

August 14, 2015
Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Building II, Suite 204
Midlothian, VA 23112

RE: Equal Justice America Fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer, I completed a Fellowship with Community Legal Services, Inc. (CLS) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I was an intern in the Private Landlord/Tenant Housing Unit. Each week, on Mondays and Wednesdays, I completed intake with a total of ten to fifteen new clients who walked in the door. I would collect their personal and financial information and then evaluate their legal claims. For many clients, this was the first time a legal representative listened to their side of the story.

Many clients had upcoming hearings in Landlord/Tenant court in Philadelphia. I would carefully explain the court process and what to expect from the moment they walked in the court door to their right to appeal the judge's decision after their day in court. I would evaluate the merits of their case with my supervising attorney and a decision would be made whether or not CLS could represent them in court. As a certified legal intern, I was personally able to represent clients. One low-income tenant I represented was a woman who was in her 30's. She had lived in her apartment for the past fifteen years and had always paid her rent on time. She had asked her landlord repeatedly to fix her rotting ceiling and one day, after a disagreement, the landlord decided to end her lease. Considering this instance of retaliation, I was able to negotiate a settlement agreement that allowed the client to stay in the property for sixty days past the hearing date. This was much longer than the twenty-one days that the law allows if a landlord wins in an eviction claim. This timeframe allowed the client adequate time to get her affairs together and find a new place to call home.

I also worked with several clients who were illegally locked out of their apartments. One client in particular was in her late 20's and had five small children. The day after she moved into her new apartment her landlord said she could not stay there because he claimed he saw a bug crawling out her belongings. She had already paid the landlord a significant sum to move in. Instead of lawfully taking the tenant to Landlord/Tenant court to evict her, the landlord illegally took matters into his own hands by first turning off her electricity and then changing the locks to the property. She called the police but was unsuccessful at gaining reentry. I called and wrote demand letters to the landlord to alert him of the law. I met with the client on several occasions, gathered evidence, and with my supervising attorney's approval, I independently drafted an injunction to ask the court to let her back in the property. My supervising attorney filed this injunction and a hearing will be scheduled in the upcoming weeks. Without the help of CLS in this lawsuit, the client and her children would likely have no place to live.

I am excited to say that I will continue interning with CLS throughout my third year of law school on a part-time basis. This experience has allowed me to experience direct representation and reaffirmed my desire to become a public interest attorney after law school. I am currently in the post-graduate public interest fellowship application process and can safely say that my experience with

CLS has aided me in this pursuit. Thank you, Mr. Ruben and Equal Justice America, for providing me the funding necessary to pursue my public interest-minded goals. I truly appreciate your generosity.

Sincerely,

Brittany Daniels
Villanova University School of Law
Anticipated Graduation 2016