



Compass Center
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PROFILE

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FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO BE APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

From East Carolina University to Compass Center, Christian Adams is the most recent Executive Director for the domestic violence service company. She started her career as the community outreach social worker for Lucille W. Gorham Intergenerational Community Center. She then moved to the Kinston Community Health Center with the same position.

Adams loved working as a community outreach social worker but decided to switch things up and start as an Outpatient Therapist and Targeted Case Manager at Carolina Outreach in Durham. She was able to do this for 2 years before joining the Durham County Department of Public Health for five years. Here, she started as a Social Worker and Care Manager then was promoted to Triple P Program Coordinator. Following those two roles, she became the Program Supervisor for two years.

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In wanting to make a change, Adams decided to move from North Carolina to Atlanta, Georgia. "As a human rights activist, someone that has been working in Atlanta for the last five years doing the work of reproductive health rights and justice, I am bringing to this center the ability to actually use an equitable lens," Adams said. In Atlanta, she worked at Sister Song, Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective as the Lead Trainer and Membership/Development Coordinator. She enjoyed this position for almost 4 years before moving to Access Reproductive Care Southeast as their Program Manager. After a year there, she is now back in NC as the Executive Director for Compass Center.

Wondering what got her started in the Social Work industry? Well, in 2004, Adams relied on the resources of a domestic violence center in order to escape her own abusive marriage. She said, "when I heard that this was a domestic violence center, for me, it was like I get to return to North Carolina to actually lead an organization that was the type of organization that propelled me into being the woman I am today."

This was a full-circle moment for Adams. When addressing the fact that she is the first black woman to be appointed as executive director for Compass Center, she thinks "it has definitely been overwhelming, but yet this is a historical moment for me to be able to step into an organization that has predominantly been white-led."

Adams notes that during the pandemic, the capacity at the center had to be limited due to high turnover. It has also been lacking funds for salary increases. So when starting she hopes "to be able to support Compass Center in providing equitable salaries and benefits for the staff that have been helping do this work and are currently still doing this work with no equitable salaries in place."

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As a long-time advocate for victims of many forms of injustices such as domestic violence and sexual violence, she is “thrilled to work alongside the amazing staff and board of Compass Center, to continue supporting community members seeking self-sufficiency services, survivors of domestic violence, and youth and adult health education participants.”

As a final note Adams said, “as an activist and a social worker, I see systemic oppressions contributing to poverty, unequal access to employment, and inequitable access to information, resources and legal remedies.”

“In addition, the multiple layers of systemic oppression also limits the lack of access and knowledge about sexual health choices, violence prevention, and domestic violence that erase personal bodily autonomy. Therefore, I look forward to leading the organization into a sustainable future that amplifies the voices of all people and raises greater awareness of social justice issues that impact entire communities for generations,” Adams said.



The Compass Center is proud to have Adams as she is continuing to stand for justice. Photo courtesy of Christian Adams.

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