

Dear Dan Ruben,

August 13, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the Equal Justice Center in San Antonio, Texas as a legal intern through an Equal Justice America summer fellowship.

During my internship, I had the privilege of seeing a case from start to finish along with a fellow intern and attorney. The client had worked as a janitor for a large factory through a small janitorial company and had not been paid his last paycheck. Through our efforts he was able to recover not just the amount of his last paycheck, but damages as well for the time spent waiting for the check. The client had moved in with his sister because he was having trouble making ends meet and I'm sure the amount recovered meant a lot to him.

Without an attorney, the client probably would never have received his last paycheck. He certainly would not have received damages from an employer who was violating the law. Using our leverage as a law firm, we were able to contact the larger corporation who ran the factory and they exerted the necessary pressure to recover from the janitorial company. Accessing this corporation at a higher level was something our client would not have been able to do on his own.

Although it was frustrating to see how many client problems we would never be able to help with due to the type of claim or the recovery-to-effort ratio, it was encouraging to see the opposite type of client problem as well, where with relatively little effort on our parts we could make a big difference for our client, mostly by being lawyers who could then reach other lawyers.

Through my internship, I also had the opportunity to interview a few of the unaccompanied migrant children at Lackland Air Force base. The first day I interviewed at the base was not as hard as I expected. Thankfully none of the teenagers I interviewed had experienced too much trauma. I went home thinking I was fine, but I couldn't stop thinking about them all weekend (I was at the base on a Friday). I am pregnant with my first child right now and I kept thinking about what if that was him all by himself in a strange place? And how must it feel as a parent to know that sending your child on a dangerous journey, uncertain of what would happen at the end, might be the best option for him or her? How would it feel to have already left my son in Central America while I came to a foreign country trying to send enough money back to feed him and hoping one day to be reunited?

The second interview day we headed to the base but most of the interviews had already been completed. The process had begun of entering the information from the interviews into a database and sorting out which children would be most likely to qualify for immigration relief. We headed to a make-shift office to help with the data-entry. I'm not sure which volunteer day was harder – the faces of the young people I interviewed are still fresh in my mind, but it was hard to go through the interview paperwork reading stories and having to enter so many into the “no relief” category. It was difficult to read the interview sheets hoping on the one hand that

nothing had happened to these kids, yet on the other hand knowing that without any hardship qualifying them for relief, they would most likely be sent back. Although this was a heartbreaking experience, I know that at least a few of the children will be able to gain legal advocates due to our efforts.

I know a lot of my fellow students thought it would be kind of boring when I told them what I was doing over the summer – “Ugh, employment law?” – was something I heard more than once. After my experience working with labor unions in the past, I had the opposite reaction when I first saw the Equal Justice Center listing on the Austin Public Service Fair website. I was excited to see the legal side of an issue I had only seen from an organizing side. However, I think even for those who don’t start out with a passion for worker rights, the Equal Justice Center is a great place to grow that passion. Whether or not people get paid is a huge justice issue. Although the stories can be heartbreaking and we can’t always help, it is very empowering and encouraging when we can make a difference, and it always helped me (and I think the clients too) to see the pictures of past clients with their checks on the wall. While wage recovery may be more of a “cut and dry” justice issue than something juicy, it is awesome knowing that clients will now be able to pay their rent or buy their children’s school supplies. I am thankful for the hand-on experience and a chance to have a real impact for justice that I gained through the Equal Justice America fellowship. Seeing the impact lawyers can have for justice solidifies my commitment to do this type of work in the future.

With Gratitude,

/s Molly Thomson

Molly Thomson

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*Via email to [Katie@equaljusticeamerica.org](mailto:Katie@equaljusticeamerica.org)*

**Re: Evaluation of Molly Thomson's Summer Internship with the Equal Justice Center**

Dear Mr. Ruben:

The Equal Justice Center is pleased to submit this evaluation of Molly Thomson. We were fortunate to host Ms. Thomson as a Legal Intern this summer through funding provided by Equal Justice America. Ms. Thomson's exceptional work ethic, enthusiasm, and ability to clearly communicate with our clients and ability to evaluate and analyze their legal claims was an invaluable asset to our office. As a result of the opportunity made possible by EJA's funding, Ms. Thomson acquired valuable legal skills for her future work in the public interest.

Ms. Thomson worked at the Equal Justice Center's (EJC) office in San Antonio, Texas performing legal research, drafting pleadings, and conducting preliminary interviews of potential clients to help low-wage working people recover unpaid wages. Ms. Thomson was frequently potential clients' first contact with the EJC, and much of her legal work was directly incorporated into memoranda and other documents filed with local, state, and federal courts.

A key element of the Legal Intern position is gaining a general familiarity with the applicable law, under an attorney's supervision, and following up with potential clients regarding the facts relevant to the law. This requires intelligence and an ability to go off script to draw relevant information from potential clients. Ms. Thomson excelled at these tasks. Additionally, Ms. Thomson displayed admirable sensitivity to potential clients who were sharing confidential and sometimes delicate information. This also required the ability to engage with a variety of cultures, as a significant percentage of the EJC's potential clients are immigrants.

Ms. Thomson is fluent in Spanish which was invaluable to the organization and enabled her to directly interact with EJC potential clients as the majority of potential clients who contact our office are Spanish speakers. Ms. Thomson's Spanish skills were also complemented by her cultural sensitivity and understanding of the plight of immigrant workers in San Antonio.

Our goal in hosting Ms. Thomson was to provide hands-on experience in the legal industry in a supportive environment. Ms. Thomson demonstrated very early on that she is reliable, practices sound judgment, and was willing to tackle challenging tasks. Ms. Thomson is passionate about improving working conditions for low-income communities which was reflected in her enthusiasm and diligence and by her willingness to learn. We were particularly impressed with Ms. Thomson's legal drafting

abilities as well as her legal research skills.

In sum, we were greatly impressed with Ms. Thomson's work over the summer, and we are grateful to Equal Justice America for funding Ms. Thomson's position. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding Ms. Thomson's internship.

Sincerely,

/s/ Philip J. Moss

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