

October 19, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for awarding me the Equal Justice America 2011 Summer Fellowship. The fellowship allowed me to spend my summer at Bet Tzedek Legal Services, working in the Holocaust Reparations Unit. Bet Tzedek Legal Services is a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income residents of Los Angeles County. The Holocaust Reparations Unit helps Holocaust survivors apply for reparations from Germany, Hungary, and other European countries. The reparations programs have stringent eligibility instructions, even though the compensation amounts are miniscule compared to the suffering of the Holocaust survivors. Monthly pensions average \$300 per month and lump sum payments are usually between \$2,500 and \$3,500. Bet Tzedek estimates that about one-third of Holocaust survivors in the United States live in severe poverty. A reparations payment can mean not having to choose between buying medicine and buying food.

At Bet Tzedek, I researched and drafted appeals of previously rejected reparation applications. Nearly all of my clients were Russian-speaking immigrants and I was able to bond with them very quickly because I speak fluent Russian. As soon as the clients heard me speak Russian on the phone or when we met in person, they were forthcoming and cooperative. My Russian language skills also came in handy when we needed to request birth certificates and housing records from government agencies and the Ukraine. Many clients did not bring their birth certificates with them when they immigrated and cannot afford to obtain the documents using private agencies. I researched the current addresses of these agencies on the Russian Internet and drafted cover letters in Russian. Bet Tzedek has only a few volunteers who speak Russian, but hundreds of cases where the clients are from the former Soviet Union.

I am very grateful to Equal Justice America for the once in a lifetime opportunity to work with Holocaust survivors. They are a rapidly diminishing population and they have suffered immensely. The stories my clients told me about their persecutions were the stories I read in history books. If only one of my appeals succeeds, I will have made a difference in someone's life.

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely yours,

Ely Grinvald
Class of 2012
Southwestern Law School

Bet Tzedek Legal Services

THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE

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August 30, 2011

Mr. Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
Building II - Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Re: Ely Grinvald

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I write at the request of Ely Grinvald, who received an Equal Justice America fellowship during the summer of 2011. Mr. Grinvald worked under my supervision with the Holocaust Services Program at Bet Tzedek Legal Services.

Mr. Grinvald worked on a variety of matters, focusing primarily on assisting Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors with their applications for reparations from the German government. He interviewed clients and prepared detailed summaries of their persecution histories, performed legal and historical research, and formulated strategies to obtain documentary evidence supporting the claims. In an effort to identify such evidence, he corresponded with archives and administrative agencies in Ukraine and Russia and analyzed the resulting responses. He also drafted administrative appeals on behalf of several Holocaust survivors whose reparations claims had been denied.

Mr. Grinvald is adept at client communication, identifying relevant issues, and analyzing information gleaned from client interviews and available documents. He is thoughtful, reliable, a quick study, and cared about doing each task well. His Russian language capability has also been a great asset to our program.

We would be pleased to work with Mr. Grinvald again if the opportunity arose.

Very truly yours,

BET TZEDEK LEGAL SERVICES

By: 
Lisa D. Hoffman
Holocaust Services Attorney