

August 31, 2015

Dan Ruben, Esq.
Equal Justice America
Building II – Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you for the Equal Justice America Fellowship opportunity. I had a really great experience at MFY Legal Services in the Three-Quarter House Project, where I helped disadvantaged tenants fight for their housing rights. The clients that I worked with were tenants of illegal boarding houses that were marketed as supportive programs but in reality, took advantage of desperate, low-income clients for profit. I worked as part of a team of attorneys and community organizers that advocated for tenants' rights and helped fight illegal eviction proceedings brought against our clients.

One memorable part of the summer was helping a client regain possession of a rent-controlled apartment that he lost in 2010 when his landlord brought an illegal sublet proceeding against him. Our client was incarcerated at the time of the proceeding, and because the court failed to produce him so that he could defend his rights, he lost possession of the apartment by default. Our client has been trying to be restored to his apartment since he was released from prison in 2013. In the meantime, the landlord had re-let the premises out to another tenant, and so part of my work this summer was doing research into factors that the court should consider when weighing the balance of equities in favor of one tenant over another. Because our client had lived in that apartment for over fifty years, could not afford to find another apartment at market rate, and had strong ties to the neighborhood in which the apartment was located, the court ruled that he was to be restored to his apartment in the early fall.

I also got to work on a memorandum of law arguing why the court should grant both a civil and criminal contempt motion against three-quarter house operators who were failing to abide by a temporary restraining order issued by a housing court judge that prevented them from harassing tenants and restricting tenants' access to common areas. As part of that process, I also got to draft affidavits of tenants in support of these motions.

Additionally, I did research for a wage and labor case the team was helping a three-quarter house manager bring against the house operators for failing to pay him wages in return for sixteen months of his duties as a house manager. For me, this was a sobering look into how three-quarter houses also take advantage of vulnerable employees and not just tenants.

Sincerely,

Chui-Lai Cheung
Columbia Law School, '17



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VIA EMAIL

September 2, 2015

Equal Justice America
Dan Ruben, Executive Director
c/o Katie Toman (Katie@equaljusticeamerica.com)

Re: Chui-Lai Cheung

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Chui-Lai Cheung worked as a summer law intern for MFY Legal Services from June 1 through July 24, 2015. Chui-Lai worked in MFY's Three-Quarter House Project. She was a fantastic addition to the Project. Chui-Lai's internship consisted mostly of legal research and writing, as well as accompanying attorneys to Housing Court and Supreme Court. Chui-Lai is very sharp and has keen research skills. She was able to grasp the essence of questions, quickly track down relevant answers, and provide the attorneys on the project with that information in concise, useable format.

For example, Chui-Lai was assigned to research the amount of damages available in a wrongful eviction action commenced by a three-quarter house client represented by MFY. Chui-Lai provided the attorneys with a neat, organized chart of relevant cases, which included authorities directly on point as well as cases that could be applied analogously to the unique facts of our case. Chui-Lai prepared to take testimony and assisted as second seat in an inquest on damages in Supreme Court. Chui-Lai also assisted the attorneys on the project by meeting with clients and drafting client affidavits in support of a motion for contempt.

Chui-Lai was very responsive to emails from supervising attorneys and always willing to take on additional tasks. She asks pointed questions and is thoughtful to make sure that tasks are completed in the manner most beneficial to the team she is collaborating with. I look forward to hearing of where she chooses to direct her intelligence and perception in her future legal career.

Thank you for making Chui-Lai's internship possible. If I can provide any more information about Chui-Lai or her internship, please do not hesitate to contact me at (212) 417-3791.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew P. Main', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Matthew P. Main
Senior Staff Attorney