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Apt. 525, The Left Bank
Philadelphia, PA 19104

August 23, 2006

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to relate my experience as summer intern at Philadelphia Legal Assistance (PLA). I worked in the Family Law Unit, which advises low-income clients who are involved in litigation concerning child custody, child support, and protection from abuse orders.

Over the course of the summer I did intake interviews for about 70 clients and worked with about 70 additional clients who had first come to PLA during the school year and whose cases were ongoing. The clients I assisted were in all stages of litigation, and had a broad range of issues in their cases, including domestic violence, substance abuse, and child abuse.

One of my memorable experiences was filing an emergency contempt for a client whose son had a tooth abscess and could not afford dental care. The child's father had been in contempt of support many times before, and was thousands of dollars in arrears. Toward the end of the summer we were able to assist her again in enforcing the child support order so that she would not have to sell her house pay tuition for her son's final year of high school.

In another case I was able to help a young mother petition the court to move out of a bad Philadelphia neighborhood to Delaware, where she could provide her child with a better home, better schooling, and daycare by family members while she went to work for the first time.

On a day-to-day basis, however, I felt that the most powerful work that we did was advising clients as to their rights under the law and reassuring and advising them so that they could represent themselves. With limited resources it is impossible for us to give representation to all of our clients, but we are able to draft pleadings for them, and help them sharpen and articulate their arguments so that they can be successful during their day in court. Many clients were also grateful for the help that we were able to provide in navigating the complexities of the legal system. I was often able to help clients work with other agencies, such as the Department of Human Services (Pennsylvania's child protection agency) and the police.

Thank you for making my summer at PLA possible. I feel that this experience has been very positive, giving me a great deal of responsibility with individual clients and providing me with a realistic perspective on the limited resources and large case loads that are characteristic of public interest work. This work at PLA has also demonstrated the power that public interest lawyers have to help people who are in desperate situations. My work this summer has enhanced my desire to pursue a career in public interest law and will also be invaluable as I continue to volunteer during the school year as a student supervisor.

Once again, thank you for making this opportunity a reality for me and other students nationwide.

Sincerely,

Evan Chyun
University of Pennsylvania Law '08