In the ten weeks of organizing with the muxeres of CLRJ, I was constantly reminded that Reproductive Justice work takes a village. It truly does! Amidst this realization, I found ways to incorporate the fullness of my Chicanx identity into my community engagement projects. Ultimately, this brought me to rely on my capacities as a student to continue learning from those whose lived experiences inform movements. If I learned one thing, it would be a resounding statement about the value of community, as it plays a central role for collective inspiration and is the only sure way of advancing social justice.

Of the many projects I worked on, I began first by creating accessible youth sexuality materials based on two California educational policies: AB329 – Lactation Accommodations, and AB302 – Comprehensive Sexual Education. It was this project that I found most humbling, as I had the chance to present the policy brief translations to our Young Parent Leadership Council in Visalia, California. Joined by the Justice for Young Families team, I presented the work that honestly took me a couple of drafts to get the language down. In the end, I was elated to get such positive feedback from them. My goal for this project was to empower a young person to be able to read over the material quickly and immediately know their rights in the classroom. Gaining this knowledge and knowing how to create accessibility of resources is one of the greatest opportunities I had here and the most memorable moment of direct community engagement.
I simultaneously focused on introducing a community effort known as Chingona Fridays with Christina Lares, where we would relate reproductive justice to the community and support what that means for Latinx. This community engagement work underlies one of my final projects, Latinx Week of Action. As a nationwide initiative that works to empower Latinx leadership and transform cultural narratives, I was thrilled to learn that our theme would center on our political power. In an increasingly troubled election year, I couldn’t think of a greater way to connect with my hermanxs than by making our Latinx voting power more visible.

Many of the projects I undertook were not what you might expect from a 9am – 5pm schedule. In addition to writing issue brief translations of two California policies, I also got the chance to be involved in our voter engagement program. Joined by the Viviendo por Igualdad Votando por Actualizar, VIVA team, I canvassed door to door in Bell Gardens hoping to gain RJ support and spread the word on the upcoming election. Later that month, we held a phonebanking event for SB1017 – Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights. The variety of tasks like the campaign engagement projects, kept me involved and continuously learning about the many aspects of CLRJ. Aspects that I realized from my archival project, were not around five years ago. This part of my internship was amazing to unfold. The growth of CLRJ was one that both impressed me and challenged me to think about the many other ways, not yet developed that activists and organizers can work towards building the movement.

My academic studies – English; Global and International Studies have strong connections to the RJ world. But it wasn’t until working at CLRJ that these became more apparent and enlightening. Global Studies for instance helped me understand the transnational activism that is alive and thriving throughout Los Angeles. Working alongside Mayra, the Policy Director gave
me the insight to tap into spaces, such as Af3irm, that support the leadership of muxeres and their need for reproductive rights and justice on a globalizing scale.

I couldn’t have successfully maneuvered the unique space at CLRJ without effective communication, time management skills, and a deep awareness of the history of Los Angeles. These key skill sets gave me a way to fully embrace my experience and push the quality of my work forward. In terms of communicating, I learned early on how communication on an administrative level, like a sweet and simple check-in email to the office can build genuine bonds of care. It might seem mundane, but it was these reassuring check-in emails that made office life refreshing. It goes without saying that my communication skills reached far beyond emails, but if I could capture the most effective times the team communicated, they would either be through collective email, or speaking openly and confidently side by side at staff meetings knowing we had each other’s back.

These moments revealed to me the power of holding space for one another, and being committed to collective support. Given the time constraint of ten weeks, I often found that the best way to plan was to pan out a work plan. Guided by Marisol, the Director of Programs, I set the layout of the coming weeks and gave myself deadlines to meet for each project. By the end, my deadlines kept me grounded and although I had taken on a couple of unexpected projects, the final work plan was one that I’m happy to look back on knowing I accomplished all that I could in the time I was there. I hope one day the unfinished archival project can be fully realized by future RRASC’s. On this note, I wish for the next RRASC to be informed about the herstories of Los Angeles and to complete the archival project that I began. Working together with the Southern California Library with Yusef Omowale allowed for me to see things in a way that shined light on the organization through its history. The future RRASC would do well to
continue that partnership with the SCL and familiarize themselves with the histories of struggles in Los Angeles.

At the CLPP Conference, we were given the chance to write ourselves a letter, one that would be mailed to our future self, post-internship. In it, I wrote that I hope to “nourish my entire being with ideas and people I love,” CLRJ offered me that and so much more. As a Law School hopeful, CLRJ brought me to a place of empowerment to want to always make space for RJ in my career plans. Like the weekly staff meetings and emails, it was the little things that made my experience there so valuable to my personal and professional growth.