

August 31, 2015

Dan Ruben
Executive Director Equal Justice America
13540 E. Boundary Rd. Building II, Suite 204
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to express my appreciation for my Equal Justice America Fellowship this summer that allowed me to work Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. I had an incredible summer in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where I was able to represent indigent clients in family court and help some of them get through the difficult stage of their lives.

Upon arriving at Harvard Legal Aid Bureau (HLAB), we were welcomed by enthusiastic clinical instructors and students. I felt like being home the minute I stepped into the office. After a week of intense trainings, each of us was given a dozen of case folders and we had to hit the ground and running. Although the beginning was somewhat difficult for me, as I did not have any family law background, soon I was able to see clearly what the next steps are for all my cases. My supervisor and rest of the clinical instructors gave me tremendous support while at the same time giving me freedom and space for independent thinking. One of the things I liked most about HLAB is that we were the sole case handlers for our assigned cases. Even as interns we were to carry the maximum responsibilities for our clients. Supervisors allowed us to make decisions that we thought were appropriate for the case, allowing us to truly feel what it is like to be an attorney.

The most challenging yet unforgettable experience over the summer came on one Wednesday, when I received a call from a client saying that something emergency happened and she needed to stop the visitation between the child and the father. I knew the next visitation would happen on that Friday, so it gave me only one and a half day to obtain an emergency order from the judge to stop the visitation. Getting the court order was critical for the mom and the child, and failure would bring harm to the family. I worked tirelessly on Wednesday and Thursday, talking to a number of different people, drafting documents, and gathering evidence. On Friday morning, I walked into the courtroom with the mother without knowing if the judge would even hear from

us. Eventually I relieved when judge granted our motion. In that particular moment I felt proud of myself. I knew I helped my client. It was a victory.

My experience at HLAB reinsured me that I can be a good litigator. It was a meaningful 12 weeks. Without the Equal Justice America Fellowship, I would not have been able to make a difference in the lives of many clients who are experiencing domestic disputes. I am truly thankful for this opportunity and I hope many more students will have the chance as I did in the future.

Sincerely,

Effie Zhang

J.D. Candidate, Class of 2016 Boston University School of Law