



BEAUTY JUSTICE

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Welcome to Black Women for Wellness (BWWLA) November Beauty Justice Newsletter! We're excited to share updates on our impact, initiatives and projects, along with opportunities for you to join us in advancing beauty justice and supporting our Beauty Justice mission!

FAST FACTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Beauty Justice Conference April 21, 2025
The California Endowment



QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER



Beauty Justice is an extremely important issue to us at Black Women for Wellness, because it holds immense impacts on the health of Black women across the world. Therefore, our mission to advance Beauty Justice is one way in which we seek to improve the overall health and wellness of Black women.

As a result of racialized beauty standards and the adoption of harmful beauty products into everyday personal care routines, Black women are disproportionately exposed to toxic chemicals within these products.

Skin lighteners, hair straighteners or perming substances, fragrances, and lotions can contain high levels of endocrine disrupting chemicals. This can lead to respiratory, reproductive, and cardiovascular illnesses, as well as the development of cancers.

This issue is made even more dangerous by the lack of FDA regulation for the market of beauty products and professional beauty practices, leaving women often unknowingly exposed and vulnerable to chemical harm.

Those most at risk include women who work in salons and beauty environments, followed by women with a high and regular usage of commercially available beauty products.

The Beauty Justice movement seeks to raise awareness around these issues, and take action to create and execute solutions. We mobilize social and political action to demand the prioritization of the health of Black women over capitalist profit generated by the beauty product industry.

WHAT IS BEAUTY JUSTICE?

Our Beauty Justice Projects

Here at BWW, we have several projects making impact in Beauty Justice - and we encourage you to join us by participating and advocating where and when you can!





ISSUE
01

A word from the Executive Director of Black Women for Wellness,

DEC
2024

JANETTE ROBINSON FLINT


It is my great pleasure to lead Black Women for Wellness. The women (and men) working here are passionate, committed, and talented in addressing issues related to our health and well-being. This inaugural Beauty Justice Newsletter offers insights into our work, our communities' efforts, and resources surrounding breast health. Arnedra, Madison, and Adia share personal and poignant perspectives, interwoven with data, on their journeys and relationships with beauty, the products we use, and the politics surrounding these issues.

Beauty Justice is a term you'll encounter frequently in this newsletter, and it's one we will revisit often. It embodies the concepts of justice while highlighting the profound impact beauty has on our physical and mental health, finances, social status, employment, and even education. Black women and girls navigate a world defined by impossible beauty standards rooted in a white, Eurocentric ideal.

The products we use to meet these unattainable standards—often designed to mimic these white ideals—are frequently more toxic, leading to our overexposure to harmful chemicals and inadequate protection from their effects. It's a dilemma where we must choose between the risks of harmful chemical exposure or facing the societal backlash that comes with embracing our natural beauty.

A powerful example of this is Michelle Obama. During the Obamas' presidential campaign, one of the ultimate insults levied against her was a picture of Mrs. Obama wearing a natural. It was intended to provoke fear in mainstream culture. Throughout her tenure as First Lady, Michelle Obama never publicly wore her hair natural, and even her daughters faced criticism for wearing braids once during summer swimming. However, since leaving the White House and the scrutiny of public opinion, Mrs. Obama has proudly embraced natural hairstyles, including during her appearance at the Democratic Convention. For Black women, wearing our hair naturally is a powerful act of justice—one that often carries profound consequences.

Black Women for Wellness began with six women who were deeply concerned about our community's health and well-being. These concerns arose from our personal lives, families, and communities, where we saw how health influenced our energy, daily activities, and social standing.



One of BWW's original members found a lump in her breast. As we waited anxiously for the test results, we worried, researched, and fretted together. The diagnosis: a benign fibroid tumor. This experience led to the creation of Keep in Touch, our first foray into breast health advocacy. Keep in Touch emerged during a time when women were encouraged to conduct regular breast self-exams. However, political influences have since diminished this self-help movement and complicated recommendations for mammograms, making advocacy even more crucial when seeking clinical breast exams or mammograms.

Our Keep in Touch program originally focused on teaching women how to conduct breast self-exams while promoting overall breast health. Over the years, it has expanded to include education on nutrition, exercise, holistic health practices, and research. Today, it also incorporates topics like proper bra fit (and the history of bras), nutrition and diet, breastfeeding, and more.

