

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

August 24, 2009

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to work in direct legal services this summer through the Equal Justice America Summer 2009 Fellowship Program. I completed my fellowship at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia and I enjoyed my time there very much. I worked with the attorneys in Legal Aid's Family Law and Domestic Violence Unit and I learned a great deal about helping low-income D.C. residents with domestic violence, child support, child custody, and other family law matters.

On my first day at Legal Aid, my supervisor handed me several heavy folders that comprised the file of a longstanding client in a domestic violence and child support matter. She explained the background of the case and suggested that I read through the file to gain a better understanding of it so that I could determine what further evidence was needed. The case involved a father who was attempting to avoid child support payments while the mother was unable to afford her most basic expenses to support herself and her young child. On this first day, I found the case and its massive file daunting. I looked through it but was soon happy to find myself busy with other assignments.

However, a few weeks later, the case became active again and I studied the file in detail in preparation for an upcoming hearing. I discovered that a key witness was available to testify regarding the father's financial situation and that some of the documentary evidence was very damaging to the father's story. I also had the opportunity to meet the client and found that she was an incredibly kind and brave person who was very thankful for the assistance she was receiving from Legal Aid. The case suddenly became my favorite of all the projects I was working on and I spent as much time as possible gathering evidence and helping my supervisor prepare for the hearing. I accompanied the client on errands to collect evidence, scoured the father's bank records, subpoenaed witnesses, and researched ways to keep the client and her young child from being evicted while the case was pending. Finally, during the last week of my fellowship, I attended the hearing in which my supervising attorney used the information I had gathered to prove that the father was capable of paying much more in child support than he claimed. This case was my first assignment at Legal Aid and it was very rewarding to see it successfully completed in part because of my work preparing evidence and directly assisting the client.

In addition to this case, I also had the opportunity to work on many other matters. I conducted legal research and writing, translated attorney-client meetings between Spanish and English, assisted at the Domestic Violence Intake Center, attended hearings at the Superior Court on at

least a weekly basis, and worked with other clients to prepare for their hearings. I found the work interesting, exciting, and exhausting, and it further prepared me for a career in public interest law. I loved working with clients and seeing first-hand the impact that my efforts and the efforts of Legal Aid attorneys can have on the lives of these individuals. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to work at Legal Aid this summer and I now feel better equipped to assist low-income and underserved populations in the future.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Fay Mara Comé
American University Washington College of Law
J.D. Candidate, May 2010