

October 5, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

A very belated thank you to Equal Justice America for making my summer internship with Community Justice Inc. (CJI) possible. As a summer law clerk, I conducted intake interviews with CJI's prospective clients. On a daily basis, I spoke with people in need of a variety of legal services, including family law assistance and housing rights concerns. I enjoyed connecting callers in need of assistance with CJI's services or with an appropriate referral. At the same time, I quickly realized that the need for low-cost legal services far exceeds the services available. My summer experience of witnessing the pressing need for accessible legal services on a daily basis reaffirmed my commitment to serving low-income clients.

I also had the opportunity to assist CJI staff attorneys with legal research and casework. My most rewarding experience involved working with a father who had a disability due to a head injury. The client wanted to spend more time with his six-year-old daughter and wanted to have a placement schedule that did not require his daughter to spend 2-3 hours on a city bus each week. I worked with my supervising attorney to modify the existing placement schedule. We had lengthy conversations with our client and his social workers, negotiated with opposing counsel, and eventually needed to have a hearing in order to modify the schedule. Though the Court did not give our client everything we asked for, the client now has a placement schedule that allows him to be more involved in his daughter's life. Further, the Court modified the transportation schedule, making visits more pleasant for our client and his daughter.

My summer at CJI reaffirmed my commitment to a career in ensuring that low-income and working class individuals and families have access to the justice system. Though my summer internship officially ended on August 20, I continue to volunteer at CJI on Wednesday mornings.

Again, thank you for your investment in my development as a legal services attorney.

Best regards,

Erica Sweitzer-Beckman  
JD Candidate, December 2010  
University of Wisconsin Law School