In addition, Taking Stock, our research initiative, explores the connections between chemicals in beauty, personal care, hair care, and cleaning products and their impact on our physical health. This newsletter will provide information and resources on all aspects of our Keep in Touch program. It will explore how these efforts intersect with racial justice, beauty politics, health, well-being, and even financial health and social standing.

Black Women for Wellness looks forward to hearing from you—your personal stories, journeys, insights, and wisdom on beauty, racial justice, health, and how you're navigating your breast health.

HOW DID KEEP IN TOUCH BEGIN?



Janette Robinson-Flint



BREAST HEALTH

↪ Awareness

Driven by a mission to empower, educate, and advocate, Black Women for Wellness tackles disparities affecting Black women like breast cancer outcomes. One in eight American women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime, and Black women face especially high mortality rates from this disease. In Los Angeles County, Black women are over 40% more likely to die from breast cancer due to gaps in healthcare access, delayed diagnoses, and broader systemic barriers.

To combat these disparities, Black Women for Wellness is creating change through community education, increasing healthcare access, and strategic advocacy efforts.



↪ Get Involved

For 20 years, the Keep in Touch program has empowered Black women to take control of their breast health through open conversations on breast cancer education and early detection. Join our virtual meetings every third Wednesday of the month at 9 a.m. to learn and grow in a supportive community. The next meeting is on November 20th.

Additionally, mark your calendars for special in-person sessions in June, October, and December for workshops and community building! For more information, contact Arnedra Jordan at arnedra@bwwla.com. You can also find the Zoom meeting link and additional details on the Breast Health Resources site, linked at the bottom of this page.



VIRTUAL MEETINGS

KEEP IN TOUCH

Breast Health Program

THIS INITIATIVE IS DEDICATED TO EMPOWERING AND EDUCATING BLACK WOMEN AND THEIR ALLIES ABOUT BREAST HEALTH AND ITS CRITICAL IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY.

JOIN US AS WE EMPOWER BLACK WOMEN AND PROMOTE BREAST HEALTH AWARENESS. BE PART OF A COMMUNITY THAT CARES, LEARNS, AND GROWS TOGETHER. YOUR HEALTH IS OUR MISSION.

 **EVERY THIRD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH**

 **START AT 09:00AM PST**

 **PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OUR IN-PERSON SESSIONS, HELD THREE TIMES A YEAR IN JUNE, OCTOBER, AND AN END-OF-YEAR CELEBRATION IN DECEMBER**

HOW TO JOIN →

 Visit our website + link below
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82164593022>
& Visit our Breast Health Resource Page

Promoting Environmental Justice in Nail and Hair Salons in California

in partnership with The EPA and UCLA



CREATING HEALTHY NAIL AND HAIR SALONS

BWW is Partnering with UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health (LOSH) and the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative to initiate a research project that ultimately promotes Environmental Justice in nail and hair salons in California.



RESEARCH AIM

By analyzing air quality in nail and hair salons, BWW aims to incorporate technical assistance and environmental sampling to improve health outcomes for salon workers and owners. This project aims to demonstrate the feasibility of salons adopting safer, more sustainable products and tracking their use and impacts.



IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING OR LEARNING MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT, PLEASE REACH OUT TO ARNEDRA@BWWLA.COM



Beauty Justice: A Movement Toward Health, Equity, and Dignity

Beauty standards have long shaped our perceptions of self-worth, but for Black women, these standards often come with additional layers of harm. Beauty justice is about more than appearance; it's a movement that challenges the dangerous products marketed to Black women, the unfair standards imposed on us, and the lack of safety in the beauty industry. For me, beauty justice is a call to action to protect Black women's health and empower us to reclaim our narrative around beauty on our own terms.

Working at Black Women for Wellness (BWW) has profoundly changed the way I view beauty. I've come to see it as something that should be liberating and health-affirming, not constraining or hazardous. Beauty justice has reshaped how I approach self-care, style, and wellness—it's no longer just about appearance but about honoring our bodies and communities with dignity.

