

August 21, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer I worked at the Children's Law Center. The Children's Law Center (CLC) provides free legal services to at-risk children and their families in the District of Columbia. Specifically, the organization serves children in the child welfare system, their families, and foster and kinship caregivers. As a law clerk in CLC's Guardian *ad Litem* (GAL) Project, I worked with attorneys who were appointed by DC courts to represent the best interests of children in abuse and neglect proceedings. I was given many responsibilities, including taking notes at family-team meetings, researching and writing about legal issues, interviewing clients and witnesses, locating client resources, attending court hearings, and accompanying attorneys on home visits.

CLC fights so that every DC child can grow up with a loving family, good health and quality education. During my fellowship, I had the privilege of assisting GAL attorneys who fiercely advocate to achieve this end. I helped draft a motion opposing the removal of a teen from her sister's care; I took case notes at a family team meeting so that a child could receive specialized educational services; I attended a home visit to interview a parent about his daughter's neglect allegations; and I helped prepare for an initial neglect hearing so that a mother with severe mental illness could receive the help she needed to raise her newborn son.

However, my most memorable experience at CLC was a client visit with two fun-loving teens. The GAL attorney that I accompanied went above and beyond to look out for the best interest of her clients; this visit was no different. Both girls greeted their GAL attorney with delight and admiration. As the visit went on, I realized that she had been their GAL for four years. She knew their family, what activities the girls were involved in, and what relationships the girls were pursuing. Furthermore, the teens openly expressed their accomplishments, their goals, and their concerns with their GAL. It was clear that the CLC attorney was a constant support in the two girls' turbulent and traumatic lives. The teens trusted their GAL to advocate for their best interests for school, home, and care because she was deeply involved and invested in their well-being. Consequently, I had the advantage of observing genuine and fierce representation of underserved DC children. I know that my experience at CLC will make me a

better public interest advocate. I truly appreciate Equal Justice America's commitment to supporting aspiring public service attorneys like myself. Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Courtney Knippen

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J.D. Candidate, 2019



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August 18, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer, I had the pleasure of serving as one of Courtney Knippen's supervising attorneys at the Children's Law Center. The Children's Law Center (CLC) provides free legal services to at-risk children, their families, and foster and kinship caregivers in the District of Columbia. The organization's focus is on children in the child welfare system, children with special education and health needs and children who witness domestic violence.

Courtney was a law clerk within CLC's Guardian *ad Litem* (GAL) Project. CLC's GAL attorneys are appointed by the District of Columbia court to represent the best interests of children who are subject to abuse and neglect proceedings. CLC GALs represent hundreds of the District of Columbia's children each year. In the project, Courtney had a wide variety of responsibilities, including attending family team meetings, completing court runs, researching and writing about legal issues, interviewing clients and witnesses, locating resources for clients, attending court hearings, and accompanying attorneys on home and school visits.

During her fellowship, Courtney completed a number of tasks that assisted CLC in advocating for our clients' best interests. Courtney thoroughly researched and drafted high-quality motions, GAL reports, and appellate briefs. She also took case notes while accompanying GALs to family team meetings, hearings, and oral arguments. When GALs are fiercely advocating at a tough hearing or meeting, we often take incomplete notes; the level of detail in Courtney's notes was a frequent asset to our cases and our clients. While interacting with clients, caregivers, and service providers, Courtney displayed professionalism and great composure. Overall, she had a great work ethic and helped CLC fight so that every DC child can grow up with a loving family, good health and quality education. It was a true pleasure working with Courtney this summer, and we appreciate Equal Justice America's commitment to supporting future legal services attorneys like Courtney.

Sincerely,

_____/s/_____

Allison Federoff

Staff Attorney, GAL Project

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