

August 25, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben:

I would like to thank you and Equal Justice America for awarding me the Equal Justice America Summer 2010 Fellowship. The fellowship helped me tremendously in assisting the clients of the non-profit organization I worked for this summer.

The non-profit organization, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA), is located in East Palo Alto, in Silicon Valley, CA. Unlike the prosperous cities in Silicon Valley, such as Palo Alto, East Palo Alto is known for crime and poverty. CLSEPA serve the underrepresented low-income individuals and families in East Palo Alto and its neighborhood. The majority of the population CLSEPA serves consists of Latino and Pacific Islander.

At CLSEPA, I worked in the Immigration Program as a summer law clerk. Almost all of the clients who I assisted in the Immigration Program were Spanish speaking Latinos, mostly from Mexico. All of the clients I served were undocumented.

One of the highlights of my summer job was the professional visits I made to Hillcrest Juvenile Hall with my supervising attorneys. At Hillcrest Juvenile Hall, we screened undocumented juveniles who were detained at Hillcrest and were facing deportation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Most of the juveniles were detained at Hillcrest for reasons unrelated to their immigration status. However, they are transferred to ICE as the result of the detention, even though they may be eligible for immigration benefits. We screened juveniles for potential 'U visa' (a special visa for victims of violent crimes) and asylum cases and represented them in their petition process. Most of the juveniles have undergone all kinds of hardships in their life. It was sometimes heartbreaking to hear the extreme hardships the youths have gone through. Their cases are still ongoing. The youths still have their long life ahead of them. I hope that I was able to make a positive impact in their lives through my summer job.

Besides assisting juveniles at Hillcrest, I worked for clients who were undocumented and came to CLSEPA to seek advice on their immigration issues. Many of them were victims of domestic violence or other kinds of criminal activity. They suffered physical and mental injury as the result. Undocumented immigrants who are victims of a crime are often reluctant to report to the police about the crime, because they do not want to reveal their immigration status to the police. The 'U visa' gives such victims an immigration benefit by allowing the victims to petition for a special visa status. The purpose of the 'U visa' is to encourage victims of a violent crime to help in the investigation and prosecution of the crime. The 'U visa' is also granted for

humanitarian reasons. We represented the clients who we believe may be eligible for a 'U visa' in their 'U visa' process. I hope that by working on their cases I was able to make contributions to the improvement of their lives and our neighborhood community.

Throughout my internship, I was fortunate to receive supervision from very well qualified and dedicated attorneys. I gained all kinds of legal experience by working under my supervising attorneys.

The summer internship allowed me to learn about the aspects of our local community which I never knew before. It was extremely rewarding to be able to work for a legal organization that serves our neighborhood community.

Thank you very much again for awarding me the fellowship.

Sincerely,

Naoko Kumada
LL.M. Candidate
Santa Clara University School of Law
Anticipated graduation December 2010



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LEGAL SERVICES IN
EAST PALO ALTO

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August 31, 2010

Dan Ruben, Equal Justice America
dan@equaljusticeamerica.org

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am contacting you to provide you with a final review for Naoko Kumada, who interned at Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto for 10 weeks this summer under the supervision of myself and Marilia Zellner in our immigration law unit.

As you know, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto is a private non-profit corporation providing free and low-cost legal services and representation to low-income residents of East Palo Alto and the surrounding areas. Our mission is to improve social justice, economic equity and opportunity and to assure due process and equal protection of the law by providing access to high-quality, effective legal services, including direct representation and pro per support services. CLSEPA is a highly leveraged program. On a minimal budget of less than \$500,000, we provide legal services to more than 1300 clients thanks to the contributions of 175 pro bono attorneys and more than 75 law students in a calendar year.

It was a pleasure to work with Naoko this summer, as she grasped our mission with enthusiasm and energized our office with her good humor, professionalism, equanimity, and problem-solving ability. Naoko's high degree of academic achievement and experience in providing services to Burmese refugees and studying diverse cultures made her a wonderful asset to our program.

She provided a particularly invaluable service in helping us to launch an experimental partnership with the private defenders at San Mateo County's juvenile hall and the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. Naoko assisted in screening children who are detained with Immigration and Customs Enforcement "holds" that mark them for immediate placement into federal custody after their juvenile detention is completed, so that they may be removed and "repatriated" to countries of which they have no ties or memories. In fact, many of these children are non-violent offenders who are eligible for immigration relief, but they are shuttled through a process that denies them meaningful access to immigration counsel. Moreover, the juvenile delinquency process, which is designed to intervene and rehabilitate youth, is instead turned against these immigrant children by extracting

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evidence used against them to effect their deportation. Our fledgling program counteracts this sad irony, and without Naoko's assistance, it would have had a much weaker impact. Naoko also followed up on these cases by preparing applications for immigration relief and dealt effectively with complex fact-gathering scenarios that required creativity, orientation to details, and persistence.

We hope that Naoko may be able to secure additional EJA funding for this fall to aid us in continuing to provide this otherwise unavailable advocacy tool for isolated and vulnerable immigrant youth.

I also want to emphasize the immense positive difference that Naoko and all of the EJA fellows have made and continue to make to our agency and our clients. Based upon our leveraged model, we rely heavily on volunteers, fellows and interns to provide the legal services most needed by our low-income clientele. Our clients come to CLSEPA when they have no place else to turn. With students like Naoko, we can contemplate expanding services as the client demand increases, but funding is static or decreasing.

Thank you very much for enabling EJA fellows to continue to do much-needed legal services work with our agency and community.

Sincerely,



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