

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

Mr. Ruben,

I would like to thank you and Equal Justice America for the wonderful opportunity that you provided me this summer. Because of your generous support, I was able to work along side the good men and women at Legal Service of Northern Virginia and get a better understanding of what it means to work in the public service sector. The work that I did this summer will leave a lasting impression on the law school community at George Mason University, as Ashley Brott and I continue our efforts this semester to establish the Virginia Student Bar Association Pro Bono Society.

I was extremely impressed by the dedication of the staff at LSNV. Many of these hard working professionals are underpaid for the services that they provide. They work long hours and fight against an endless sea of poverty and injustice. In addition, they have to rely on sub-standard working conditions and technology. Under these conditions, one would expect the staff at LSNV to be jaded. I discovered, however, that the people who work in this field have a strong sense of accomplishment. They recognize their limitations, but they also know that they are striving for the greater good. The positive attitude that they bring with them everyday transforms their efforts into something more than worthwhile; their efforts are heroic.

For many of LSNV's clients, legal representation is an absolute luxury. They have no way to afford representation, which means that they would be railroaded by the opposing party if it were not for the services of LSNV. Even then, I saw too many individuals who were turned away with just legal advice and no representation simply because of the lack of resources available to LSNV. As a future professional, it made me realize the importance of doing pro bono work to help bolster the manpower available to legal services organizations. While not every case can receive adequate representation, many more poor individuals could receive representation if more lawyers were willing to expand their pro bono activities.

In one particular case, I interviewed a woman and her two children. The mother was fighting to regain custody of the children, who were in their early teens. She had lost custody of the children due to a bad relationship that she was in when the children were young, but had since got her life back together. In the meantime, the father had married a woman who was both physically and emotionally abusive, and the children were being physically neglected. I was able to console the woman and assure her that she did have legal options, which would be explained

by an LSNV attorney. I told that they could fight through the institutional barriers of poverty with a lot of hard work and dedication.

If it weren't for the grant that I received from EJA, I would have never been able to help these individuals. As a working student, I would have spent my summer saving up money for the upcoming school year. Thanks to EJA, I was able to maintain my own personal finances while making a real difference to a lot of people in the Northern Virginia area. For this opportunity, I can't thank you enough.

Sincerely,
Bradley T. Warby
George Mason University
Third Year