Being new to the social and reproductive justice communities, I was not sure what to expect from my time at Class Action. Before the training and CLPP Conference I would have thought I was just doing office work. However, with what I learned from the conference, the trainers, the RRASC alumni, and the scores of SJ and RJ speakers, leaders, and activists I had a sense of purpose with everything I did. My fellow interns and Anne Phillips, our director, were an amazing and special group of people that I had the honor and privilege to work with, and the RRASC interns and staff will always be my motivation to continue work in the RJ and SJ field.

Class Action is an organization whose views and goals are “A World Without Classism.” Their vision:

•Meet everyone’s basic needs;
•Treat people from every background, race, class status and rank with dignity and respect;
•Support the development of all people to their full potential;
•Reduce the vast differences in income, wealth, and access to resources;
•Ensure everyone has a voice in the decisions that affect them.

Class Action’s goals and vision are crucial in promoting social and reproductive justice and they make an incredible effort to ensure everyone receives an education on class, classism, and the oppressions therein.

The project I was assigned to work on was the First-Generation Student Summit: an annual summit hosted by Class Action at a college or university, geared towards educating current and prospective First Gens and school faculty and staff about the challenges of being
a First Gen student and how the schools, other students, and campus organizations can aid them in facilitating their education and experience. Statistically, First Gen students are older and have a lower income than their peers and don’t have the resources to navigate college, or know anyone outside of the college who can help them with jobs, internships, or other opportunities that make their experience as successful and fruitful as possible. I had several projects I worked on while there. I was in charge of acquiring feedback on a First Gen mentor program started the year before by Class Action. I was also tasked with renovating and updating the old system and creating a new one to help match First Gen students with First Gen alumni mentors.

Another job I had was cataloging and contacting colleges and universities around the country to gain insight on whether or not they had active First Gen or low income groups, clubs, or departments which prospective and current First Gen students could use as a resource. I did this through Google, phone calls, emails, and Facebook. Contacting the groups was tough because it was over the summer and usually no one would be available to answer my calls or questions, but I logged every school and person I contacted to facilitate updating the information.

Lastly, I was in charge of organizing a networking event for First Gen students and alumni. In June, I was sent to New York to participate in a networking event for First Gen students. There I met successful First Gens who had an open mic discussion about how to navigate life after graduation and how to help and support current First Gen alums and First Gen students. The people I met there were incredible, helpful, and active in social and reproductive justice and very open about their activism. After that weekend, I came back to Class Action and helped to plan and set up a similar event that’s set for the fall semester in Boston!
A lot of the skills I used were mainly office-related skills, like phone and email etiquette, filing, and other things, but the volunteer work and travelling I did required a lot of people skills. When I went to New York for the networking event, I met a lot of great people, walked around the city, and had conversations with First Gen alumni. I was exhausted by the end of the trip, so if you’re more introverted than I am, makes sure you take a break at some point.

Most of the difficulties I encountered with the internship were about getting in contact with colleges and student groups. Because it was the summer I had to send about two to three emails and then make phone calls to get a response. When I did get responses, they were redirecting me to someone else who wouldn’t answer or took too long to get back to me. Sometimes people who would volunteer to help with planning wouldn’t get back to me, and getting responses for the student groups and the feedback from the mentor program was slow and tedious because only a small portion of the people responded. Hopefully the next summer intern will have better luck.

One of the highlights of my internship was definitely our “Lunch and Learn” series, where an activist member of the community would come to our building about once a week and present on a topic in their field and have lunch with us. Topics ranging from self-care to the apartheid in Palestine were presented to us through the summer. One of my favorites was a reflection and perception class by one of Class Action’s neighbor organization’s directors. We were taught how to view people and how our perceptions created biases. Another highlight was my trip to New York. It was the first time I had spent a significant amount of time in the city on my own. I met a bunch of awesome activists and got to visit my family in New Jersey for the first time in a while.
The internship didn’t change my career plans much but it did change what direction I wanted to go in them. After graduation, I want to teach. With the help of the RRASC Program, CLPP, Class Action and other activists, I want to teach social justice and equality to the classes I teach and be involved in community organizing. After law school, I want to help make and draft policy and laws that aid in the establishment of equality.

Class Action is an amazing organization and completely necessary in the struggle against oppression and inequality in the world. Anne and the trainers are all great people who truly care about the work they do. Even with limited resources, they fight the good fight every day with every workshop or event they participate in. Class Action is a small organization but it is completely necessary in the global struggle against oppression and inequality. Their goals and mission can help directly influence the division between the socio-economic classes. Class Action also provides a service by educating their followers and subscribers on classism, like working-class whites who felt isolated during the 2016 elections. Class Action aims to bridge the gap between the working class and activists to ensure equality and equity so that something like 45 never occurs again.

I learned more about intersectionality and reproductive justice during my internship through the classism workshops and our Lunch and Learns. The intersectionality between race, class, gender, and sexuality can all be linked to classism: A tool which the elite use to keep the working class divided along racial and gender lines while they profit from the competition, violent capitalism, and inequality created by the turmoil. It’s also a way to block reproductive healthcare through invisible, caste system-style walls between classes, making abortions and birth control inaccessible to those who can’t afford it, and continuously make healthcare out of reach, especially for poor women of color.
For future interns, make sure you work hard here, because the work you do can help fight inequality. Boston is a great city, full of activists and allies, fun things to do, and places to visit. Make sure you budget because it’s also an expensive place, but you’ll make it. Make sure you get an apartment or room close to your internship because it’s nice to walk around during the summer. Anne is a great person and incredibly understanding with mental health and the need of down time. Be open and be proud of what you’re doing, because you’re on the front lines of this fight. Good luck!