

August 31, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you and Equal Justice America for funding my incredibly rewarding summer at Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS). My summer provided me with valuable legal experience, client contact, and a wonderful opportunity to help those in need.

I spent my summer at Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services (CASLS), an office of GBLS. At CASLS, I worked as an Elder, Mental Health and Disability Rights Law Intern and was exposed to a wide variety of public benefits, housing, and special education law. I gained hands-on experience advocating with government agencies, drafting motions and advocacy letters, and conducting legal research. I also was able to participate in impact advocacy, helping to shape a Home and Community Based Services Medicaid waiver to best serve the needs of participants.

CASLS's small, close-knit office environment allowed me to take on a lot of responsibility but receive constant support and advice. I was able to manage my own caseload and work directly with clients in order to best serve their interests. I engaged in a wide variety of substantive, challenging work and received constructive feedback.

My summer was colored with wonderful successes and depressing setbacks. I was most surprised by how few of my cases were resolved in the obvious way, more often than not the best solution stemmed from creative problem solving and an intimate understanding of the client's individual desires and needs. This was particularly true for an elder immigrant couple that I helped. The couple were legal US permanent residents who had been receiving Massachusetts' Emergency Aid for Elders, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC) benefits. The couple had jubilantly won \$3000 in the lottery but sadly the winnings resulted in a termination of their EAEDC benefits. Originally, we had thought that the best course of action was to appeal the benefits termination. However, over the course of careful research and many conversations with their DTA worker, I was able to discover that the wife's benefits had been inappropriately terminated. By reapplying, the wife was able to get her benefits reinstated. Further, her husband became her dependent, which increased her benefits allotment and resulted in a minimal overall reduction. This option was much faster and easier than an appeal, and best served the clients desire to get their

benefits restored as quickly as possible. We were able to obtain the best solution even though it was not the obvious one.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my summer and learned more than I ever expected. I was constantly inspired by how the majority of my clients resiliently approached every difficulty with a positive outlook and never ending hope. Thank you for making this enriching and unique experience possible.

Sincerely,

Eliza H. Reed
University of Michigan Law School
J.D. expected, Dec. 2012