Many products marketed to Black women contain harmful chemicals that lead to serious health risks, including hormone disruption, reproductive health issues, and even cancer. For example, research has found that hair relaxers, skin-lightening products, and some cosmetics can contain chemicals that disproportionately impact Black women's health. This is more than an industry oversight—it's a failure in accountability that puts profit over our well-being.

Black Women for Wellness and similar organizations are uncovering the invisible injustices in beauty. Through this work, I've learned how products that promise to enhance our beauty often compromise our health. My role in beauty justice is a commitment to exposing these risks and

advocating for safer alternatives for Black women.

Beauty justice also means challenging the Eurocentric standards of beauty that pressure Black women to conform to certain looks, often involving straightened hair or lighter skin. These pressures are not just a matter of style but an issue of cultural dignity. When our beauty is only validated by how closely it aligns with non-Black standards, it strips us of the right to define ourselves.

Beauty justice is not only about health and empowerment; it's also about access. Many of the healthier, safer products that are free from harmful chemicals are often more expensive or hard to find in Black communities. This creates an economic barrier that makes beauty justice an issue of equity. We need to make sure that all Black women, regardless of income, have access to safe, affordable products that reflect our needs and values.

Beauty justice is a movement to bring health, safety, and dignity back to beauty. It's a call to transform an industry that has too often neglected us into one that values and respects us. Through education, advocacy, and community action, we are reshaping beauty standards and demanding that our safety and well-being be prioritized. Together, we are reclaiming beauty on our terms and building a future where Black women can celebrate their beauty without compromise.

Yours in good health and beauty,
Arnedra Jordan
Project Manager
Black Women For Wellness

SAFER BEAUTY

REDUCING OUR TOXIC EXPOSURE

by Madison
Beckett

Growing up, my mother would often relax my hair as an easier way to “manage” it. About a year ago, while scrolling through social media, I came across an advertisement featuring that same familiar box of hair relaxer I used as a child. But instead of sparking nostalgic memories of our bi-annual ritual in the bathroom, the ad revealed something unsettling. It was for a class action lawsuit which cited findings from the [Sister Study](#), linking regular use of hair relaxers to a 150% increased risk of uterine cancer, among other serious health risks. I remember feeling shocked, confused, and betrayed, thinking “**how is this legal?**”



TOXIC CHEMICALS

The more I learned about this hair relaxer lawsuit, the more I was surprised to learn just how **widespread** toxic chemicals actually are in the products we use everyday. These carcinogens are not just limited to occasional treatments like relaxers; they're also found in **everyday items**—makeup, skincare products, conditioners, and shampoos. The health impacts of using these products are significant. Some chemicals, like *formaldehyde*, are linked to [cancer](#), while others, such as *phthalates* and *parabens*, have been shown to cause hormone disruption, reproductive and developmental harm, allergies, and additional [adverse health effects](#).



This issue is pervasive. A study of ingredients in 1,177 beauty and personal care products marketed to Black women revealed that about **1 in 12** was rated highly hazardous! This is unacceptable and our women and girls deserve better. These toxic chemicals in beauty products isn't just an environmental concern—it's a matter of **social justice**, because toxic beauty products [disproportionately impact Black women](#).

A SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE

As Black women, there are several social pressures that influence us to use more beauty products. For example, **eurocentric beauty standards** often influence women of color to use hair straighteners, skin lighteners, and more feminine hygiene products than other racial/ethnic groups. The result is that these toxic products are introduced into the market, without regulation, and we end up **overexposed** and **underprotected**.

SO... WHERE'S THE FDA?

You might be wondering, “Why are products with clear links to severe reproductive harm allowed on the market?” The answer is shocking: the FDA has no authority to ensure the safety of beauty and cosmetic products. Personal care manufacturers are essentially **unregulated** when it comes to safety. They don't have to report negative side effects, provide safety data to the FDA, or even *disclose* all ingredients used in their products. This lack of oversight leaves Black women and others vulnerable to products with dangerous chemicals.

