

August 29, 2017

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to thank you for accepting me into the Equal Justice America Fellowship for the summer of 2016. I was blessed to work with Community Legal Services, CLS, on their Youth Justice Project.

I was able to help Philadelphia's most vulnerable young people gain or maintain access to disability benefits. I interviewed young people and their parents in preparation for hearings before administrative law judges. I even had the wonderful opportunity to represent a client in an administrative hearing that went rather smoothly due to the rapport I was able to establish with the client and my high level of preparedness.

I was also able to help young people clear up their juvenile records so that they could have greater access to employment, education, and housing. I attended every expungement clinic held by CLS, did intake, filed expungement petitions and gathered documents, communicated with clients and more. In one case, I helped a young mother in school for nursing clear up her criminal record as she continues to strive for success.

I attended and helped facilitate Legal Assistance Clinics at Covenant House, a youth homeless shelter, and Youth Build, a program that helps young people who have dropped out, re-enroll in school and get their high school diploma. At these on-site clinics, I walked young people through the Youth Justice Project's screening tool designed to help identify the different legal issues that they may have.

I helped write a policy report on access to higher education for young people with criminal records and the barriers they face when asked about their criminal history on a college application. I also conducted legal research on access to benefits for foster youth aging out of care.

I have gained wonderful mentors and an incredible and memorable work experience. I hope to return to Community Legal Services through a fellowship opportunity.

Sincerely,
Tracie Johnson
Temple Law