

## ANGELITA M. RENTERIA

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November 28, 2011

Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
Legal Services Fellowship  
Building II-Suite 204  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

The purpose of this correspondence is to submit to you my end of summer statement about my time at the Milwaukee Justice Center. Over the course of the summer I worked in three different legal services clinics for the Milwaukee Justice center and helped out on various research projects. The Milwaukee Justice Center oversees three walk-in clinics and one appointments-only clinic. Below is a short summary of my experience at those organizations.

Over the course of the summer I helped numerous people with their legal matters. Unfortunately, the high volume of people means that there is no specific story that jumps out to me from my internship. This is mostly due to the nature of a walk –in clinics and the limited time we have with any given person. However, while helping people in the clinic I would often times see people's face light up when they comprehended how they fit into the legal system. It was also, inspiring to watch people's reactions change to the legal system when they realized what decision they got to make from a self-represented standpoint. I hope that I helped people feel like they could access the justice system and represent themselves in a competent manner.

Daily, there were several instances where people came in angry, frustrated and feeling overall defeated. Over the course of our short meeting, I was able to walk them through what to expect as far as going to various rooms to file papers, explain to them the purpose for going to each room and the overall set up of the legal system. I feel that giving them an overall perspective on the system helped them to understand what to expect and where they could present their side of the matter. It was also, interesting to help show them where the legal information and the legal advice line is drawn in particular questions they asked. Helping them work through their thinking processes and watching them make decisions from a legal information stand point was exciting. The change in their thought process and emotions were often times instantaneous. It was exciting to see how their faces lit up when they made confident decisions and their new sense of empowerment in their legal matter.

On the other hand, there were people who did not walk away feeling confident or feel like they could represent themselves. Often times it was these people who we referred to attorneys because the services they needed were beyond the scope of our clinic or because of the complicated matter of their legal matter. Not being able to help these people was frustrating, but giving them the best information for obtaining representation was necessary to ensure their best interest. It was also beneficial by helping me understand where to draw the line in what I could do in a given matter.

Thank you for taking the time to review my end of the summer statement for the EJA fellowship. As a result of my experience I am even more deeply committed to helping underrepresented populations and am truly grateful for the financial support your organization provided me this summer allowing me to work at the Milwaukee Justice Center.

Respectfully,  
Angelita Renteria  
University of Wisconsin



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October 4, 2011

Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
Legal Services Fellowship  
Building II-Suite 204  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I submit this correspondence on behalf of Angelita Renteria and I apologize for the untimeliness of its submission. The Milwaukee Justice Center is largely a volunteer based organization and semester transitions are challenging for us. This summer we also experienced a staff transition so Ms. Renteria's work was particularly important to the continuity of service we provided to low income, unrepresented litigants.

The Milwaukee Justice Center offers a continuum of service to unrepresented litigants in Milwaukee County. Ms. Renteria worked in the Family Law Walk-In Clinic, the Brief Legal Advice Clinic and the Appointments Clinic.

Over the course of the summer, Ms. Renteria had the opportunity to work with hundreds of clients, largely in family law, but also in many other areas of law. Often times when clients arrive at the Milwaukee Justice Center they are frustrated and discouraged. Many have multiple legal issues that are impacting their lives and the lives of their families. Ms. Renteria was the initial point of contact for many of these clients. She quickly developed an excellent rapport with clients and became quite skilled at issue spotting.

In addition to her direct service work, Ms. Renteria researched and wrote a grandparent's rights handout to be utilized by volunteer attorneys in brief legal advice clinics. Also, she developed a packet of forms and a checklist for attorneys to use when assisting domestic violence victims. Both of these resources are beneficial to the attorneys that volunteer with the Milwaukee Justice Center.

In summary, I would like to thank Equal Justice America for financially supporting law students who choose to pursue public interest legal opportunities. This support provides practical



work experience for law students and helps instill a culture of service in future generations of lawyers.

Sincerely,

Dawn R. Caldart