

22 Rockridge Road  
Larchmont, NY 10538  
(914) 589-0065  
ess322@nyu.edu

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am a rising third year student at New York University School of Law, and I received the Equal Justice America Summer 2012 Fellowship. I am writing to summarize and reflect on my summer experience.

This past summer, I was an intern at Public Counsel Law Center, a Los Angeles-based non-profit organization that provides a wide range of civil legal services to low-income Los Angeles residents. Within Public Counsel, I worked in the Impact Litigation Project, which partners with law firms and other public interest organizations to bring lawsuits focused on civil rights and economic justice.

My internship in the Impact Litigation Project was a wonderful experience. I was given challenging assignments, permitted to talk strategy with and learn from highly accomplished civil rights attorneys, and provided with a broad picture of some of the most pressing social problems in Los Angeles. Unfortunately, much of my work was part of litigation and negotiations that are currently pending and therefore confidential. This means that I am unable to share specific client and case stories.

In broad terms, I can reflect on two lawsuits to which I contributed. The first was a suit to stop racial discrimination by city government officials against African-American Section 8 housing voucher holders. In assisting with that case, I was shocked to learn of the blatant racial hatred that had poisoned and divided our plaintiffs' communities. The second suit was a case to protect migrant agricultural workers wrongfully deprived of basic access to shade and drinkable water. My research and writing for that case gave me great insight into the administrative systems that fail to protect some of the most vulnerable workers. It also gave me pause on a personal level, as I enjoyed the acclaimed fruits and vegetables of California that I knew were the products of tremendous hardship.

For me, the internship at Public Counsel was an invaluable introduction to the Los Angeles public interest world, as well as a chance to learn from attorneys I admired wrestling with the cutting-edge civil rights issues of the moment. I hope to practice public interest law in Los Angeles when I graduate from law school in 2013, and this internship has strengthened my resolve to join that legal community.

Sincerely,  
Eliza Schafner