

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

August 24, 2010

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for the Equal Justice America Fellowship grant which allowed me to pursue a position in public service this summer. With EJA's support, I was able to work as a summer law clerk with the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society of Charlottesville to provide much needed legal services to low-income individuals and families in the region. Over the course of the summer, I had the opportunity to assist the CVLAS attorneys in providing legal assistance to more than 60 individuals.

During my time with CVLAS, I spoke with a number of clients and conducted extensive research on matters including landlord-tenant law, foreclosure defense, consumer protection, divorce and custody proceedings, contract disputes and record expungements. My work has been utilized by the CVLAS attorneys in court proceedings and settlement discussions in order to help our clients deal with difficult situations.

I spent the majority of my time this summer working on domestic violence cases and the subsequent divorce and custody matters that often arise. I spoke with victims of family abuse on a daily basis to gather the details necessary for them to obtain protective orders from the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. The work I did on any given day often resulted in a protective order for our client by the end of the week. It was immensely rewarding to be able to see such a fast outcome and be able to assist in getting victims of family abuse some immediate relief and protection. On one particular case, I had the opportunity to write a successful brief to the Circuit

Court of the City of Charlottesville which directly helped our client and also set favorable precedent for other victims of family abuse in the city.

We had a client who came to CVLAS after having petitioned for a protective order and representing herself in front of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations court. The judge had granted her a protective order against her abusive live-in boyfriend, but in it he included a provision excluding her from the shared residence. So, as a result of seeking protection from the court, our client was effectively rendered homeless. In preparation for an appeal of this issue, I worked with another intern to conduct legal research on the amount of discretion J&DR judges have when dealing with a petition for a protective order and whether the provision in question violated our client's due process rights. Together, we wrote a brief which the appellate judge used as the basis for his decision to overturn the unlawful portion of the protective order, allowing our client to return to her home. The judge stated that there were serious due process concerns when a victim of domestic violence petitioning for protection from the courts could be removed from her home without any notice that such an action was a possible consequence of her petition. This precedential decision ensures that similarly punitive orders will not stand in this city, and as a result, victims of domestic violence seeking redress from the courts have a measure more protection than they had previously.

I have greatly enjoyed working with CVLAS and love that I have had the opportunity, through my work, to positively affect the lives of our clients. Thank you very much for making this experience possible.

Very truly yours,



Alex Solomon
University of Virginia School of Law
Class of 2012