

August 7, 2013

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

Dear Dan,

I want to thank you and the folks at Equal Justice America for enabling me to work in the Juvenile and Special Education Clinic this summer. The skills I have learned and the client relationships I have developed are invaluable.

Most of my days this summer were spent working with and for a 17 year old male who has a specific learning disability that has been untreated for the majority of his life. Due to the failure of his prior schools to address and provide services for his specific learning disability, he has a reading grade equivalent of 1.7. The failure to provide services is not the only issue that we have been fighting; he is often denied access to school due to his lack of a clean uniform. The student lives in Southeast DC with his mother and great-grandfather in a dilapidated home. His mother's disability and TANF benefits are their main income. Unfortunately, the family does not have a washing machine in their home and cannot afford to purchase new uniforms for the student. The school, aware of the family's situation, denies the student access to school instead of providing supplemental uniforms.

A due process complaint was filed by the mother on behalf of the student and we were prepared to go to hearing. A resolution session was held and, surprisingly, a settlement was reached. The school district completely revamped the student's previously inappropriate IEP to provide for all of the services that he will need in order to progress, placed him in a new school that will be able to provide these services and a fresh start, and awarded him with 75 hours of compensatory education to make up for the previously inappropriate IEP. The going rate for compensatory education is \$65.00/hour; the student was awarded a total of \$4,875.00 that he can use for outside tutoring services at a location of his choosing. The student is excited to use the award at a private organization that is highly computer and online based to learn computer skills and work on his reading skills in an individualized environment. Part of the settlement agreement also addressed the student's lack of a uniform which will be worked out at his new school placement.

I believe that the work I put in for this student has produced an outcome that will enhance his life and provide a brighter future now that he will receive services to address his specific learning disability and have equal access to school despite the family's ability to procure a uniform.

Working in the clinic this summer has solidified my desire to advocate for disadvantaged youth. In the future I hope to be able to combine the skills learned in clinic, legal research, writing, and knowledge of special education law, with my knowledge of family law and juvenile delinquency to be able to work in a setting that combines all aspects of child advocacy.

Thank you,

Teresa Cole
Juris Doctor Candidate - 2014
University of the District of Columbia
David A. Clarke School of Law



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August 8, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

It is my pleasure to write this evaluation of Teresa Cole's work in the UDC Juvenile and Special Education Law Clinic as an EJA Summer 2013 Fellow.

I have gotten to know Teresa since January through her work in the clinic. Teresa has consistently demonstrated dedication to her work and, more importantly, to the clients she represents. She has gone beyond the fellowship's required hours to ensure that her clients receive the quality legal representation that they need. Teresa provides competent legal assistance and thorough support for her clients. Her involvement with one particular client has resulted in a settlement that will enable the client's son to attend a high school that will meet his special education needs that have gone unmet since the first grade. Teresa was also able to secure a compensatory education award that will provide tutoring services from a private agency, enabling the young man to learn computer skills. It must be said that these types of settlements are uncommon and difficult to obtain without the decision of an independent hearing officer in our client's favor. Facilitating this type of settlement requires an advocate to work constructively with several agencies and key players, including the parent, the local education agency, the special education office, teachers, and opposing counsel. Teresa coordinated the proceedings capably and efficiently.

What is also impressive about Teresa's work in the clinic is her enthusiasm to work with the underserved members of the community. She is willing to make herself available to her

clients wherever and whenever she is needed. I think this is indicative of Teresa's dedication to the public interest law.

Teresa's lawyering skills are not limited to client-based work. She has been tremendously helpful in researching legal issues that will be used in a practice guide for juvenile defenders. Her research on that project was as thorough and diligent. She demonstrated the same proficiency in her brief writing for her client's case.

Please feel free to contact me with any other questions you may have about Teresa and her work as an EJA Summer 2013 Fellow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa M. Geis', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Lisa M. Geis, Esq,
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