

August 23, 2012

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

RE: Summer Fellowship experience

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I was fortunate enough to work alongside several attorneys this summer at the Legal Aid Justice Center. In doing so, I gained experience and knowledge on several distinct practice areas. Though I only worked for 10 weeks at LAJC, it served as a crash course for me in public interest. I spent time researching bankruptcy laws, the DREAM Act, Richmond Public Schools policies and bylaws, and DOLI wage claim outsourcing. I contacted MCV for medical records, credit agencies, the Virginia Dept. of Taxation, mental health facilities all on behalf of clients in order to get them the answers and peace of mind they deserve.

I spent a majority of my time assisting an attorney that specialized in education law. I assisted kids that were expelled or suspended from school for behavioral issues that stemmed from their mental disabilities. Rather than have these students drop out of school and never receive a proper education, I assisted with getting these students compensatory education in order to either graduate or receive their GED.

There was one education case that I spent most of my summer working on. The client was an eighteen year old that suffered from Asperger's Syndrome. He was expelled from school for assaulting a resource officer and was facing criminal charges. He was a year away from graduating. Fortunately, we were able to enroll him into another school that offered a program that could better accommodate his needs. And assisting his court-appointed attorney for the criminal charges, we were able to keep him out of jail and its hostile environment.

I truly enjoyed my internship this summer at LAJC. Not only was I able to learn and gain beneficial experience, but also I was able to help those in dire situations with nowhere else to turn. Interacting with a client in person makes the work seem more real or significant rather than just looking at a file or papers. My summer internship has further strengthened my passion and will to practice public interest law that was all made possible with the assistance of Equal Justice America.

Sincerely,

Ian Edward Vance  
University of Richmond