

August 26, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I wanted to thank you and your team for your support this summer. It was an honor to be selected as an Equal Justice America fellow and to serve people with disabilities again this summer at Equip for Equality. The Equal Justice America fellowship allowed me to return to Equip and be part of their brand-new Employment Rights Helpline.

I spent ten weeks at Equip for Equality, a private non-profit organization that serves as the governor-designated protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in Illinois. I was part of the new Employment Rights division of the civil rights team. I worked on issues ranging from failure to hire to discrimination and wrongful discharge. I also served Equip's clients through intake interviews, outreach events, and trainings.

This summer reaffirmed the centrality of gainful employment in peoples' lives. I heard from individuals who are trying to find their first job out of high school to individuals who worked decades and find themselves pushed out of employment because of a disability. These individuals were trailblazers, breaking stereotypes while affirming themselves and their community with grace and dignity. I was truly fortunate to interact with them, and I am forever grateful for the lessons that they taught me.

As I reflect on my past ten weeks, I hope that I helped Equip's clients as much as they helped me. I took intake calls from people who were just fired or horrendous problems with co-workers or supervisors harassing them at work. I had the experience of being the first and perhaps only person that our client was able to talk to about these issues. I also was fortune to be in a position to call that person back, to tell them we were taking their case or tell them we had information so they could advocate for themselves. I will go into this school year and my career knowing that I was able to make an impact, however small, on the life of someone else. I cannot thank Equal Justice America and Equip enough for putting me in the position to be able to say that.

Sincerely,

James Naughton
Loyola University Chicago – School of Law
Class of 2018

August 15, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

It has been a sincere pleasure to work with James Naughton this summer at Equip for Equality. By way of background, Equip for Equality (EFE) is a private non-profit organization that serves as the governor-designated protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in Illinois. We handle both individual cases and systemic litigation. I supervise the legal interns for our organization's Civil Rights Team.

James worked on a variety of projects this summer, with a focus on employment issues. He conducted several client interviews, researched and drafted memorandum pertaining to reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. He also assisted EFE attorneys in advising clients on requesting reasonable accommodations, failure to hire issues, and disability discrimination in the workplace.

James was always outstanding in all aspects of his internship. He demonstrated maturity and diligence throughout the summer. His writing has been described as "organized" and "clear" by attorneys reviewing his work. Jim has been widely praised by the attorneys who supervised him and being an excellent advocate for people with disabilities. One attorney wrote, "Jim has a great working relationship with his clients who clearly feel very comfortable talking to him. He takes every opportunity to advocate on their behalf."

Thank you for your support, which helped ensure that James was able to work at Equip for Equality this summer. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mariangela F. Monteiro
Mariangela F. Monteiro
Staff Attorney
Equip for Equality
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Chicago, IL 60602