

August 31, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben,

Thanks to the generosity of Equal Justice America, I was able to spend this past summer in North Philadelphia building meaningful relationships with client-partners at Community Legal Services (CLS). I was fortunate enough to work under the venerable Josie Pickens in CLS's Energy Unit. Josie immediately shared her enthusiasm for protecting low-income Philadelphians' access to basic dignities: water, electricity, and heating.

Over the course of the summer, I helped client-partners in some of the most vulnerable situations imaginable. One woman I worked with came to CLS at the eleventh hour needing help reconnecting her utilities before a public housing inspection. If her home did not pass the inspection, she would be evicted. Together, we were able to get her utilities turned back on the Friday before the Monday inspection. Another client-partner was striving to gain custody of a family member's child but because her utilities were turned off, the newborn child was placed in foster care. Working together, we resolved the utility issue and set the client on the path to achieve her goal of gaining temporary custody.

Additionally, because of CLS's contributions to Philly's novel income-based water affordability program, I was able to help client-partners submit some of the first applications for the program and spread information about available protections to help Philadelphians maintain their access to water. It was inspiring to see the fruits of many years of CLS advocacy and to be involved in new advocacy campaigns where we could elevate community members' priorities, e.g. ensuring adequate funding for Pennsylvania's Low Income Energy Assistance Program.

Before beginning this work, I did not understand what a significant role energy issues play in regards to family and housing stability. Because of the broad range of civil representation offered at CLS, I was able to collaborate with legal workers and attorneys with different specialties, and contribute to the sort of holistic civil legal services to which ALL clients should be entitled. While at CLS I also had opportunities to work with community members at legal clinics around the city, volunteer at a community education event, and even go door-to-door in Northeast Philadelphia to spread information to an underserved neighborhood (I loved talking to people on their porches, however, I could have done without the ninety-degree weather).

I am so appreciative of Equal Justice America, CLS, and most of all, the client-partners who trusted me. This experience will inform my future career as a social justice lawyer and passion to build power hand-in-hand with my clients.

Sincerely,

Tyler Dougherty
Class of 2018
Rutgers-Newark



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September 7, 2017

Via E-mail: Katie@equaljusticeamerica.org

Dan Ruben, Executive Director
Equal Justice America
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13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Tyler Dougherty Evaluation – 2017 Summer Internship at Community Legal Services

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer I had the pleasure to supervise Ms. Tyler Dougherty. Tyler interned in the Energy Unit at Community Legal Services during a particularly busy summer for our unit. CLS's Energy Unit advocates for affordable utility service and consumer protections for low-income utility customers through the provision of direct services, systemic advocacy, and legislative reform. We have two office locations in Philadelphia and we receive dozens of requests for assistance per week from low income individuals who have either had utility service terminated or who are at immediate risk of termination. Tyler worked with me at our North Philadelphia office site.

Tyler quickly impressed me. First, she knew our case management software from her previous work experience, and, as a result, she came into the position with a high level of organization and case management skills. Second, Tyler's demeanor, and her ability to work with almost anyone, made her an office favorite. Many of my colleagues commented on her collegiality and the high level of respect that she showed to our clients. Tyler brought this same personality to her interactions with our clients, who frequently expressed to me how much they valued "Ms. Tyler" and all she had done for them. On top of her people skills, Tyler is a creative and thorough advocate. She often looked outside of the box for solutions to our clients' problems. This led her to do things like contact every grant assistance provider in the city to secure funds for clients and using the internet and other tools to locate out of state property owners to resolve title disputes.

Tyler is smart and she has strong legal research and writing skills. This summer she helped edit expert testimony in a very complicated utility rate case proceeding. She also researched other states' energy affordability burdens and alternative universal service funding models. In addition, Tyler was involved in our advocacy to save the federal LIHEAP program and assisted with the drafting of community education and outreach material.

Tyler is clearly committed to the pursuit of equal justice for all. She believes in community lawyering and spent several days in the community educating and encouraging community members to participate in various CLS workshops, clinics, and public hearings.

Tyler was a standout law student intern and she will make an excellent attorney.

Sincerely,

/s/ Josie Pickens

Josie B. H. Pickens
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