

August 29, 2015

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to inform you about my summer 2015 EJA fellowship and the successes accomplished therein. Over the course of the summer, I worked at Catholic Charities of the East Bay, which has its headquarters in Oakland, California. CCEB's legal services department provides direct legal aid to low-income immigrant families. A majority of their legal services are provided to people who recently arrived in the United States. A large percentage of which are undocumented children that fled the violence of Central America.

During my ten weeks at CCEB, I gained a tremendous amount of experiential knowledge in the area of immigration law. Specifically, I sat in on a number of client intakes and consultations. Moreover, I had my own caseload, which primarily consisted of preparing asylum applications. The most rewarding part of my summer fellowship was devoted to helping two minors that fled the violence in their native Guatemala.

One of the young men was targeted for being indigenous. The other young man was the victim of domestic violence. I met with both of them on a regular basis and successfully completed their asylum paperwork, worked on their declarations, and filed their completed applications with USCIS. I also translated a number of documents from Spanish to English, and even appeared before an immigration judge for one of our clients.

Additionally, I attended a naturalization event at Hayward City Hall that was co-sponsored by CCEB. During that event I helped a number of people from various countries prepare I-912 fee waivers for their citizenship applications. Overall, I must say that the experience was very rewarding yet somewhat challenging at times. However, my EJA summer fellowship was one of the best hands-on learning experiences of my life.

In sum, I want to thank all the people that made my summer fellowship a success, including Equal Justice America for providing the funding to make my work possible, and all the incredible people at Catholic Charities of the East Bay. The current flow of young people into the United States is a humanitarian crisis of enormous concern. Our immigration laws need to be properly reformed to fix the problem of unjust deportations, which are essentially death sentences for many that are forced to return to their home countries. Lastly, I want to thank you, Mr. Ruben, for being such an outstanding steward in helping to fund legal aid to those most in need. The work of EJA is truly remarkable.

Sincerely,

Ryan J. Blackney
J.D. Candidate, Class of 2017
University of San Francisco School of Law



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Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
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August 24, 2015

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I write this letter to evaluate Mr. Ryan Blackney's summer fellowship at our office, Catholic Charities of the East Bay. I was his direct supervisor for the entirety of his internship from June 1 to August 7.

I am an immigration attorney who works primarily with unaccompanied minors from Central America. They are all monolingual Spanish speakers. All of my clients are in removal proceedings in immigration court. They qualify either for asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status ("SIJS"), or U Visas. The asylum cases are adjudicated by an asylum officer at the San Francisco Asylum Office. When we pursue SIJS, we must get a predicate order from a state court in an underlying family court or probate court proceeding. I have two active SIJS cases- both custody cases before a family court, and approximately 20 other active unaccompanied minors cases.

Ryan began three unaccompanied minor cases from the intake stage onward. The first case is an asylum case of a young Indigenous man from Honduras. Ryan worked on this case under the supervision of my colleague, Jessica Arena. Ryan completed the client's asylum application, his detailed declaration, and a packet of articles on the conditions in Honduras. This client is currently awaiting an asylum interview date.

Ryan's second case is a young Indigenous asylum seeker from Guatemala. Like the first case, he completed the asylum application, declaration, and a country conditions packet. He submitted the application, but the client has yet to be called for an interview.

Ryan's third case is a young man from El Salvador. At the intake, we interviewed both him and his mother. We discovered that his mother is eligible for a U Visa- the crime victim visa which is a pathway to citizenship. Ryan did substantial work on the U Visa for the mother with the son as a derivative. He worked with the Oakland Police Department to get the law enforcement certification needed for the first step of the application. He had the mother attend a psychological evaluation, and moreover, he spent many hours with her working on her declaration and the many forms required for a U Visa.

Ryan appeared at Immigration Court in San Francisco under my supervision, representing one of our clients at his Master Calendar Hearing- essentially the immigration version of an arraignment in which he requested a continuance. He was poised and efficient.

In addition, Ryan assisted me in doing country conditions research for two other cases, and compiling them into an annotated table of contents. When I went away on vacation, and some urgent matters came up regarding my two custody cases, Ryan took over, helping to provide notice to various relatives around the United States and abroad, and appealing a denied fee waiver request. Ryan also assisted Ms. Arena on a probate guardianship case. In sum, Ryan was able to handle miscellaneous assignments that came up, even those that weren't related to his primary cases.

Ryan was very professional- always hardworking and independent. He communicated well with me and my colleagues, and he maintained a congenial attitude around the office.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (510) 768-3125, amukherji@cceb.org, or at the address below.

Sincerely,

/s/

Anita Mukherji, Esq.
Catholic Charities of the East Bay
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