I was part of the Movement Building Team (MBT) during my time at SRLP. I worked on various tasks and projects throughout the summer, some independently and some in collaboration with other staff, interns, volunteers, and community members.

**Toilet Training** is a documentary by Tara Mateik and SRLP released in 2003, on the necessity for inclusive and safe bathrooms. An updated version of the documentary will be released this fall. My fellow intern Natalia and I spent time going through the old teaching companion guide, finding similar updated resources, editing statistics, activities, FAQs, etc. the guide is intended to provide teachers or facilitators with background information and a bigger picture, so they can better convey the material to students, co-workers, etc. who might have different levels of knowledge around trans issues and bathroom politics.

**PAC** Much of my work at SRLP was related to the Prisoner Advisory Committee (PAC). PAC is composed of SRLP staff, and currently incarcerated low-income and people of color who are trans, gender non conforming, or intersex SRLP members. PAC helps to connect incarcerated low-income and people of color who are tgnci with each other and with community members on the outside; it provides opportunities for political participation for incarcerated PAC members.

SRLP believes that the people should guide the work. I particularly enjoyed working with the Prisoner Advisory Committee because I got to hear (well, read) and to help elevate some of the voices of those most affected by the intersections of racism, sexism, classism, queerphobia, transphobia, misogyny, transmisogyny, the police state and the prison industrial complex.

**In Solidarity**  *In Solidarity* is SRLP’s annual collaborative newsletter by incarcerated Prisoner Advisory Committee members (PAC); SRLP staff; collective members; volunteers; and interns. I researched and compiled info and tips for health and wellness, writing prompts, and I transcribed video interviews and speeches to include in the next issue. I sent out a call for submissions to incarcerated PAC members, and entered the submissions as they arrived. Because I did a lot of the
legwork for the next issue of *In Solidarity*, the new outreach director can spend more
time putting together the newsletter.

**PAC blog** The PAC blog is a space to publish letters written by incarcerated PAC members. I learned how to type up the letters, write an intro and title, and publish it on the blog. The hardest part was picking title and writing excerpt, without being able to consult the author. Making these stories available in this way helps to center the lived experiences and voices of those affected by the systems of oppression that we are opposing. Reading the stories in PAC letters was grounding. It helped to humanize and bring me closer to the people for whom SRLP does this work, and to counteract the many stereotypes circulated about people who are in prison.

In a new video series of the PAC blog, people on the outside read aloud PAC letters to background music and images, including PAC member artwork. The videos provide a more sensory experience of absorbing the letters. I joined in on a PAC staff meeting to provide feedback on the video material, and help find PAC artwork relevant to the content.

**Outreach and events** I spent several days throughout the summer doing outreach for SRLP, and assisted with several events. I learned to design flyers, and then traveled to other health clinics and social service organizations to distribute them. I started to see a network of medical, social, and legal resources and intentional spaces for people of oppressed identities.

**Brooklyn pride** One weekend, I went to Bushwick Pride, where my supervisor Reina was grand marshal and I marched with SRLP’s #transhealthcarenow banner.

**Membership orientation** After doing outreach, I did the food and supply shopping for the membership orientation. I helped set up the space, and welcomed people as they came.

**TDOA** Trans Day of Action (TDOA) is an annual rally and march to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall riots and decades of trans activism, and to celebrate trans, intersex, and gender non-conforming people of color resistance and liberation. In preparation for TDOA, I did outreach for and helped host a sign-making party at SRLP.

During TDOA, I had fun wearing my photographer hat and running back and forth taking pictures with SRLP’s camera.

The organizers of TDOA recognize that low income, trans, intersex, and gender non-conforming people of color suffer disproportionately from discrimination in healthcare, housing, jobs, schools, prisons, etc., and should accordingly be placed at the center of movements for liberation and self-determination. It was nice to finally attend a (queer) pride event that put the T front and center rather than letting it drop off at the end.

**Filing** I spent time organizing old PAC mail and submissions to *In Solidarity* and the PAC blog. It was a tedious and often emotionally taxing process, but I felt privilege to learn about PAC member’s lives through their letters and creative submission.

It was a tedious and often emotionally taxing process, but I felt privilege to learn about PAC member’s lives through their letters and creative submission. I particularly enjoyed sorting through the *In Solidarity* submissions: drawings, sketches, poems, favorite quotes, etc.
Alternatives to incarceration I briefly joined another intern on their alternatives to incarceration project. They had compiled a list of trans friendly drug treatment and rehab facilities, and I helped to look up info about the facilities and then call them to get a sense of how trans friendly they were. An SRLP staff will meet with receptive facilities to further assess them, to discuss the need for tgnci accessibility, and provide trans 101 training(s).

Interviews I took notes during interviews of candidates for the position of director of outreach. Observing the interview process was pretty cool. The interviewers were thorough, and no matter how many positive or negative judgments I had formed about the interviewee, my opinions usually changed after the interviewers had finished discussing each candidate.

