

Mr. Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I spent this past summer at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago (LAF). It was my second summer working with this organization as a legal intern. This summer, I worked in general intake. I had the opportunity to work on a variety of cases from family law to unemployment, from housing to disability cases. While there were not that many cases I had the opportunity to work on from the start to finish (given a sometimes slow adjudicatory process), I had the most meaningful time meeting initially with clients and interviewing them. I was given a great amount of autonomy at LAF and was able to interview clients by myself while also consulting with the supervising attorneys before the client left the office. I remember my clients being very grateful even when I would just call them to see how they were doing or if they had received any updated court documents in the mail.

The case I worked on most this summer was a continuing disability case for a young child. He was born with cerebral palsy, and now, the social security office is stating that he no longer qualifies to continue receiving benefits. I researched the case/my client's background and represented him at his hearing before the judge. While we are still awaiting the judge's decision (which could take up to a year), the supervising attorney and I feel that the hearing went well and that the judge appeared to be sympathetic to our client based on the questions he asked at the hearing.

All in all, the summer was definitely worthwhile. I met many inspiring attorneys who are greatly committed to their clients. I hope to apply to the Legal Assistance Foundation for a full time position in the upcoming months.

Sincerely,



Claudia Rosa Silva
University of Illinois College of Law
Class of 2006