

## Women's Day: Creating Safe Spaces for LGBTQI Youth



On March 16, 2018, ten students from the Women's Leadership Project (WLP) at King-Drew Magnet of Medicine and Science led all-day workshops which focused on creating safe spaces for LGBTQI youth in school communities. WLP students discussed the importance of gender pronouns, validating self-determining LGBTQI, gender-non-conforming and queer identities, and homophobic and transphobic stereotypes in mainstream media. Eleventh and twelfth grade students Lucina Ambriz, Allison Govea, Adebayo Ojute, Briza Contreras and Cheyanne McClaren also highlighted cultural perceptions of heteronormative family roles, the impact of homophobia and transphobia in religion, queer contemporary and historical figures of color, and the mainstreaming of toxic heterosexist language in school cultures. The interactive sessions were part of annual school-wide Women's Day activities at King-Drew Magnet that take place during all class periods and are mandatory for students and faculty. Approximately one hundred fifty students participated in WLP's sessions.

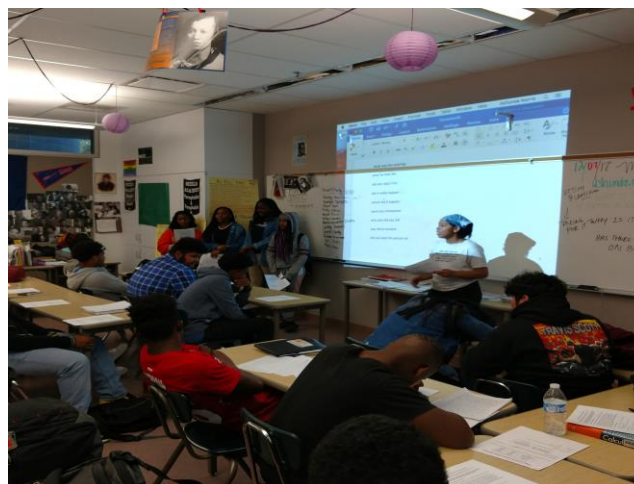
## African American Male Mentoring Workshop



On March 20, 2018, five students from the Young Male Scholars' (YMS) program at Gardena High School conducted an African American Male Mentoring workshop with twenty student participants and invited speakers. Students Markease Harris (12<sup>th</sup> grade), Danny Wood (9<sup>th</sup> grade) and Jaden Mudd (9<sup>th</sup> grade) began the session with a Power Point presentation on the YMS program, citing sociopolitical statistics and demographics on racial justice in the U.S. Students reviewed YMS and WLP collaborations on improving access to Advanced Placement education, academic mentoring, college readiness, redressing the school-to-prison pipeline, and sexual violence prevention. HRC staff member Kevin Coleman, a Morehouse and Cal State Dominguez Hills graduate and decorated veteran, gave a powerful presentation on his personal and professional background. Coleman discussed the importance of self-reliance, discipline, community engagement, and challenging racist notions of black masculinity. Coleman's inspirational remarks were enthusiastically received by the mentees, who expressed appreciation for his professionalism and tenacity. Sexual violence prevention advocate Rashad Beal, program coordinator at Peace Over Violence, discussed how his upbringing in hyper-segregated Texas informed his growth as an educator and mentor. Beal emphasized the connections between misogyny and institutional racism and challenged the young men in attendance to interrogate sexism in their everyday lives. The second-in-a-series session was co-facilitated by Gardena restorative justice coordinator, Garrett Lee, who is also a Morehouse alum.



## #MeToo in LAUSD Schools: Sexual Violence and African American Girls



On March 21, 2018, seven students from WLP Dorsey participated in an interview with KPFK's Feminist Magazine. The interview focused on the racial politics of the #MeToo movement and the marginalization of African American girls' activism. Students discussed "misogynoirist" images (racist gender norms, stereotypes and misperceptions that are specifically aimed at black women and girls) and their efforts to raise awareness about the culturally specific impact of sexual violence, sexual abuse, sex trafficking, harassment, and homophobia on black girls in LAUSD schools. Nationwide, nearly sixty percent of African American girls have experienced sexual abuse by the age of 18. Because of misogynoir and economic inequities, African American girls are also less likely to report sexual abuse and receive trauma care than are white girls. Students and faculty advisor Ashunda Norris stressed the need for mandatory culturally responsive sexual harassment prevention training for K-12 schools that is geared toward communities of color. WLP also highlighted the nexus between over-policing, "random" searches and other criminalizing efforts that disproportionately target black students and precipitate pushout of black girls.

## **Advance Placement Workshops and African American Youth**



In January, 2018, WLP and YMS students presented to over eighty students on Advanced Placement education and awareness. The workshops are part of a series of school-community engagements on the under-representation of African American students in AP course and test taking. Ninth-twelfth grade WLP and YMS students discussed the importance of AP classes for college preparation and admission, and deconstructed the racist cultural cues and low academic expectations that discourage African American students from taking AP classes. Students highlighted their own experiences in AP classes and the need for greater vigilance from counselors, teachers, administrators and parents/caregivers. Nationwide, fewer than 30% of African American and Latinx students enroll in and/or take AP courses, which are gatekeepers for admission to competitive four year colleges and universities.