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Mr. Ruben;

I would like to thank Equal Justice America for granting me a fellowship this summer at the Legal Aid Justice Center. I had a wonderful experience with this organization and would recommend it to anyone. As soon as I began working with LAJC, my supervisors gave me real life tasks, such as writing and filing pleadings, which introduced me to Virginia's civil procedure. Most of these duties were in relation to Housing cases, two of which I represented, having my third year practice certificate and authorization from the General District Court of Richmond City. Both clients were in danger of losing their housing, and my supervisors helped me to save both from that fate. It was wonderful to get to know the clients and have the responsibility and reward of securing their rights.

Most other clients with whom I interacted had situations that required only advice, and, under supervision, I worked with them through their issues. I accompanied one of these clients through the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority's voucher program, learning much of the process myself while guaranteeing that she was provided with appropriate services. Her case is still continuing, but it seems promising that she'll be able to leave a debilitating apartment and neighborhood and move into a clean townhouse that suits her disability needs.

Otherwise, I helped the JustChildren program at LAJC by researching education issues and attending conferences on new standards for schools and alternative schools. I learned much about the interaction between school discipline and access to education, especially from some clients' situations. I hope to pursue this topic in the future, as I strongly believe in the need for educating all people.

Finally, I attended neighborhood meetings concerning the City's plan to change the layout of particular areas. I was proud to hear some comments by the residents, who

are willing to stand and take action to protect their rights. Yet, these meetings also provided a dose of reality, teaching me the dedication and cooperation one must pursue in order to lead such a group. I plan to research the issues discussed at these meetings, because I have a passion, enhanced by my fellowship experience, to aid people in poverty however possible.

The staff at the Legal Aid Justice Center is made of some of the most amazing and impassioned people I have ever worked with; it was wonderful to be surrounded by others who have similar goals and such a fire to aid underprivileged people. Again, thank you for the opportunity.

Sincerely,

Miriam R. Sincell  
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