

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer I had the opportunity to work at the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society thanks to the assistance of the Equal Justice America Fellowship. Yes, I gained the experience of writing depositions, motions, orders, and similar real-world everyday court documents one never learns how to produce in law school. Yes, I represented my very first clients in court. While these are no doubt invaluable experiences which are steps to becoming a functioning courtroom attorney, my experience was made most memorable by the people I met. The attorneys at CVLAS welcomed the interns with open arms, establishing roles as mentors as well as colleagues. Our supervisors, incredibly intelligent attorneys with many years of experience over our young heads, came to us with questions and respected us as if we were peers.

Other interns in our office made a tremendous impact on one of society's most vulnerable by preventing evictions, assisting in filing bankruptcy, helping open channels for unemployment and disability benefits, and sometimes simply providing an ear for those in need. I worked under the supervision of an attorney who handled predominantly family law cases. I met my clients during arguably the worst points in their lives – after they were victims of domestic violence. Many domestic violence victims do not report their abuse, and a surprisingly high number of those who made initial contact with Legal Aid for assistance did not follow through and did not show up for their interview appointments. The men and women I was able to counsel showed courage just to show up and speak to us, and I think I appreciated the opportunity to be a support system and learn from them just as much as they appreciated the legal assistance we could provide. Despite seeing some of the worst in people through acts of domestic violence, it was beyond rewarding to be able to provide at least the slightest comfort to these victims.

Equal Justice America is an organization with a wonderful mission to assist law students who wish to pursue interests in poverty law. I am very thankful for the assistance which Equal Justice America was able to provide to me this summer, easing the financial burden often associated with working in a legal aid society. I sincerely hope that I am in a position to give back to this organization someday.

Best regards,

Hillary S. Brown
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