PROP 65

While the FDA falls short in protecting consumers, there are ongoing efforts to better inform consumers and protect their health. A recent **study** published in *Environmental Health Perspectives* is the first of its kind to assess the impact of California's **Prop 65**—a law requiring businesses to warn consumers about exposure to chemicals known to cause cancer. While it is known that Prop 65 has raised public awareness of harmful chemicals, researchers wanted to find out if it has actually reduced people's exposures. And the results were positive. This recent study found that, for many chemicals listed under Prop 65, levels of these toxic substances in people's bodies **decreased** both in California and nationwide after the chemicals were publicly listed. This supports researchers' belief that as Prop 65 increases public awareness of toxins present in consumer products, companies reformulate their products to avoid using listed chemicals, which in turn **reduces peoples exposure nationwide.**

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BEAUTY JUSTICE

This study on Prop 65 is especially relevant to beauty justice. It implies that **public awareness** and **regulation** can lead companies to reduce or eliminate harmful chemicals. It highlights a pathway for change in the beauty industry, that can drive the industry toward safer products.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

These toxic environmental chemicals are everywhere. Our exposure to them is **not our fault**. However, we do have the power to take action to protect ourselves, our friends, and families. As informed consumers, we can pay attention to the toxins that may be present in our everyday hair, skin, and beauty products, and seek out safer, toxin-free products. Check out the next column for simple tips to get started. Furthermore, by advocating for stronger regulatory laws, we can push for the manufacturer accountability and transparency that we deserve.



1

DOWNLOAD THE CLEARYA APP TO **CHECK** YOUR PRODUCTS

The Clearya app offers safety rating on thousands of personal care items. Just scan the barcode to see ingredient information and potential health risks

<https://www.clearya.com/>

2

BUY BLACK-OWNED + NON-TOXIC PRODUCTS

You can find a verified non-toxic product database at

www.safecosmetics.org/black-beauty

3

GET INVOLVED

[Taking Stock Study](#)

See the page below for more information!

[Stay up to date with Beauty Justice](#)

Email **Arnedra@bwwla.com** or **Madison@bwwla.com** to be added to our mailing list, for upcoming events and news in the fight for Beauty Justice



TAKING STOCK RESEARCH PROJECT

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The 'Taking Stock' initiative is a research project that investigates the connection between breast cancer, reproductive health, and the products used by Black women. Women of color, especially Black women, are disproportionately exposed to harmful chemicals in consumer products, such as parabens and phthalates, which are endocrine disruptors linked to cancer

GET INVOLVED

Black Women For Wellness is excited to invite you to participate in a six-month program called Taking Stock. This research project is designed to help Black Women make healthier choices in hair and personal care product use. We're forming small groups, or cohorts, with about 10 participants each. Over six months, we'll collect valuable insights through surveys, a product logging app, urine samples, and interviews at three points: when you enroll, at three months, and the end of the program. You will also have the opportunity to meet with a chemist to audit your products.

As a participant, you'll have the unique opportunity to work with a professional hairstylist who will guide you throughout the program. You will receive free hair products and \$150.00 in gift cards. You'll also be connected with an online community of other participants, who will provide mutual support and share experiences.

This is a fantastic opportunity to participate in a study that could significantly improve the promotion of healthier habits and products. Email us at madison@bwwla.com to take part!



Beauty Justice Is a Journey We Can Navigate Together

BY
ADIA JA'NEA JAMES

Some of my earliest childhood memories revolve around hair. Growing up in a family composed mostly of Black women, the matriarch of our family, my kindhearted grandmother, was our first hairstylist. Her home was filled with hair care products; I remember opening her hall linen closet to get rags and towels and seeing the top shelves filled with Blue Magic hair grease, Pink hairspray, Cream of Nature shampoo, Olive Oil relaxers, and more. The bathroom was no exception, with a plethora of products under the sinks, on top of the toilet tank, and lining the bathtub. Even the guest room closet was filled with containers of hair bows, beads, hair rollers, curling irons, hot combs, and, again, more products. With all these products constantly in my face, and my hair texture being different from most of my cousins, little Adia was often intimidated by the overexposure.

The overwhelming amount of products in my grandmother's house was indeed intimidating, especially since the tighter your coils, the more heavily those products are marketed towards you. I tried many ways to get my hair to "behave," aiming for an unattainable, unrealistic form of beauty. I would mix and match products, "relax" my hair, and straighten it consistently on the highest heating level. At 16, I realized that these products were doing more harm than good to my hair, health, and well-being.

