Crystal's Road Trip Reflections

Dear "Black Women in Medicine" supporters,

Thank you to everyone who made our journey to the West Coast possible. This was trip filled with extreme highs and tremendous obstacles. We traveled the six thousand miles from Connecticut to California and then back again. The incredible amount of distance, time, and resources that were invested in this trip were both a miracle and a challenge. Add onto this the realities of traveling as a quadriplegic. This trip was larger than life and each moment was a moment that I thanked God for the wonderful blessings and safety nets that were provided to hold us as we journeyed into the unknown.

Once we arrived in Los Angeles, we began preparing for the
event at California Endowment. It was an incredible convening on so many levels. I cannot fully depict the energy and warmth that Dr. Robert K. Ross, Bill Duke, and Danny Glover brought to that space. It was amazing and beautiful to witness these Black men in their positions as leaders in our community, as well as fathers. It was also incredible to have our doctors there to sign books or participate in the program. I am grateful to each and every one: Drs. Ramona Tascoe, Claudia L. Thomas, Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Jessie Sherrod, and Roberta Doucet. It was so important for the audience to witness that type of camaraderie and approachability of these exceptional women.

As you can imagine, the trip provided for many profound learning experiences. One of the most intense was driving with three guys in a van for so long. When you spend that long in a van with somebody, you learn things about them that you never knew. And they learn things about you that they don’t want to know.

Sometimes these lessons are extremely hard to learn. Often you are forced out of your own denial. For me a lot of this had to with being a quadriplegic. I constantly think that there’s nothing I can’t do and I still think that’s probably true, but not without extreme cost. It’s not always a financial cost.
Thank you to Guru Madeleine for her energy shield protecting us. Thank you for God’s amazing gift of Grace. There are no words to thank our board president and my best friend, Allen Scott (CT). You are the wind beneath my wings. The three guys that drove me were Will, Robert, and Jeffrey. I’m still not sure whether they drove me to California, or were trying to drive me crazy. Either way, I could not have gotten there without you. Will, extra kudos for getting that banner on the truck and not damaging the truck. That banner made everyone’s head spin.

Again, thank you also to those of you beyond our own team who have cheered us on, read my daily travel story, and supported us throughout this journey with your prayers. Your support made this journey possible. And what a journey it was. In the end the obstacles brought forth our creative problem solving and the setbacks confirmed our shining resilience.

I am reflecting on this especially at the conclusion of a long and difficult election season. Our nation is at a crossroads and now, more than ever, it is critical that we work to achieve our dreams and dismiss the specters of our fears. The journey is just beginning, and it will be beyond difficult. It is a daunting journey, but I remind you that I am here because my ancestors fought against great hardships. They didn’t give up and neither can we.

It is critical that we begin this journey standing tall and united. We must lift up the next generation and allow them to stand on our shoulders. We have come this far by faith, and it is time to 'keep our eyes on the prize' and keep moving.

You are all so important in this process. Thank you again for your
contribution, your caring, your compassion, and your dedication both to my own journey to Los Angeles and the national journey that lies ahead.

It takes a village to raise a child.

Namaskar,

Crystal

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