

August 30, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you so much for awarding me with an Equal Justice America fellowship this summer. My experience at a legal aid agency was invaluable, and I learned a lot about the type of work that is done at public interest organizations. My experience this summer affirmed my desire to practice public interest law when I graduate from law school.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my internship was that I learned about many different areas of law. My sponsoring organization, the Legal Assistance Foundation (LAF), assists low-income clients with various types of legal issues, ranging from housing law to immigration law. Although my organization has special projects with attorneys devoted to each type of practice, I worked from the North Suburban service office in Evanston, Illinois. Therefore, the attorneys and interns at that location did not specialize in one area of law; we worked on all types of cases, including housing, public benefits, consumer, and family law. The majority of my work was with family law cases because I have a specific interest in family law. I am also very interested in immigration law, so I was able to collaborate with some of the immigration attorneys at the downtown office to work on VAWA and U-Visa cases as well.

The best experience and memory of my summer was with a young 25-year-old Nepali woman. I worked on her divorce and her VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) petition on my own (with some supervision). When LAF was deciding whether to take on her case, they expressed that they could only take her case if I was able to work on it. Furthermore, the family law attorney could only accept the client's divorce case if the immigration attorneys accepted her VAWA case. It was a great feeling to know that I helped someone who otherwise would not have received legal services from LAF because of the organization's heavy caseload, lack of resources, and lack of attorney availability. She was very appreciative of my help when I finished her case. I was very happy that I was able to make a difference in her life. I hope I am able to follow her case and find out when Immigration makes a decision about her VAWA petition.

I also enjoyed working with the attorneys at LAF. They came from very different backgrounds, and it was interesting to learn about why they chose careers in public interest law. They were very welcoming and laid back, which made the work atmosphere nice.

I learned a lot this summer from my internship, and I thoroughly enjoyed my work. I was able to perform many tasks that I had never done before, including drafting petitions for dissolution of marriage, researching public benefits and consumer law, and conducting extensive client intake. I especially enjoyed interviewing clients because direct interaction with clients helps to keep our

legal work meaningful and interesting. Some of their cases were sad, but they helped me realize the huge need for free legal services in Chicago in *all* areas of law.

I hope to work at another legal aid agency or public interest organization next summer. With my 711 license, I will be better able to assist the organization. I am glad that I worked at the Legal Assistance Foundation this summer, and the Equal Justice America fellowship allowed me to take on this internship. Thank you again for this wonderful opportunity. As I begin my second year of law school, I have already used much of what I learned this summer. The Equal Justice America Fellowship Program is a great opportunity for students to pursue careers in public interest law and learn more about what it takes to be a legal aid lawyer.

Sincerely,

Anita Gupta
DePaul College of Law
Class of 2013