The products would cake up in my hair, the relaxers would chemically burn my scalp, and the flat iron would sizzle my hair as it made its way down my locks. So, I made a decision that terrified my mother: I cut off all my damaged, processed hair and started anew.

It's been almost ten years since I made that decision, and there have been learning curves in figuring out the best way to maintain my hair. However, I realized that I am happiest with my hair (and my hair is happiest with me) when I nurture it daily with water, one-ingredient oils, and leave-in conditioner. Simple as that. Of course, I have a wash routine like anyone else, but the key is that stacking product after product was damaging to both my hair and me.

My hair journey is part of why I chose to work on Black Women for Wellness's Beauty Justice Campaign. As Black women, we are often overmarketed products that cake up on our hair and have unnecessary chemicals seep into our pores. We face chemical burns from products that are supposed to "help" us maintain our hair better. As a specialist on this campaign and a medical student, ensuring Black women are aware of healthier ways to maintain their radiant beauty and gorgeous crowns is of utmost importance to me. I look forward to educating, learning, and growing with you all on this journey.



Interview with Nakeah Fuller

Building a Toxic-Free and Sustainable Beauty Brand

by Madison Beckett

Nakeah, the founder of Nakeah Beauty, has built a cosmetics brand that not only prioritizes beauty but also promotes health, sustainability, and inclusivity. In this interview, she shares the inspiration behind her brand and her commitment to offering non-toxic, sustainable products that empower women of color.

What inspired you to create Nakeah Beauty, and why did you focus on toxic-free and sustainable cosmetics?

Nakeah's journey into the beauty industry is deeply personal, rooted in her desire to fill a gap she noticed in the market—especially for women of color. Inspired by her students, she says, "I wanted to make sure they were trained using products that are safe and beneficial for the skin." Recognizing the lack of diverse shades and the widespread use of harmful ingredients in mainstream makeup, she felt compelled to create her own line. "Since the beginning of time, our skin has been forgotten about; there hasn't been enough focus on women of color in the beauty industry," she explains. She notes that most non-toxic cosmetic lines offer limited color ranges, which ultimately drove her to create her own.

What are the "red flags" when it comes to makeup ingredients?

"Talc is one of the main ingredients that manufacturers used to create darker shades in makeup, especially for women of color." Nakeah explains that this is problematic, because talc is a cancer-causing ingredient.



Nakeah also shares that lead and titanium dioxide in lipsticks and blush are major red flags. She explains that these ingredients are often used to cut costs, and unfortunately, some brands that claim to be 'paraben-free' or 'non-toxic' are still not as safe as they market themselves to be. "It's crucial to look beyond the label," she warns. "Just because a celebrity endorses a product doesn't mean it's safe. You need to dig deeper into who is actually making these products, and research the story behind the brand." She believes it's alarming how many women unknowingly use products that contain toxic chemicals such as talc, lead, and parabens. She reflects on how she used this knowledge in crafting her own products: "It took a lot of research to discover that darker shades actually don't have to be produced with talc, and I've made sure to remove those harmful powders from my collection," she says.

Prioritizing Health in an Industry Dominated by Mainstream Brands

Through her heartfelt conversations with women who have experienced health scares, including cancer concerns, Nakeah has seen firsthand the potential impact that toxic ingredients in beauty products can have. "When you find out that your favorite lipstick contains lead or that your foundation has parabens, you begin to question what else these products might be doing to your health," she explains. Her mission has always been to create products that are not only beautiful but safe—helping customers avoid unnecessary risks associated with some mainstream brands.

Challenging Beauty Standards: Staying True to Classic Beauty

Nakeah has always adhered to her vision of what beauty means. She focuses on classic beauty rather than chasing trends. "Beauty standards are often affected by the latest trends, especially the heavy makeup looks and cut creases " she explains.

She believes that many times, women are influenced by social media to believe that there's a "correct" way to wear makeup. "But makeup is meant to enhance what's already there, not to create a whole new face."

Throughout her career, Nakeah has remained steadfast in her belief in classic beauty. "When Instagram came out and everyone was following these trend-based looks, I stuck to my roots. My customers, too, gravitate toward classic beauty, and it's okay to be true to yourself." She emphasizes that beauty should be about enhancing one's natural features, rather than conforming to society's changing ideals.

