

August 28th, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

For the summer of 2012, I was a law intern at The Legal Project, which operates under the Capital District Women's Bar Association. I first became acquainted with the organization during my undergraduate studies at University at Albany, SUNY. I was involved in a Women's Studies internship program, and I was able to intern and later volunteer at The Legal Project (herein referred to as "TLP"). I was delighted when I was able to return, now after completing my second year of law school. I had the immense pleasure of working with Carla Brogoch, who was my supervisor this summer. Carla has been working with TLP since she graduated law school, and I learned a great deal from her expertise and guidance.

Having taken coursework in matrimonial law and having completed a semester interning at the Family Violence Litigation Clinic at Albany Law, I felt prepared to serve the clients at TLP to the best of my abilities. My main responsibilities at TLP were to assist all the staff attorneys with their clients, who are victims of domestic violence. All of the legal services are done on a pro bono basis. I sat in on consultations with clients, and weekly "triage" meetings with TLP staff. I drafted divorce documents, mostly under New York States "no fault" criteria, and drafted motions to dismiss family offense petitions, and a motion to extend an existing order of protection.

I was able to attend domestic violence trainings for local attorneys, led by TLP staff attorneys, and a two day seminar on immigration issues as they relate to family court, which was held at Albany Law School and a local church. I did legal research for the staff attorneys, and I maintained case briefs on all the family law and matrimonial law decisions form the New York State 3rd Department and Court of Appeals. The briefs were part of a compilation that will be present to TLP's Matrimonial Law "breakfast club", a monthly meeting of local attorneys who specialize in family law and matrimonial law.

One of my most difficult experiences at TLP, but most rewarding, was attending an appearance for a client who was represented by a volunteer attorney who took on the case for TLP pro bono. I went to Rensselaer Family Court, and I met with our client, a young 20 year old woman, who was attempting to obtain an order of protection from her ex-boyfriend. She was assaulted by him

several times and was a victim of stalking. Our client was very fearful of him and his family, as his father was a “high powered” attorney in the area, as was his mother, and his father was representing him in court. The opposing party did their best to bully our client, but I was able to stay with her, and counsel her and try and give her support while the pro bono attorney was able to advocate for her in court. It was very important to be able to be there and assist the pro bono attorney, as our client was incredibly emotional. In the end, we were able to get the order of protection she needed, and she was appreciative of our involvement.

In the end, working this summer at TLP with the fellowship from Equal Justice America proved to be an amazing experience, which further solidified my desire to work in public interest law. I admire the work that TLP does and I am happy to report that I am going to continue to volunteer with them weekly during the academic year. I thank you and Equal Justice America for allowing me this rewarding opportunity, as it really had a lasting impact on me and gave me knowledge and experience that I can really use in the future.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Chaula H. Shukla
Albany Law School
J.D. Candidate, Class of 2013



Capital District Women's Bar Association

Lisa A. Frisch
Executive Director
Ellen C. Schell, Esq.
Counsel
Carla Brogoch, Esq.
Supervising Attorney
Susan S. Pattenau, Esq.
Senior Attorney
Director of Pro Bono Services
Gayle E. Hartz, Esq.
Staff Attorney

August 21, 2012

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

Re: *Chaula H. Shukla, EJA Fellow at The Legal Project, Summer 2012*

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing this letter to report on Chaula Shukla's successful completion of her Equal Justice America Summer 2012 Fellowship Award.

We at The Legal Project were very grateful to have such a qualified and enthusiastic fellow as Ms. Shukla, and are very thankful to Equal Justice America for providing the funding for her to have this opportunity with us. As our Equal Justice America fellow, Ms. Shukla worked specifically with our in-house Staff Attorneys and provided assistance with our domestic violence program. In this program, we assist low income victims of intimate partner domestic violence at all stages of their efforts to leave an abusive situation, whether they are here merely for advice as to their legal options or whether they need legal representation with a divorce or matters involving custody or support.

As our fellow, Ms. Shukla worked a full time schedule and assisted in a variety of cases. Often, Ms. Shukla would sit in on client meetings and consultations with potential clients. From these meetings, she was able to learn about a variety of areas of law that affect domestic violence victims as well as observe the different ways that our Staff Attorneys have of interacting with clients. Ms. Shukla attended court appearances with our Staff

Attorneys in both Supreme and Family Court. Ms. Shukla also assisted with drafting divorce documents, motions, and conducting legal research.

Under a Student Practice Order, Ms. Shukla, with attorney supervision, conducted her own client interview and interacted directly with clients regarding their divorce cases. Ms. Shukla has now learned the process involved in obtaining a simple, no fault, uncontested divorce in New York State and is able to draft the necessary paperwork to do so. She also helped with more complicated divorces, learning about financial disclosure, discovery, and motion practice. In addition, she observed many different court hearings, including a complicated two day equitable trial against a self represented batterer.

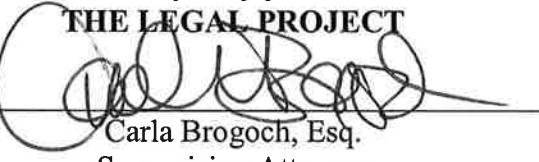
Ms. Shukla was always willing to help out and was obviously very dedicated to our clients and the work we do. For example, on one occasion, Ms. Shukla attended court with one of our volunteer panel attorneys who was representing a victim of domestic violence who was terrified to go to court because her abuser had many lawyer friends and family which he was using to intimidate her. The client herself had no local support or advocates. Ms. Shukla was able to go to court with our panel attorney to both offer the client the moral support of a stronger “team” on her side as well as to observe an initial appearance on a somewhat complicated Family Law matter.

Ms. Shukla could always be depended on for her helpful and friendly manner, and professional demeanor with our clients. She was a great asset to our team here at The Legal Project. We have been extremely satisfied with Ms. Shukla’s work and dedication to our clients. In fact, we are so pleased with Ms. Shukla that we have offered and she has agreed to continue to volunteer with us during her own free time this semester. She will be with us on Monday afternoons, continuing to help with our divorce and family law matters.

Very truly yours,

THE LEGAL PROJECT

By:


Carla Brogoch, Esq.
Supervising Attorney