

August 23, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I want to thank you again for supporting my Summer Internship at the Legal Assistance Foundation in Chicago, IL. (LAF) Without the generous support of Equal Justice America, I would not have had the opportunity to learn critical new skills and provide equal access to legal services.

This Summer I worked with the Immigration Practice Group at LAF. I primarily worked with immigrant survivors of domestic violence and other crimes to help them obtain an immigration status in the United States. These statuses included applications for Asylum, self-petitions under the Violence Against Women Act, and U-Visas (a visa available to crime victims who aid in the investigation or prosecution of that crime). I gained many new skills by working for LAF, but most importantly I was able to empower a particularly vulnerable population.

I worked with many clients over the summer, but there is one client in particular who I was especially proud to serve. A former client had referred Mary\* to my supervisor because her immigration case was in dire circumstances. Like so many other young people in the United States, Mary's parents brought her to this country without documents when she was just a baby. Although she had lived in the US for almost her entire life, she had no immigration status. This was particularly frightening for Mary; not only is she entirely unfamiliar with her native country and completely acculturated to the United States, she is a mother to several young children who are citizens of the United States.

Mary came to the attention of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which placed her in removal proceedings. She had already had several court dates before we represented her, which she attended alone without any form of legal assistance or representation. Her next court date was merely seven days after she met with my Supervisor for an intake appointment.

After meeting with Mary, we learned she was a victim of a U-Visa qualifying crime when she was just a child. In a few days, we were able to obtain certification from law enforcement that she aided in the investigation and prosecution of this crime and filed a complete U-Visa application before her court date. Normally it can take months to receive certification from law enforcement and weeks to finalize a U-Visa application. Because I was working with the Legal Assistance Foundation, we were able to take her case and help her in a quick manner. My supervisor told me that had I not been working with LAF, her case would not have been taken. Mary could have been deported, but she was not. My supervisor represented her at her next

\*Name changed.

court date and won a motion to continue her immigration case while her U-Visa application was pending.

I am so happy to have worked with Mary and the rest of my clients at the Legal Assistance Foundation. I truly believe I will be a better lawyer having worked at LAF. I look forward to starting a long career in public interest immigration law!

Sincerely,

Cynthia A. Bedrosian  
DePaul Law Class of 2014

\*Name changed.