

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Dan,

I had a spectacularly productive and educational summer at the Homeless Action Center. The attorneys and advocates I worked with allowed me to delve into what it means to be disabled, and homeless, in Alameda County, while I learned how to navigate the SSI/SSDI application process.

While at HAC this summer, I wrote four hearing briefs for SSI clients, two briefs and their subsequent hearings, resulted in fully favorable decisions, two are still pending. I wrote a letter of complaint to Disability Determination Services regarding a psychological examiner whose reports were consistently detrimental to applicants whose initial claims were denied on the basis of her reports and who were later found disabled in contradiction to her reports. I edited and cite checked a Motion for Summary Judgment in an SSI case at the district court level. I conducted and assisted with six client intake interviews and directly assisted multiple clients with SSI/SSDI paperwork. I communicated with and assisted clients getting to and from doctors appointments, which added evidence to clients' disability claims. I also engaged with clients and attorneys during hearing preparation and attended four administrative law hearings on SSI benefits.

HAC was the most supportive and open office I have ever worked in. Part of the philosophy they have is that in order to care for their clients fully, their attorneys and advocates need to be taken care of, and work together. To those ends, dogs are allowed in the office, there are no walls between desks, and there are impromptu chess games throughout the day. The collaboration and cooperation that results from this atmosphere is unbelievable and the clients receive amazing advocacy because of it.

I knew going into my summer internship that I wanted to do public interest work after graduating from Hastings. My experience at HAC solidified my commitment to public interest work. Learning about the ways in which county, state, and federal welfare systems work together to either help or hinder people seeking benefits was fascinating. I look forward to a career in which I can work to improve people's access to the benefits they deserve.

Thank you for allowing me to have this unforgettable and grounding experience.

Sincerely,
Kate Walsham
UC Hastings, 2013

HOMELESS ACTION CENTER

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August 30, 2011

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Rd
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Re: Kate Walsham

To Whom It May Concern:

Kate Walsham worked full-time in our Oakland office during the summer of 2011 as a legal advocate for homeless and mentally ill applicants for public benefits. As her supervising attorney, I am happy to attest to the wonderful work she did on behalf of our clients.

Homeless Action Center (HAC) is a legal services program with offices in Berkeley and Oakland, California, that serves homeless, mentally disabled clients by representing them in claims for Social Security disability benefits. These benefits provide clients with a monthly income and Medicaid health insurance, allowing clients to lead healthier and more stable lives.

In general, Ms. Walsham was responsible for interviewing clients, completing numerous legal forms, obtaining and analyzing medical and other evidence, developing legal arguments, writing persuasive letters, corresponding with clients' medical providers and Social Security, coordinating and attending medical appointments with clients, and participating in various agency meetings.

More specifically, Ms. Walsham conducted and assisted with six client intake interviews and directly assisted multiple clients with Social Security disability paperwork. She communicated with and assisted clients in getting to and from medical appointments, which added evidence to clients' disability claims. She wrote a persuasive letter with citations to the rules to assist one client in getting his disability payments started. She wrote three pre-hearing briefs and submitted them to administrative law judges. She also engaged with clients and attorneys during hearing preparation and attended four administrative law hearings for SSI benefits. Finally, she drafted a complaint letter against one of the psychologists who performs one-time disability exams of Social Security applicants. This complaint letter was the first complaint our agency has filed.

Our agency and clients benefitted greatly from Ms. Walsham's work. Our staff attorneys maintain high caseloads of 40 clients each, and Ms. Walsham's assistance on these cases eased the burden our staff experiences as well as provided excellent, thorough advocacy on behalf of the clients. The complaint letter she drafted was a project that our agency had set

aside for over a year due to a lack of resources. Her dedication to this project resulted in the submission of a well-drafted complaint letter with multiple attachments.

As a final note, Ms. Walsham was a pleasure to work with. Her professionalism, competence, commitment and sense of humor were truly appreciated by the staff. We miss her and are so grateful to Equal Justice America for supporting her summer internship and contributing to the high quality legal services our clients deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Lunsford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa Lunsford, Esq.
Managing Attorney