

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben,

During my fellowship this summer I worked at KIND, Kids in Need of Defense, in their Los Angeles office. KIND represents unaccompanied refugee and immigrant children in immigration and deportation proceedings. KIND strives to ensure that unaccompanied minors have legal representation in court. The two most common types of cases I worked on were Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) cases, and Asylum cases. The majority of the clients I assisted were children from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. During my fellowship I was assigned to four of KIND's Pro Bono Coordinating attorneys. In addition to working on cases, I participated in an intake clinic, where I was able to speak with prospective KIND clients, and talk to them about their journey to the United States and the possible immigration relief they qualified for. Client interaction was a main component of my work at KIND. I constantly spoke with clients either in person, or over the phone in order to uncover more facts about their asylum/SIJS claims, or to retrieve other important information. Furthermore, I assisted with filings in the Los Angeles immigration court, and filings at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse. Another major component of my fellowship included translating for Pro Bono Attorneys or KIND attorneys in the office. In addition, I also translated client declarations.

My favorite thing about working at KIND was definitely the amount of client interaction that was available to me. I had the opportunity to meet and speak with unaccompanied minors. I learned about their stories, and the sometimes horrific and saddening circumstances that led them to flee their home country and seek refuge in the United States. During and after speaking with clients, I felt like I was able to truly help and assist them. For example, many of the clients that KIND assists are monolingual and only speak Spanish. As a translator during conversations with attorneys, I was given the opportunity to act as the voice of these children and help advocate

for them, and tell their story. Aside from this, I was able to attend court hearings where KIND clients usually heard life changing news about their immigration status. Seeing clients excited about their new starts, and the hard work of KIND attorneys paying off was inspiring. Working with KIND, and the Equal Justice America Fellowship has further encouraged my interest in immigration and public interest law.

Thank you,

Yesenia Piste

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Class of 2019