What advice would you give to women, men, and young people who want to prioritize their health while still enjoying makeup?

"Know your ingredients and do your research. Don't just trust the celebrity face on the packaging. Understand who the founder is and where the products are made," she advises. "Makeup is an investment. When you love yourself, you take the time to invest in products that are safe and that work for you." Nakeah stresses the importance of this advice, adding that learning about where your products are coming from will assure that you feel 100% in control and have confidence in the products that you are putting on your face everyday.

Looking to the Future

Looking ahead, Nakeah has big plans for her brand. "I want Nakeah Beauty to become a household name. My goal is for my products to be available to women everywhere, not just affiliated with celebrities and Hollywood. This is what prompted the change in her brand, as Nakeah Beauty was formerly known as Nakeah Cosmetics of Hollywood.

In addition to her beauty line, Nakeah is launching *Nakeah Curve*, an inclusive plus sized fashion line, that complements her beauty products, and *Nakeah Beauty University*, a platform for educating people not only about makeup application but also about the importance of clean ingredients and skincare. "Beauty education is key," Nakeah says. "We need to teach women how to wear makeup for their unique features and educate them on what goes into their products." She emphasizes that *Nakeah Beauty University* is not only for professional makeup artists. Her makeup academy is for anyone who wants to learn more about how to use makeup to complement their unique features. "We teach everyday people how to look their best, from applying lashes to choosing the right foundation," she relays.

As a leader in the beauty industry, Nakeah is always learning and evolving. "I'm constantly educating myself on what's best for my customers, and I want to share that knowledge with others. It's not just about selling products; it's about helping women feel confident and empowered in their own skin," she concludes.



Keep up with the Nakeah Brands on Instagram & Facebook: @nakeahcurve @nakeahbeauty @travelexcellence

<https://www.nakeahbeautyandcurve.com/>

Beauty Justice DEPARTMENT



Arnedra Jordan - Project Manager

Arnedra Jordan is the Project Manager at Black Women for Wellness, overseeing the Beauty Justice Initiative. With over fifteen years of experience in the breast health field, Arnedra has dedicated her career to advocating for the health and well-being of Black women and girls. Her work involves providing education on environmental health, beauty justice, and breast health education, where she focuses on addressing harmful ingredients in beauty products and promoting comprehensive breast cancer awareness and prevention strategies.

Madison Beckett- Environmental & Beauty Justice Coordinator

Madison is a recent UCLA Sociology graduate and currently serves as BWW's Environmental & Beauty Justice Coordinator. Originally from northern Connecticut, she moved to San Jose in 2020 to focus on grassroots community organizing and public health initiatives. Passionate about building an equitable future, Madison draws inspiration from Black thinkers like W.E.B. Du Bois, Angela Davis, and James Baldwin. In her free time, she enjoys practicing Pilates, dance, or yoga, visiting neighborhood cafés, and taking road trips to the Bay Area to see friends. Madison can be reached at madison@bwwla.com.



Adia Ja'Nea James - Environmental & Beauty Justice Support Specialist

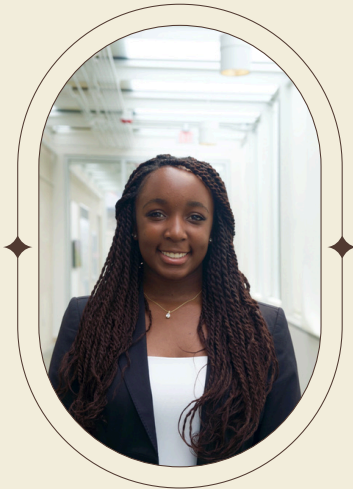
Adia is a second-year medical student and a PRIME LEAD-ABC Scholar at the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine. She was born and raised in Sweet Home Alabama, where her grandmother, a retired nurse, played a significant role in her upbringing as well as her passion for community-based healthcare and health education. Outside of her studies and advocacy work, Ja'Nea loves to read, bike, kayak, longboard, skate, crochet, and FaceTime her baby cousins down South. Adia can be reached at adia@bwwla.com.

