

JULIA C. YOUNG

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

August 31, 2011

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer I completed an internship with Community Legal Services (CLS) in Philadelphia, PA. This was a wonderful experience, and one that re-solidified my commitment to public interest work. The combination of client interaction and wonderful supervision and guidance from well-known attorneys at CLS helped make my summer as meaningful as it was.

CLS is the largest legal services organization in Philadelphia. CLS helps clients with many different areas of need, but I was assigned specifically to the housing unit. For ten weeks this summer I learned about private housing law in Philadelphia and was able to provide direct representation for several of those clients in Municipal Court as well as the Fair Housing Commission. I also assisted with intake and managed a full caseload that developed during my time with CLS.

The private housing unit was a particularly moving unit to work in because often clients came in for intake because they were being evicted from their homes. Thus, I was defending tenants in eviction actions. The results varied, but through the negotiation process required prior to a full hearing, many times I was able to successfully advocate on my clients' behalf and get them more time before an eviction would take place or help negotiate away some of the back debt owed. In one instance, a client had in fact overpaid, and the landlord was suing her for over \$1000. I was able to successfully show that my client was current in rent and thus, there was no need for the eviction.

This was an unbelievably rewarding job as in many instances, clients were able to get more time in their homes/apartments or they received a rent abatement of some kind, and in some cases, a combination of the two. The relief my clients felt after negotiations or trial could be seen on their faces, and their gratitude made the work worth it. However, even when clients did not receive their desired outcome, they were so appreciative to have had the support of an advocate in court on their behalf.

CLS not only provides excellent representation, but they also are able to counsel clients before a client's case needs a court's attention. Helping clients avoid evictions before they begin was also a huge part of my job this summer, and I truly enjoyed empowering people with the knowledge they would need to defend themselves and their families.

Overall, this was an incredibly rewarding summer, and I know that my time and effort was well-spent. CLS provided wonderful supervisors, which were invaluable to us young interns eager to help those most in need in Philadelphia. I gained a lot of experience and assurance that public interest is where I too hope practice after my last year. Thank you for helping make this possible for me.

Sincerely,

Julia Young
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