

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you so much for your support of my summer working at the Legal Aid Society's Juvenile Rights Practice in Brooklyn, New York. I left my fellowship with much more than ten weeks worth of experience and knowledge and a stronger commitment for pursuing a career in the fields of child advocacy and juvenile justice.

As an intern in the Juvenile Rights Practice (JRP) I worked primarily with three attorneys who handled child protective and delinquency cases in Brooklyn Family Court. Legal Aid's Juvenile Rights Practice serves approximately ninety percent of the children involved in New York City's Family Court system, representing clients in child protective, delinquency and person in need of supervision (PINS) cases. This summer I was continually impressed by the passion and dedication with which my supervisors and their colleagues serve their clients.

Interning in this office was a very hands-on experience. My time was spent not only in the Legal Aid office but also at court and in the field, traveling to locations in three different boroughs. During my internship I interviewed clients at the office, at court, at their homes, and at a child psychiatric institute, made home visits for very young clients in foster care, represented clients at foster care conferences, traveled out of state as part of a delinquency investigation and took a tour of a secure juvenile detention facility. Shadowing my attorneys I observed a range of proceedings in Brooklyn Family Court including permanency hearings, abuse and neglect fact-findings, suppression hearings and independent source hearings. In the office I had the opportunity to strengthen my legal writing and research skills through projects assigned by my attorneys. Some of the topics that I researched included Special Immigration Juvenile Status (SIJS) orders, interstate transfer of custody, exceptions to the exclusion of hearsay rule, and alibi notice procedure, among others. Under the supervision of my attorneys I also drafted motions and orders such as an affirmation in support of a motion to dismiss for failure to state a cause of action and a SIJS order. The SIJS order and accompanying motion that I drafted will help one client, a 15-year-old undocumented boy from Mexico who had been voluntarily placed into foster care by his mother, on his path to United States citizenship.

My clients this summer made a lasting impression on me and reinforced just how much work is to be done in the fields of child advocacy and juvenile justice. The stories they shared showed me how remarkably resilient children can be, but also how much help they need to ensure that their voices are heard. Thank you again for making it possible for me to intern at Legal Aid and help my clients this summer.

Sincerely,
Marisa Gold
University of Pennsylvania Law School '13