

Jordyn Bishop  
Summer 2016 Fellow at Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment

August 29, 2016

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Building II, Suite 204  
Midlothian, VA 23112

RE: Fellowship Evaluation

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for all that you do at Equal Justice America that makes funding law students like myself possible. The fellowship funding I received this summer allowed me to take on a legal internship at the Center on Race, Poverty & and the Environment (CRPE), a national environmental justice non-profit organization. I have wanted to intern with CRPE ever since my environmental law professor pointed me in their direction after learning about my background and legal career interests (as described in my application cover letter). CRPE's mission 'to achieve environmental justice and healthy, sustainable communities through collective action and the law' is a perfect fit for my long-term career goals and I was very honored to be hired as an intern with them this summer.

CRPE's work is focused in California's San Joaquin Valley, the home of the worst air pollution in the nation. CRPE represents many communities living in San Joaquin Valley, communities that are face-to-face with an unbelievably long list of injustices. The current CRPE campaigns are Civil Rights, Clean Air, Climate Justice, Toxic Free Communities, Sustainable Agriculture, Forgotten Voices, and Policy Advocacy—and my summer 2016 internship experience exposed me to all of them.

Historically and currently, the communities of San Joaquin Valley face deep environmental and racial injustices including disproportionate impacts from fracking, climate change, drought, hazardous and toxic waste disposal, and pollution from pesticides, mega-dairies and other big agriculture businesses. In addition to lacking access to clean air and clean water, many of the low-income, communities of color that CRPE represents also lack access to fresh and healthy foods while, ironically, living in an area that produces one-quarter of the nation's food.

The late Luke Cole founded CRPE in the year I was born with the unique understanding that social justice advocacy and legal representation needs be community-based to be successful—a stark contrast from the typical top-down lawyering approach. Luke Cole, his life, and his work have been extremely inspirational to me personally, and so to see that his community-based approach still guides his organization and its entire staff to this day was a very moving experience. Every project I worked on at CRPE was “built from the ground up.” The San Joaquin Valley community, led by its own community-based leaders, governs all projects with CRPE available for assistance, guidance, and training.

CRPE adopts a similar engaging approach with its interns. Staff Attorneys at CRPE involved the interns with their work on a near-daily basis; they frequently invited interns to participate in community-meetings, staff-meetings, lobbying trips to Sacramento, and many other events and meetings—in other words, if something/anything was happening, interns were invited to participate. It seems to me a purposeful approach to training the next generation of lawyers, like myself, by engaging us “from the ground up.”

My day-to-day work mostly involved researching and writing memos on a variety of different cases and legislative issues, but not much direct-client interaction on a daily basis. However, I was able to see the impact of my work in other ways. For example, I wrote a legal memo on a civil procedure question for a recently decided case in which the CRPE attorney was preparing to ask the community whether they wanted to appeal the trial court decision. My memo provided the attorney with the information she needed to present to the community in order to make that decision. After submitting my assignment, I was invited to sit in on the community meeting and I was able to see first-hand how my work made an impact in their overall decision to pursue an appeal.

The experience of that particular community meeting, as well as the entire internship itself, was extremely eye-opening. I have studied cases and legal theories regarding environmental justice, but seeing and speaking to the communities that personally and historically face environmental and racial injustice everyday of their life was an immeasurable learning and humbling experience.

Thank you, Equal Justice America, for providing summer funding to me and making it possible for me to pursue a career in environmental justice.

*Respectfully,*

*Jordyn Ashley Bishop*  
J.D. Candidate, Class of 2017  
University of California,  
Hastings College of the Law



**CENTER ON RACE, POVERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT**

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September 9, 2016

Dan Ruben, Executive Director  
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**Re: Jordyn Bishop Evaluation**

Dear Mr. Ruben,

It is with great pleasure that I write to provide an evaluation of Jordyn Bishop, who recently completed a summer legal internship program at the Center. Overall, Jordyn displayed a high level of professionalism, was a pleasure to have on our team, and produced quality work product.

In addition to being a team-oriented intern, Jordyn's personality and professionalism established her as one of our top interns in recent years. She brought a positive attitude consistently and contributed to our unique organizational culture, displaying the values we seek in interns and staff members. Her work product this summer has demonstrated good writing, solid legal research, and a firm grasp of environmental justice issues. She prepared a research memo for me on the legal standards for certain civil rights claims which I found to be of exceptionally high quality. The memo reflected her skills as well as her commitment to putting in the hours necessary to produce solid work. Another attorney asked Jordyn to prepare a memo on an obscure standard of review issue. This attorney described Jordyn's work as "fantastic" and appreciated her work-ethic and self-confidence. Many interns do not ask questions yet Jordyn was comfortable and engaged attorneys in her work with those questions and interest in *how* we do our work. In conclusion, Jordyn was an exceptional intern and we hope to work with her in the future. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Brent Newell  
Legal Director

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