











How did you get introduced to Layla's Got You, and what does that organization really do to make a big difference here in Syracuse?

Erykah Pasha:

Yeah, so actually I got introduced from my friend, Niara, who's also from here and also goes to Syracuse University. She was

the Intercultural Collective and the

and I saw that they had opening and I was like, "Oh my God, perfect opportunity." So yeah, I ended up there. I think that was once again, something that found me, I really think, and I'm super glad I did. But yeah, I've been locked in, ever since.

John Boccacino:

I want to ask this question carefully and gingerly because everyone's story is different, but did you find yourself... Was it hard, was it tough finding acceptance from community, finding acceptance in high school with who you were before you came to Syracuse? And then, have you had success in finding that belonging of who you really are? Have you been able to really be who you are here on campus?

Erykah Pasha:

I think high school me, and me now, is very different, but generally, I don't think it was so much that I had a hard time finding community in high school, but there wasn't a very huge dead set queer community for me in high school. So I think, wasn't so much not being able to find community, but the community I had was very different and related to different things. So I think since being here on campus, there is a pretty carved out queer community. So that community just relates to different things still. So I think it's just been finding that different community and still having the community of people in high school and people here in Syracuse, but really just expanding what that community is for me and what community can be for me, I think, is where the Resource Center has come in.

John Boccacino:

And just to kind of expand upon that a little bit, because I love the sentiment you just expressed there, just how has the Resource Center helped you when it comes to feeling as comfortable as you need to be in your skin with who you are and what you bring to this campus?

Erykah Pasha:

I think a big thing about working with the resource center and what I've done so far is they really encourage you to bring what you're interested in, into the Resource Center. So I was interested in the Vogue and the Ball community. So I helped connect some of the ballroom community here in Syracuse and implementing the HalloQueen Ball and our Vogue workshop that we do each semester. So I think things like that, it's been really, once again, letting me expand on things that interest me. And I've been super lucky that those things have related to the queer community and LGBTQ people and that it's been so openly encouraged for me to engage in those things, in those ways that interest me and work for me and work for people here in Syracuse too and work for people on campus. So I think it's really just been that encouragement aspect.

John Boccacino:

It seems like you really have a great support system here and you've had a great support system in high school and growing up too, but having that really here on campus, it helps to make you thrive. It helps to make you feel like you can reach your full potential. And it's unfortunate with LGBTQ month being in June, our students really aren't on campus, but we do a celebration for the history month coming up in October. What does Pride Month mean to you? If you had to put your finger on the impact and the meaning, what does Pride Month signify?

Erykah Pasha:





your final year here on campus. Make the most of all your experiences and best of luck in Michigan too. That's such a great groundbreaking experience for you to get to go out there and pursue this research.

Erykah Pasha:

Thank you so much.

John Boccacino:

Thanks for checking out the latest installment of the 'Cuse Conversations podcast. My name is John Boccacino, signing off for the 'Cuse Conversations podcast.