

Audio Transcript: Keyssh Datts

Radio Producer, *Hear Us Out*

My name is Keyssh, and I'm from Southwest Philadelphia. I've been a member of PhillyCAM for about five years. I would say I'm a multimedia creator that tries to create in regard of social justice. About, like, the end of junior in high school, I was like, I was like one of the anti-social, like, cool kids, I don't know how to explain it. I was always like, I fit in, but didn't fit in. So I felt like I fit in a lot of different social groups. But I always didn't feel like I had a community on my own. And so junior year of high school, I remember just hating high school because I got bullied because I tried to fit in, but kind of backfired on me, because I almost got jumped. And, um, I remember just like, felt like, I don't want to come to school. Like, I don't want to come to school no more. And so, actually, I prayed after the situation where I almost got jumped in front of like, 30 people. And I said, "God, like change my life. Please, like, just get me out of this situation." Like I don't, I didn't know what direction I was going in.

But then maybe a week, or a couple of weeks later, there was a walkout for Columbine, and a situation that happened with someone shooting up to school and it was the anniversary, I don't know if it was the 20 year or ten year anniversary. And, um, I don't know what the walkout was for, but I'm like, I don't like school and I need to walk out. because I felt like I just needed to protest. because of the emotional baggage I was feeling walking into school every day. And so I walked out and I found the Philadelphia Student Union. And I found this lady named Saudia Durrant and she was organizing and then through organizing, PhillyCAM hosted a program called Youth Set the Stage which would bring a lot of different youth nonprofits together. So it was one big event. And then I seen that PhillyCAM was having applications for a radio show. And I remember feeling like like growing up I was like, "I'm not one of these like talented, artsy, people." Like I thought like you had to be born with it. I'm like, I thought these people were like the special people that was just

like, gifted with like art. And so I'm like, even though I don't have nothing, like no work, I felt like that was the first time somebody took a chance- I was just waiting for a chance and I feel like they took a chance to put me on a platform to speak. And even though I was still shy of speaking, I just knew I needed to like, I just felt like an alignment of like, this is a step you need to take. And so that's when I joined PhillyCAM doing a youth radio show called *Hear Us Out*. It was like the first time I really got to express myself through justice.

The way that we reach our greatest point, if we study history, is through our communities and the communities that come before us. So I feel like my learned skill of like helping future generations and helping, like our community now is knowing that everything that I'm like doing is for them, and what is the needs of our communities? And I feel like I examine that and I examine like the hurt and the pain that's like surrounding me to like, be a part of like, being like an on-ground organizer, like I'm seeing people be displaced, right? I'm seeing like my friend was like shot and killed. I'm seeing like the pain that comes through like people's mothers like, of like, that pain. Like I'm seeing the pain of like somebody be in an abusive household, like I'm seeing so much pain is like how can I figure out what is the solution through art?