

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Equal Justice America for helping to make my summer internship with Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A (“BKA”) possible. My work with BKA’s Anti-Predatory Lending/Foreclosure Defense Unit was challenging and fulfilling.

After finishing my first year of law school it was exciting to apply some of the knowledge I had acquired by serving individuals who are in desperate need of legal services. The number of foreclosures across the country, and to a great extent in the East New York community where BKA is located, continues to grow. Unfortunately, without enough organizations like BKA, many of those who risk losing their homes to foreclosure will go without any legal assistance.

Upon joining BKA, I was immediately welcomed as a member of the unit. Because of the high volume of cases, there was no shortage of work to be done. Legal interns would identify potential defenses by meeting with each homeowner and reviewing their file. Then, in order to assist as many individuals as possible, we would work with the litigant homeowner and a supervising attorney to complete a *pro se* verified answer or notice of a motion to dismiss, as appropriate. The internship provided as opportunity for me to do real legal work, drafting pleadings, notices, affirmations and demands. It was an incredible feeling to be able to produce legal documents that would stave off foreclosures for a homeowner who was previously unaware of the viable defenses they could raise. The work I was doing at BKA was important, highly relevant, and extremely worthwhile.

Because of scarce resources, in additions to providing critical legal assistance and representation, the attorneys at BKA manage heavy workloads with minimal support staff. It is clear to me that such organizations benefit enormously when they are able to sustain productive summer internship programs with the help of outside funding. Without this funding, law students such as myself would rarely be financially compensated for spending their summer doing public interest work, and would instead have to find paid work in the private sector.

As the nation continues to grapple with the mortgage crisis, I am happy to have had a position with an organization that is committed to helping homeowners litigate foreclosures cases. The people of the communities in which BKA works have minimal access to comprehensive legal and financial information. The overwhelming majority of defendant homeowners who sought our assistance had little understanding of their loans and were often given false and misleading information from mortgage brokers and lenders. Some knew little English and had little formal education. The most distressing cases involved families who had built up equity in their home for generations and now stood to lose everything. It seems unconscionable to allow a homeowner to go through a foreclosure proceeding that could have such devastating consequences without effective legal assistance. This summer, I was able to take part in an effort to fill that gap.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Andrea Clisura
Brooklyn Law School
J.D. Candidate, June 2011