

October 19, 2017

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

Re: Catharine Debelle summer fellowship evaluation

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am pleased to write to you to evaluate Catharine Debelle's fellowship with LAF in 2017. It was a pleasure to have her with us this summer.

This summer Catharine worked on cases for LAF clients seeking to obtain or maintain public welfare benefits such as SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income. At the beginning of the summer Catharine expressed to me her interest in developing client advising and counseling skills. These skills are very important in this area of law, because clients experience great stress when faced with the risk of losing benefits they need for basic subsistence. I asked Catharine to work directly with my clients in obtaining evidence, dealing with government bureaucracy and helping them understand the issues in their cases. She performed exceptionally well

In one particular case, Catharine completed the initial intake – which meant conducting an in-person meeting with the prospective client, asking questions for the purpose of filling in missing gaps in information and fact gathering. She pieced together a timeline from the random assortment of documents and government notices that the claimant brought with her to the meeting, which was no easy task; and she did a great job making sure the prospective client was comfortable with LAF's process and informing her of "next steps." Afterwards, she worked up the case by researching the relevant legal and administrative rules pertaining to this individual's specific issues, and was able to organize and present all her findings to our practice group in a meaningful manner. This allowed us to ultimately decide we were going to provide extended representation to the prospective client. Catharine continued to take the lead on this case until she left, regularly reaching out to the client with important case updates and working to obtain necessary documentation from the Social Security Administration.

My colleagues and I found Catharine's work with clients and her correspondence with government officials to be professional and thorough, and we appreciated having her assist us this past summer.

I will only be too happy to answer any particular questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. L. Pick', written in a cursive style.

Steven L. Pick  
Senior Attorney  
312-347-8301 (voice)  
773-814-0342 (mobile)  
312-612-1401 (direct fax)  
[spick@lafchicago.org](mailto:spick@lafchicago.org)