

August 30, 2014

Mr. Dan Ruben  
Executive Director, Equal Justice America  
13540 E. Boundary Rd.  
Building II, Suite 204  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the opportunity to be part of the Equal Justice America Fellowship this year. I have learned so much from the program and from the legal service agency where I worked, and appreciated the experience of working directly with clients with significant legal needs who might not otherwise have had meaningful access to the court system. My fellowship took place at Cabrini Green Legal Aid, a Chicago legal assistance agency that works with clients with family law, housing, criminal defense, criminal records, and juvenile law issues. Additionally, the agency provides legal assistance to incarcerated mothers with family law matters. I was assigned to the family law program, where I assisted clients in parentage, divorce, guardianship, visitation, and child custody matters. Many of our clients had been in high conflict situations for a long time, and they and their children were suffering as a result. While working at CGLA, I was able to observe a number of cases in which legal intervention made a significant difference, both for our clients and their children. The supervision I received at the agency was incredible, and my supervisor worked hard to make sure I got practical experience, and understood not only my client's situation but the broader context as well. The EJA Fellowship was an amazing chance to gain practical skills, to work closely with clients, and to learn more about the legal issues faced by low income populations, and I am leaving the Fellowship even more certain that I want to pursue a career in public interest law when I graduate from law school.

Two clients in particular stick out to me when I think about the summer. The first, a young man named Devin<sup>1</sup>, came in seeking assistance regarding his three-year-old son. Devin had not seen his son in several months, and had a high conflict relationship with the mother. The two had difficulty being in the same room together, much less agreeing to a parenting schedule. When we received Devin's case, it was only a few days before Father's Day, and Devin was devastated at the prospect of not spending the holiday with his son. After spending a great deal of time meeting with him and determining what his goals were, I was able to accompany Devin to court, where I met with him and his child's mother for several hours. Eventually, between us, we were able to negotiate a temporary parenting schedule that would allow both parties to spend time with their son – including Father's Day with Devin. We were also able to assist both parents with getting into the family court mediation program, so they could come up with a more permanent schedule going forward. Devin was able to spend Father's Day with his son, and he and his son left a voicemail on my work phone over the weekend thanking me for my help and telling me what a great time they were having. I kept up with their case with my supervisor even after I finished my fellowship, and was glad to hear that both parents are making progress in mediation, and Devin is seeing his son regularly and continuing to build a strong relationship with him.

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<sup>1</sup> All client names have been changed to protect privacy and confidentiality.

The other client, Sarah\* was an incarcerated mother with a teenage son. Even though she had made some mistakes, Sarah was working hard to turn her life around – she had earned her GED in prison, was attending drug counseling, individual therapy, and anger management, and had obtained a professional license in the prison program that she could use toward employment when she was released. Throughout her time in prison, Sarah had maintained a close relationship with her son, receiving regular updates from his father about his health and education, visiting with him as much as she could, and exchanging countless phone calls, letters, and cards. Eventually, her son's father became ill however, and a family from church began caring for Sarah's son. Gradually, the visits tapered off, then ceased all together, as did the phone calls and letters. Sarah kept calling and kept writing, but was always dismissed or met with excuses. Eventually, she was served with a petition for adoption – the couple wanted to adopt Sarah's son, and was alleging that Sarah had abandoned him.

I was able to meet with Sarah at the prison, and in addition to getting more information about her case, I was able to write down her story, and to capture the love, concern, and devotion she has for her child in writing. When I returned to adoption court, I was able to use that account to serve as a voice for Sarah, and to make sure the judge heard her concerns, even if she couldn't present them from prison. The case is still pending, but the judge clearly took note of Sarah's side of the story – so much so that she is now ordering that Sarah be transported to attend future adoption court proceedings and to have her chance to speak in court. Without that meeting, and without that handwritten account of Sarah's words, I'm not sure the court would have paid her much attention, and might have been willing to accept that the version of her presented by others was reality. Now, Sarah has a chance to make her case, and I am confident that the court will see that same love and commitment to her son that I saw when I first met with her. She is truly a remarkable woman, and it meant a lot to me that I could help her to secure one of the most basic rights a person has – the right to be heard.

While I was able to work with a number of clients this summer, I found these two cases particularly meaningful because of the tangible improvements I could see after working on them, and the significant impact these two sets of legal proceedings had on my clients' lives and family relationships. Family law can be difficult, but I found the experience to be incredibly rewarding, and it solidified my decision to work in public interest after graduation. This experience would not have been possible without participating in the Equal Justice America Fellowship, and I am so grateful to have had this opportunity. I sincerely thank you for sponsoring me this summer, and I hope to have the chance to give back as I advance in my career so that other law students can have the same opportunity that I did to be part of making a difference. Thank you so very much for a life-changing summer, and I wish you all the best as EJA continues to grow and develop... It is truly an incredible program.

Sincerely,

Kathryn J. Huber  
Loyola University Chicago School of Law  
J.D. Candidate, May 2015

September 5, 2014

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

RE: EJA Fellowship Evaluation for Kathryn Huber

Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to evaluate the EJA fellowship of Kathryn Huber, a law student at Loyola School of Law in Chicago, Illinois. Kathryn spent last summer at Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA), a non-profit that provides free legal services to impoverished Chicagoans in the areas of criminal defense, the expungement and sealing of criminal records, family law, and housing law. Kathryn worked in our family law program under the direct supervision of attorney Darryl Apperton. I am Mr. Apperton's supervisor and the coordinator of the internship program.

Our family law program handles many different kinds of cases, focusing on parentage court issues (paternity, visitation, custody) and discharging minor guardianship. Kathryn worked directly with clients in all of these areas. She met with clients, performed legal research, prepared court documents, participated in settlement negotiations, and represented clients in court pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 711. Kathryn is obviously committed to public interest law and to providing direct legal services. She is able to establish rapport with clients and communicate effectively. Her research and writing is thorough and she is receptive to feedback. She works well independently and completes tasks in a timely manner. Kathryn is thoughtful in her work and shows compassion is all she does.

Overall, Kathryn was a committed and conscientious intern, and was a valuable asset to both our staff and our clients. It was a pleasure having her at CGLA and we pleased that she is continuing to work with us throughout the upcoming school year on a special project. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Regards,



Jill E. Roberts  
Civil Program Supervisor