Rebecca Barry - Intern

Rebecca is a recent MSc Medical Anthropology graduate from the University of Oxford, currently working as a freelance journalist in the public health sector. She is passionate about improving women's health and advocating for environmental justice through her own research and publications, as well as in collaboration with progressive and empowering organisations like BWW. She would love for you to reach out and contact her at rebeccabarry04@gmail.com with any questions or for further discussions!



Beauty Justice DEPARTMENT



Ifeoma Ajufo- Intern

Ifeoma is a Junior at Cornell University Studying Global and Public Health. She is incredibly passionate about improving health outcomes for women of color and improving access and awareness in health education. She used these passions to participate with BWWLA this past summer as a Reproductive Justice intern by helping with the Annual Reproductive justice contact. She can be reached at Ifeoma@bwwla.com

Leah Nadavallil - Intern

Leah is a high school senior and aspiring engineer interning with Black Women for Wellness, where she contributes to projects on environmental health and beauty justice. Outside of work, Leah enjoys painting, drawing, playing the piano, or spending time with friends and family. Leah aims to create an impact in the fields of engineering and wellness.



Valerie Monroe

Valerie Monroe is a dedicated advocate in the beauty and justice space, empowering Black women to thrive in wellness and self-expression. With her background as a graphic designer, canvasser, and outreach worker, Valerie combines her creative skills and passion for community engagement to make a lasting impact. Her work centers on creating safe, supportive spaces for Black women, encouraging wellness, and promoting justice. Through her community and outreach efforts with Black Women for Wellness, Valerie builds connections, raises awareness, and supports initiatives that uplift and empower. She is committed to fostering positive change, blending artistry and activism to champion the well-being and rights of Black women everywhere.





MARK YOUR CALENDARS



We warmly invite you to come and take part in our Beauty Justice Conference, on the 21st of April, 2025 at the California Endowment.

We have big plans for this conference, with multiple incredible speakers, activists, and brands coming together to learn how we can all adopt safer practice, and campaign for justice within the beauty sector!

We want your voice to be heard, so please keep this date in your diary and follow our updates!

[REGISTER HERE!](#)

@BWWLA

YOUR GUIDE TO SAFE HOLIDAY GIFTING

Black-Owned Clean Beauty *holiday guide*



Holiday gifting is the perfect time to embrace thoughtful and impactful choices! We know that choosing the right products can feel overwhelming, especially with the prevalence of harmful chemicals in so many beauty items. That's why we've created this resource: to help you navigate the world of clean beauty, decipher labels, and make informed choices that protect you and you loved ones health, and align with your values. Explore the tips and resources below for inspiration on supporting clean beauty and making meaningful decisions this season!



BEAUTY
JUSTICE

1







Scan your products with the Cleararya App

Before you purchase beauty products this holiday season, consider using the Cleararya app to ensure you're making safe, informed choices.



Cleararya scans product labels and alerts you to harmful chemicals often hidden in beauty products, making it an invaluable tool for supporting clean beauty practices. The app utilizes a color coded system to help you easily determine which chemicals are safe and which are harmful.



-  Banned or toxic
-  Potentially toxic
-  Potential allergens
-  Allowed with restrictions
-  Generic ingredients
-  No Alerts

 Cleararya

By checking products with Cleararya, you can confidently shop for Black-owned beauty brands that prioritize health, safety, and transparency—helping you give gifts that truly care for your loved ones.

iOS



Download the
App Now

**cleararya**

2

Black-Search the Non-Toxic Black Beauty Product Database Owned Clean Beauty

Another great tip for finding safe and thoughtful beauty products is to use the Non-Toxic Black Beauty Product Database. Updated and expanded in April 2024, this database features a curated selection of beauty products from Black-owned brands that are free of harmful chemicals found on our Red List—substances known to pose health risks that disproportionately impact Black women. This resource makes it easier than ever to prioritize your health while supporting Black-owned businesses dedicated to clean beauty.

The database allows you to filter by Brand, Product Type, Product Category, and Price. And yes- all the products listed are from black-owned business owners!



Search here...



Filter by Brand

Filter by Product Categories

Filter by Product Types

Filter by Price Range



MannaVeda
[11:11](#)



MannaVeda
[11:22 Scalp Serum](#)



Midori Family
[17 Botanical Based
Natural soap](#)

Click the link below to explore the Non-Toxic Black Beauty Product Database and find high-quality, toxin-free beauty options.

