

August 24, 2007

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

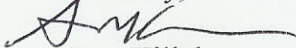
Dear Mr. Ruben:

Working at EBCLC was an amazing experience. It was a great opportunity to interact directly with clients, mixing both legal work and social work. I was placed in the Health and HIV unit of EBCLC and most of my work focused on social security disability programs. I worked on appeals at various stages in the SSI/SSDI application process, overpayment issues, and some initial application issues. In addition, I had the opportunity to work on a tax penalty issue, a guardianship proceeding, and a Medi-Cal re-determination. I found the variety of work to be a great mix of client interface, legal research and writing, and social work. No client ever came into the office with one cut and dried legal problem. Most clients had a variety of mental health, public benefits, and housing issues with which they were contending. Often, they just needed to be listened to for awhile, rather than talked at.

My most meaningful experience occurred in my work with an HIV-positive man appealing his denial of SSI/SSDI benefits. He had a combination of physical and mental impairments and had been involved in the disability and appeals process for two years. He was frustrated with the entire process and viewed it as just one more obstacle set up against him in a long line of traumatic and unfortunate events in his life. His hearing date was set while I was working on his case, and despite a process that had already lasted two years, he seemed hopeful. I worked with the client to get his case ready for hearing, including preparing a brief and gathering updated medical records and forms. He was eager to help and tracked down missing medical records and delivered various forms to his doctors. Indeed, the entire process was empowering for him and he played an active role. A week before I left EBCLC, the client was granted a fully favorable decision on the record, without the necessity of a hearing. It was a great experience to call the client and let him know the good news. He was so happy, he was speechless.

I was truly inspired by the work EBCLC does on behalf of low-income people living with HIV. My experience taught me that health care advocacy and disability work are areas that I want to pursue in the future.

Sincerely,



Amy Killelea

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Class of 2009