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I am a girl and I am the moonlight

By Mam-Marry SarrFox

To commemorate International Women's Day this year on March 8, The Philanthropist collaborated with Mount Saint Vincent University and the Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice to offer a writing and publishing opportunity for girls participating in the 2019 Girls Conference in Halifax. This week, we're publishing poetry/spoken word pieces written and presented by two of the conference delegates and speakers, El Jones and Mam-Mary SarrFox.

I am a girl, and I am the moonlight. You can see it in the way that even in the deepest darkest nights, I light up the world. I am a girl, and I am the sunlight. You can see it in the way that my face lights up when I'm happy. I am a girl, and I am the sea. You can see it in the waves in my hair. I am a girl, and I am the stars. I give the world something to look up to, a role model.

But what does the world give me? The world gives me shame, pain, and mostly no gain. The world gives me hate and rape. The world gives me harmful cultural practices that hurt my body as a young woman; FGM, footbinding, early marriage, brideburning, anorexia, bulimia, and liposuction. The world gives me young boys that don't know the words "no" and "stop." The world gives me a silicone mold of a perfect body that I will never fit into and no one does.

I am a girl someday to be a woman. The foundation to a new generation of a nation of people. People of the future. I will be a teacher, a preacher, a leader, a mother who will raise sons to be better fathers to their someday daughters. Sons who will respect and honour women. And the first words I will teach them to respect are the words "no," "stop," and "I don't want to." I'm the mother who will teach her daughters to respect themselves and know their rights.

I am on the bottom of the social scale because I raised everyone up on my shoulders while I moved mountains. But I don't plan to be kept there. I will help raise a better tomorrow where we lift each other up. I am a girl, and I am the moonlight. I am compassion. I am love. I am beautiful, just the way I am. I am a girl, and I am the moonlight.