

August 16, 2012

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Because of the Equal Justice America Fellowship I was able to intern at the Legal Assistance Foundation this summer. LAF has many different practice groups, however I worked primarily with the Child and Family law group. While working in this group, I learned more about the reality of the practice of law than I have in two years of law school.

On a daily basis, I helped fill out orders of protection, divorce pleadings, 13.3. disclosure statements, Uniform Orders of Child Support, prepared for divorce prove-ups, etc. I also wrote letters and spoke on the phone with clients and opposing counsels.

Some of the most memorable moments, however were my client interviews. I typically did about 2-3 client interviews per week. One time this summer, I interviewed a low-income father, whose son had been kidnapped by his maternal grandparents. The father however, was not on the birth certificate, and had received a letter from DCFS in North Carolina saying he was an absent parent. This interview was memorable because of the convoluted fact pattern and the many different legal issues involved in his case. At that point, I realized that many family law cases are extremely challenging, and an attorney needs an expansive skill-set to practice in this field.

In addition to client interviews, I also used my 711 license and went to court for status dates for the attorneys. While the first time in front of the judge was extremely nerve-racking, by the end of the summer I began to feel very comfortable with it. These experiences are invaluable.

By the end of the summer, I was extremely saddened to leave LAF. The clients I met changed the way I saw the low-income sector. It felt amazing to give them the help they desperately needed. I was also sad to leave the wonderful attorneys and law students I had met. Every one of them was amazing people to work with.

LAF also provided an educational component to our internship. Every Thursday, a different attorney from a specific practice group would host a brown bag lunch. There, the attorney would discuss the laws behind his or her specialization. The lunches included topics such as public benefits law, employment law, consumer law, housing law, child law, and family law. These lunches were very helpful, because a student may not have time to take a specific class on the topic in law school, but may be able to learn a little bit about it during this lunch.

In sum, thank you so much for awarding me the EJA Fellowship. This summer truly changed me as a person and as a student for the better.

Sincerely,  
Nour Bahrani



Equal justice starts here.

312/347-8327

August 8, 2012

Mr. Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing this letter on behalf of and at the request of Nour Bahrani, a law student at DePaul University School of Law in Chicago, Illinois. Ms. Bahrani interned at our agency this past summer and worked directly under my supervision. Our agency represents low-income people in a variety of civil proceedings. My department is composed of attorneys who assist clients with divorce and domestic violence cases.

Ms. Bahrani spoke by phone and in person with clients calling our agency for possible court representation. Her duties included obtaining information from the potential clients about their particular legal issues and attending our weekly staff meetings to discuss the information she obtained from client interviews. Her work with our clients was especially valuable because she is fluent in Arabic and many clients seeking our help are monolingual Arabic speakers.

She also prepared many pleadings for me and other staff attorneys, including petitions for dissolution, discovery responses, requests to admit, and marital settlement agreement. She researched several legal issues and wrote memos on each topic.

Additionally, Ms. Bahrani obtained her Rule 711 license this summer, which enabled her to appear in court on some of our cases, including several court status proceedings. She was enthusiastic about court appearances and competently handled the court assignments.

At all times, Ms. Bahrani's work was excellent and she was a pleasure to have at our agency this summer.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact me at the above address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JoAnn F. Villasenor', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

JoAnn F. Villasenor  
Supervising Attorney  
312.347.8327  
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