

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

The Equal Justice America fellowship allowed me to work with the Public Benefits Unit of Community Legal Services of Philadelphia this summer. There I helped disabled clients access benefits by appealing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) determinations through the Social Security Administration (SSA).

I successfully convinced an administrative law judge (ALJ) that a child with ADHD satisfied the SSA's criteria for being disabled, and the ALJ overturned the previous unfavorable decision so as to award benefits to the child's family. In working on this case, I met with the client, retrieved necessary records, wrote a pre-hearing brief, and attended the administrative hearing. The family will now have better financial stability, which will help them cope with the day to day stressors that come with a child who was getting in daily fights with his peers and experiencing frequent violent tantrums.

My supervisor, Richard Weishaupt, has worked on SSI cases for many years and he helped me in learning the basics of SSI representation. During the summer, he was disturbed by the recent phenomenon of judges not retrieving claimants' original files for disability review cases, in which the judge is supposed to determine whether the disability has "medically approved." This practice was resulting in clients being taking off of SSI benefits, which they continued to depend on, simply because a different judge thought they were not disabled, rather than because of any improvement in their condition. I researched the law and drafted a demand letter to SSA, which urged them to address this concerning practice. I hope my advocacy will result in fewer SSI claimants being removed from SSI benefits.

Community Legal Services also encouraged their interns to participate in various clinics throughout the summer. I worked at an expungement clinic, where I identified clients that had expungable criminal records and entered them into the legal server for future representation. I also helped out at Community Legal Service's first ever utility clinic at their medical legal partnership where we helped clients meet with different utility companies and get them on better low-income payment plans.

The summer internship with Community Legal Services was a wonderful experience made possible in part by your generous fellowship. I greatly appreciate the financial support.

Sincerely,
Louisa Rich
University of Virginia School of Law



COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES
OF PHILADELPHIA

August 21, 2017

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Louisa Rich

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I supervised Louisa Rich this summer during her internship at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia. Louisa worked for us from the end of May through the beginning of August and did a terrific job. Chosen as one of 24 interns in our highly competitive summer programs, Louisa stood out as an excellent employee.

Louisa worked in our public benefits unit concentrating mostly on individual Social Security disability cases but also worked on various policy issues and did research on health issues. She wrote excellent memos on the treatment of Continuing Disability Reviews of individuals whose cases were in danger of termination because they were suspected of medical improvement. Through our case work we realized that SSA was not following their own rules to the detriment of the claimants, our clients. Louisa started by writing a brief outlining the proper procedure that we could use for individual cases but was also adapted for a letter we sent high level SSA officials demanding better performance and hinting at litigation. Louisa handled the assignment brilliantly. Her research and writing skills were strong and required very little editing despite her relative unfamiliarity with the area. She did an excellent job combining statutes, legislative history, regulations and subregulatory history into a single document and applied it to individual cases as well as our demand letter, saving me hours of work. She also interacted with our clients, returning calls and explaining the progress of their case and what was happening. I could tell that our clients related well to her and that she established an easy rapport with them. She also did an excellent pre hearing brief for a complicated case with abundant evidence, boiling it all down so that the busy Judge could digest it with a minimum of effort. As a result of that work, we won the case and the family was extremely grateful.

I have supervised quite a few law students in my time and I can say with confidence that Louisa stands out as one of the strongest. She is hard working and dedicated as well as easy to work

with. Our clients appreciated her communication skills and we were all impressed with her abilities. She is smart, has good skills and will no doubt succeed in her career as a lawyer.

Very truly yours,

Richard P. Weishaupt
Senior Attorney