Front desk Thursdays are drop-in days at SRLP, when clients can come in to speak with a lawyer or ask for resources. I spent several periods at the front desk on Thursdays, buzzing people up, assisting clients in the waiting room, and maintaining communication between staff and clients.

Mailings I helped with several large PAC mailings during the summer. Preparing a mailing involved prepping materials, making packets for each member, checking and updating addresses, making mailing labels, addressing and stamping envelopes, and finally, taking a trip to the post office.

Meet the interns I collaborated with another intern to create “Meet the interns” blog posts for SRLP social media. We developed interview questions for our fellow interns, and published their answers and photos online.

Op-ed I drafted a section for an op-ed article arguing that prisoners in solitary confinement need access to programs like GED classes. My section explained how the school-to-prison pipeline pushes certain people out of school and into the prison system, and why low income and people of color who are TGNCI often enter prison without necessary education and job skills.

I used and developed various skills during my time at SRLP. Basic computer skills, writing (not as scary as I had worried) and communication, organizational skills, and creativity came in handy on a daily basis. I developed design skills by creating various flyers for outreach material. Empathy and patience were also helpful.

One of the biggest challenges for me was juggling working full time and living on my own. I was also sick a lot during the summer. My supervisors were very understanding, and when I talked to them they encouraged me to take care of myself and take time when I needed it, like if I needed to start later than normal some days. Writing things down helped me to keep track of what was going on, coming up, what I needed to do, how much time I had, where I was in the process of various projects. My primary supervisor left a few weeks into my internship, so it was sometimes difficult to complete tasks related to his position. Asking other staff members for help or ideas made it easier to figure out how to approach tasks in ways that worked best for me.

I had a difficult time thinking about with my privilege as someone who is considered underprivileged. I am very fortunate to have a body that is not targeted by police or strangers because of my skin color, clothes, or gender expression and to have a mother who went to college, is a US citizen, and has never been imprisoned.
It was often difficult to maintain the motivation and energy for social justice work when I felt bogged down in the everyday details of the job. I did not feel like my work was really benefiting the larger movement for gender self-determination, racial and economic justice, and prison-abolition at these times. Sometimes even after all of our hard work, people responded to SRLP with anger.

One person who came to the office yelled repeatedly at another intern, and refused to leave until she had written extensive grievances against the organization and the members. Another community member was angry when she was not invited to speak at Trans Day of Action; she threatened and intimidated SRLP staff and the staff of other organizations in the building. These events were stressful, but served to reinforce my desire to understand and confront the structures that are torturing community members to the point that they will lash out at organizations like SRLP.

One of the things that really kept me going was the connections that I made and strengthened throughout my time at SRLP. I would encourage future interns to make an effort to get to know your co-workers. Go on lunch breaks with people; spend that extra minute chatting in the doorway instead of rushing back to your desk. Not only did the laughs, heart to heart conversations, passing jokes, and memories motivate and inspire me, but also I gained valuable friendships, knowledge, connections, and experiences for life.

One of the best parts of my internship was working with amazing people, both staff and other interns, as well as volunteers, clients and other community members who are involved in SRLP. Staff members are varied and complex in their personalities and in their work towards gender self-determination and racial and economic justice. In working with them I found encouragement to pursue my interests, and to keep an open mind about who I can be and what I can do professionally with my passions for social justice.

Working at SRLP broadened my understanding of the intersections of reproductive rights and social justice issues. I now have a better understanding of huge barriers people face to just surviving, let alone to creating the kinds of lives and families that they want.

Through my academic studies and extracurricular activities I gained an understanding of how race/class/gender/sex/sexuality/ability/documentation status shape people and influence how they can move in the world. This knowledge definitely helped to prepare me for the internship, which in turn strengthened my understanding of these intersecting forms of oppression. This knowledge will come in handy for future academic and career goals.

After interning at SRLP, I have a better understanding of the Prison Industrial Complex, and how gender, gender norms, race, and documentation status play into oppression. I learned various strategies for countering oppression and creating/maintaining intentional communities that incorporate and center lived experiences or oppression into activism.

I gained firsthand experience of what it’s like to work in a small, radical nonprofit, and what kind of work and dedication an organization like SRLP needs to stay alive. The internship helped me to realize the necessity of working to take care of myself. I
was fortunate to work with such dynamic, compassionate, creative, fun, and caring individuals. I was treated as an equal, and valued for my lived experiences and potential.

I am very glad that I spent my summer working at SRLP. After interning in a small nonprofit setting, I am not sure if I want to work in a similar job, where people are overworked and underpaid and change is often excruciatingly slow. I do know that I want to do social justice work, and I am glad to have this experience to draw on when I am choosing what type of work to do after college.

My suggestions for potential future interns: Make connections; take care of yourself; reach out to your supervisor, talk to them about what you are dealing with; push yourself and step outside of your comfort zone; say yes, go to events and have experiences; say no, stay home or go on a walk by yourself when you need to; don’t expect every task to be gratifying or make you feel like you really contributed to the larger movement. Enjoy the small moments!

More information on RRASC internship program: clpp.hampshire.edu/RRASC