

August 21, 2017

Dear Dan,

Thanks to you and everyone at Equal Justice America, I was able to spend the summer helping others without the worry of taking on other jobs to support myself financially. The summer stipend afforded me the opportunity to concentrate on my clients and serving their needs without financial concerns. I will be forever grateful for the support, as I will be pursuing a public interest career after graduation and it is heartening to know that there are those like you who are working behind the scenes to help us.

As this was my second summer at Children's Law Center in Monterey Park, I was able to delve deeper into dependency law, which is nuanced, largely overlooked type of law and thus can be complicated and overwhelming. I got a taste of what a dependency lawyer does last summer, but this year, I was able to forge deeper relationships with the attorneys, staff, and clients at CLC, as well as with the clerks, officers, and judges in the courtroom. As a rising 3L, I was able to make appearances and argue on behalf of my clients.

Many people do not know that dependency law exists and are surprised to hear how many children are in the system. I would like to help spread awareness and inform others about this niche field, as it is fascinating yet often heartbreaking. Those who are aware of the dependency system have the misconception that our job as minors' counsel is to take children away from parents and break up families. This could not be further from the truth. We need to look out for our clients' best interests, whether it is legally, emotionally, mentally, or physically. Sometimes that means detaining children from their parents but only with the primary goal of reunification. For example, one of our clients is two years old and was born in a public restroom. His mother was suffering from mental health issues and had a history of substance abuse. His

father was largely absent and did not show any apparent commitment to raising his child. When the baby was born, his mother repeatedly denied that she had given birth to him and he was detained by the Department of Children and Family Services. In the two years since his detention, his mother worked hard to complete all court ordered programs, such as parenting classes, Narcotics Anonymous meetings, and individual as well as group therapies. She is currently enrolled at a community college with the goal of transferring to a four-year university. Due to her fantastic progress, we were able to close our client's case and permanently reunify him with his mother.

Throughout the summer, I was able to witness the turmoil and grief experienced by these families as well as the moments of joy and exhilaration when a family is reunified or a child is adopted into a loving home. The pace of the work can be grueling and it is often a thankless job. Working in dependency law is not glamorous and is not for the faint-hearted. But I welcome the challenge as my goal has always been to help children who need someone to stand up for them. My hope is to continue working at Children's Law Center after the bar and to become a staff attorney there so I can dedicate my life to helping these children who I have already come to love.

Sincerely Yours,

Kyuhee Han
Chapman University, 2018



Children's Law Center of California

Excellence In Advocacy

August

(323) 980-7759

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben,

I am writing regarding Kyuhee Han's work at the Children's Law Center of California ("CLC") through Equal Justice America.

I first met Kyuhee when she came to work with me as a 1L law clerk at Children's Law Center of California (CLC) in the summer of 2016. CLC is a nonprofit law firm which represents the vast majority of children in the Los Angeles County foster care system. As is common in many public interest law organizations, CLC tends to encounter much more need than we have the resources to meet. Kyuhee provided invaluable assistance to me in meeting the needs of our clients. She did everything from filing to organizing, to preparing me for trial, to legal research and client interviews. She was able to make connections with many of our clients by demonstrating empathy and patience. As she progressed in her understanding of our practice, I began to give her some of my most difficult clients to guide through the process. I knew I could rely on her. As the summer went by, she learned the system quickly.

Kyuhee returned to CLC in the spring of 2017, this time as a certified law clerk. She began to make appearances in court at all stages of dependency proceedings. While she was nervous to appear in court in the beginning, she took on the challenge and began to be more comfortable making requests and arguments on behalf of our clients. Her work with CLC continued into the summer of 2017 and she began to take on more and more complicated tasks and cases with much less direction. It was clear that she understood the process and was studying the legal standards for each case she worked on. She did not need to re-interview clients after speaking with me, because she had already asked the appropriate follow-up questions. She made a jump from helping me out, to really coming close to handling full cases with some supervision.

Throughout her time at CLC, Kyuhee showed real dedication to the clients she worked with and a passion for helping individuals and families in crisis. She always had candy or toys on hand to make the court experience a little brighter for the kids. She would remember to note their birthdays and make sure to give them a call. She also was remarkably efficient and hard working. She was often in the office well before me and would work through lunch, getting tasks that I expected to take days finished in a matter hours.

I so appreciate Kyuhee's work here, and Equal Justice America making it possible for her to take on an unpaid internship at CLC. I hope and expect that she will return to CLC as an attorney and that she will continue to make a huge difference in our clients' lives through her advocacy.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Widitor Esq., MSW