

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
August 25, 2010

Letter Summarizing my Summer Fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I wanted to thank you and the entire organization for awarding me a 2010 Summer Fellowship. My summer at Legal Advocates for Children and Youth (LACY) confirmed my desire to work for social justice. The stipend allowed me to focus all of my energy on advocating for children. I was able to work with youth in the Juvenile Dependency System, children who needed a guardianship, and minors struggling with severe learning and behavioral challenges. If I had not received the Fellowship I would have had to divide my time between aiding this vulnerable population and working solely for the purpose of income. Thank you for allowing me to commit to a cause I fully believe in.

LACY allowed me to truly experience what it means to be a child's attorney. As a certified law student, I was able to appear and advocate for children who had been abused or neglected by their parents. Interviewing these children allowed me to better understand the complex world that they live in. For some of these children their attorney is one of the most constant, supportive figures in their lives. Although no child should have to endure what these children have, it inspired me to know that I can be a source of comfort and stability in some of their most trying moments.

During my internship I was also able to work with older children who had directly filed for a guardianship. Initially, guardianship cases seem straightforward. There is a stack of papers that needs to be completed and filed and a court date needs to be established. I quickly realized, however, that the request for guardianship is usually just the tip of the iceberg. After interviewing multiple clients, and their family friends, parents, and school officials I realized how chaotic and stressful children's lives could be without a stable caretaker. Thankfully I realized that a child's attorney is able to help with many of the challenges these children face in their daily lives. It was amazing to know that I could help make someone's life more predictable and more fulfilling.

Thank you again for this amazing opportunity. I will forever remember my work this summer. Please continue allowing students like me to follow their passions.

Sincerely,
Meghan Dunn
University of California, Hastings College of the Law
Class of 2011