All submissions should include your full name, major and classification. Please send all work to expressions@ecu.edu. Those pieces selected may appear in our next edition.

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Expressions

