

August 28, 2008

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I write to thank you for granting me the ability to help serve others. Without the funding from the Equal Justice America Fellowship, I would not have been able spend my summer working in SSI and Consumer Law at South Brooklyn Legal Services in Brooklyn, New York. This summer, I was able to help six people successfully appeal to the Social Security Administration to get the SSI and Disability income that they needed to keep their homes and continue to provide for their families. These people had clearly documented disabilities and could not earn a living. Because of the work we did at SBLs this summer, they can now afford to survive on their own and live with dignity.

I also was able to help fight for the poor against debt collectors who were illegally going after our clients' social security money. We were able to unfreeze about five bank accounts and stave off the creditors so that the social security money could continue to help who it was meant to help. I had one client who was being relentlessly chased by creditors. She was managing her sister's bank accounts after her sister had a stroke. A debt collection firm had been trying to collect a 25-year-old credit card debt from the sister. The account was only used to pay rent, and only contained social security and disability money. Yet my client was being hounded to pay old debt that she did not owe from an account with barely enough money in it to pay rent. We got the debt collectors and the bank to unfreeze her sister's bank account, and she was able to help care for his sister free of the extra agony and stress.

Equal Justice America gave me a grant of \$2000. The six SSI clients now receive over \$700 per month. The bank freeze clients each regained access to on average \$1000. So for the two months plus that I worked at South Brooklyn Legal Services, Equal Justice America contributed \$2000 and the poor got over \$13,500. You can't get a better return on an investment than that. Thanks for making it all possible.

Sincerely,
Andrew Kleinfeld
University of Pennsylvania Law
School
Class of 2010

