

August 7, 2016

**Dan Ruben**

Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I would like to thank you and the rest of the EJA team for providing me with financial assistance this summer. In order to fully show my gratitude, I would like to explain my experience at Cabrini Green Legal Aid and what it truly meant to me.

I began law school with the goal of working in the public sector, whether that be in a government agency or a non-profit legal aid. I set that goal knowing that it might be difficult to fully obtain, and was often criticized by peers for not having more interest in the financial benefits of being a lawyer. However, I continued to seek internships and experiences that fit with my goal. When I heard about the internship opportunity at Cabrini Green Legal Aid in Chicago, I was immediately interested. It seemed like an organization that functions on the same moral code as me, and it would be an amazing experience to work in Chicago for my final summer of law school. I was ecstatic when I received an offer, but also nervous about the costs. When EJA contacted me with a large stipend offer, I finally felt secure. My financial worries for the summer evaporated and I was able to put my all into my position at CGLA.

I worked primarily in the Criminal Records department at CGLA. This department is dedicated to assisting individuals who are facing employment and social barriers due to their past mistakes and criminal backgrounds. I was drawn to this department because I believe that not only do people deserve second chances and an opportunity to turn their lives around for the better, but I've studied and understand the issues revolving around the access to justice gap in this country. Additionally, I know that lower-income persons are more likely to be adversely affected by the stigma and restrictions imposed upon people with criminal backgrounds. It seemed like something I could work passionately on and I was happy to learn new law along the way, too. I learned about sealing, expunging, and other alternative forms of relief in the State of Illinois for people with criminal records, which was quite fascinating compared to the law of Michigan, my home state.

This position gave me the best experience I could have asked for as a rising-3L. All of my legal internships had consisted of researching primarily, but at CGLA I was able to actual practice law and have clients like a true attorney. I had approximately 7-8 clients of my own this summer, whom I met with in person, talked to on the phone, wrote petitions on behalf of, and stood in court with to argue those petitions. One of my first clients will forever be a special memory for me. She had most of her record sealed, but she had one ineligible offense. So my job was to convey to the judge that this client was rehabilitated and deserving of a special type of order, called a Certificate of Good Conduct. I wrote a lengthy petition described the client's life

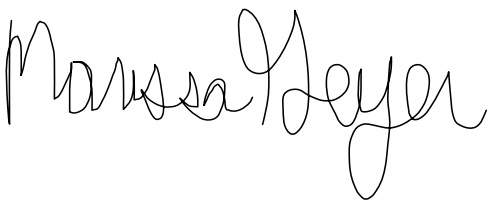
history, criminal history, and future goals. I wrote about how she turned her life around and was on a better track. I was even able to meet her one-year old son, which gave me more motivation to do a great job for her. The day of the court date, I argued with everything I had that this client deserved the certificate. I even refuted the State when they asserted some opposing arguments. In the end, the judge granted the certificate and my client was elated! She thanked me outside the courtroom, while crying, and told me that she felt I “captured her soul and said everything she never knew how to say.” As I left court that day, I couldn’t stop smiling. I know I helped that client, but she also helped me. Working on her case reignited my passion for public service. I always wanted to be a lawyer so I could be a voice for those who need it, and in that moment I had done just that. It was a spectacular feeling.

Aside from the CGLA clients I worked with, I also staffed a public help desk one day per week. At the help desk I spoke with members of the public about their legal issues and how we might be able to assist them that day, or refer them into the office. I had to think on my toes and had to deal with any situation that was thrown at me. By working this help desk I learned how to interact with different types of personalities, how to deliver bad, unfortunate news, how to truly listen to what someone is trying to convey, and how to manage my time so I could help as many people as possible. These skills will certainly transfer over to my future job and help me be a more effective attorney.

This summer I learned so much about myself and my goals, all while being able to make a difference in peoples’ lives. I’m fully dedicated to a life of public service. I’m excited to graduate so I can continue to work in the public sector for those in need. I cannot thank you, Mr. Ruben, and the EJA team enough for the assistance you provide me this summer. I’m not sure I would have been able to follow through with the offer from CGLA had it not been for your help financially. The assistance you provide helped me to work in an underserved area of the law, and to learn more about what I want to pursue in my future career.

Thank you again for your help. I will certainly tell all of my public service friends about your organization and the great things EJA does!”

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marissa Geyer". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marissa" and last name "Geyer" clearly legible.

Marissa Geyer  
Michigan State



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Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Rd.  
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Midlothian, VA 23112

August 9, 2016

Re: Marissa Geyer, Michigan State Law School

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing as an end of summer assessment of Marissa Geyer, rising 3L at Michigan State Law School, and summer 2016 intern at Cabrini Green Legal Aid. My name is Eve Kleinerman; I am a Staff Attorney in the Criminal Records department at Cabrini Green Legal Aid. I had the pleasure of directly supervising Marissa in her capacity as an intern at Cabrini Green Legal Aid. Marissa's internship began in May of 2016 and concluded at the end of July 2016.

During her time at CGLA, Marissa made herself an asset in the courtroom. Marissa's in-court representation allowed her to stand out in her position as an intern with CGLA. Marissa volunteered weekly at the Expungement and Sealing court call at 26<sup>th</sup> and California. Marissa handled a handful of cases each week at the court call, and she did so with poise and skill. We came to count on Marissa as an asset in the courtroom, and she is truly missed now that she has returned to Michigan. Marissa's work on individual cases in the courtroom was also exceptional. Marissa handled multiple clients seeking Certificates of Good Conduct from the Circuit Court. Marissa only had the opportunity to represent one client at their hearing, but she did so excellently. Marissa received numerous compliments on her oral advocacy from all of the attorneys in the courtroom that morning. My only wish was that Marissa attended a Chicago law school and could continue this work throughout her school year.

Marissa's incredible patience and care with clients was evidenced by her ability to know what the client needed and to approach the clients with compassion. Marissa is passionate about helping others, especially those who struggle to overcome previous life choices that resulted in their criminal record. Marissa worked incredibly hard, both with in-house clients as well as with brief service clients at our Expungement Help Desk. Marissa volunteered at our Help Desk at least once per week, and she became well versed in expungement and sealing law. In addition to her Help Desk work, Marissa handled cases for representation for clients seeking Healthcare Worker Waivers, Permanent Employee Registration Cards, Certificates of Good Conduct and Petitions for Executive Clemency. Marissa's written work was always exemplary and needed little editing to be ready for submission.

Marissa was a fabulous intern this summer. She was an asset to the office as a whole, but specifically to Criminal Records and to myself personally. All clients who worked with Marissa received excellent service. Marissa came to work with the professionalism of a seasoned attorney, a skill that often takes years to learn. Marissa will be an asset in any office that she works in as her career progresses.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding Marissa and her work with CGLA. I can be reached at 312-374-6191 or via email at [evkleinerman@cglanet.net](mailto:evkleinerman@cglanet.net).

Sincerely,



Eve R. Kleinerman, Esq.

Staff Attorney, Criminal Records  
Cabrini Green Legal Aid