Visit Now**C
S
C** Campaign
for Safe
Cosmetics

<https://www.safecosmetics.org/black-beauty/>

3

Shop Locally

While practically all consumer products have some sort of carbon footprint, when you shop locally, you help reduce the carbon footprint associated with shipping and packaging!



Choosing to shop locally and supporting Black-owned businesses allows us to invest in our community, promote healthier products, and keep money circulating in our local economies. Through our purchasing habits, we can make impactful choices that align with our values while giving meaningful gifts.

Support local Black-owned beauty retailers in the community. Shopping locally not only **supports small businesses** but also **reduces your environmental impact**.



Baldwin Hills Mall



Degnan Blvd



Farmer's Markets



Shopping locally gives you the chance to find unique, one-of-a-kind products that larger retailers often overlook. Local Black-owned beauty retailers and farmers' markets often carry handmade, small-batch, or exclusive items crafted with care and intention. These treasures not only make thoughtful gifts but also celebrate the creativity and innovation within our community.

4

Look for Third-Party Certifications

Deciphering long lists of chemical ingredients on beauty products can be overwhelming and time-consuming. To simplify your shopping experience, look for trusted third-party **certification labels** that indicate safer, non-toxic choices. Certifications like EWG Verified, USDA Organic, Leaping Bunny Certified, and Cruelty-free ensure products meet strict safety and sustainability standards.

These labels take the guesswork out of choosing products by verifying that they are free from harmful chemicals like parabens, phthalates, and formaldehyde, and have not been tested on animals.

Furthermore, it can be helpful to look for symbols like **paraben-free, sulfate-free, phosphate-free, and silicone-free**, as these ingredients are often linked to health concerns. Example symbols can be seen below.



= the products contain organic ingredients



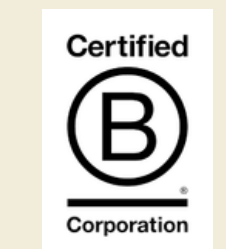
= the product is free of animal-derived ingredients.



= the product has not been tested on animals



= the product is cruelty-free.



= the company that meets high standards of social and environmental responsibility



However, it's important to note that the symbols above, unlike the ones to the left, are **unofficial** and not regulated by a third-party certification. While they can provide useful guidance, always double-check ingredient lists.

5

DIY Beauty Gifts



DIY Afro Hair Cream

- Aloe vera gel/juice
- Cocoa butter
- Coconut oil

- Xanthan gum
- Optional: Cinnamon and vitamin E oil

full recipe [here](#)!

Coffee & Cocoa Exfoliating Scrub

- **Ingredients:** Ground coffee, cocoa powder, sugar, and olive oil.
- **How to Make:** Combine coffee, cocoa, and sugar, then add olive oil until you get a spreadable consistency. Package in a festive jar for a luxurious treat.

Give the gift of self-care with homemade beauty products! Not only are DIY gifts thoughtful and personalized, but they're also a great way to ensure clean, non-toxic ingredients are used—many of which you can find right in your kitchen or pantry.



Peppermint Lip Balm

- **Ingredients:** Beeswax, coconut oil, shea butter, and peppermint essential oil.
- **How to Make:** Melt equal parts beeswax, coconut oil, and shea butter in a double boiler, stir in a few drops of peppermint oil, and pour into small lip balm containers.

DIY beauty gifts are affordable, eco-friendly, and allow you to control exactly what goes into the product. By using common ingredients like coconut oil, coffee, and sugar, you can create unique, clean beauty items that your loved ones will appreciate.

[Click Here](#)



for DIY Hair
Mask Recipes
by BWW!

Wishing You a *Joyful* Holiday Season!

As we celebrate the season of giving, let's make thoughtful, health-conscious choices that support clean beauty, Black-owned businesses, and the well-being of our communities. Whether you're shopping locally, crafting DIY gifts, or exploring non-toxic products, every small step helps create a healthier, more equitable world.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. From all of us at Black Women for Wellness, we wish you a joyful, safe, and beautiful holidays! 🌟🌟

