

Dear Dan Ruben,

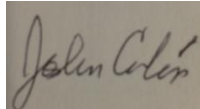
This summer I worked for Lincoln Square Legal Services, Inc. (LSLS). Though LSLS has hands in many fields, such as Intellectual Property Law, I worked solely in the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic. I had direct contact with around thirty clients and I genuinely feel as though I provided substantive help with their issues. I was greatly impacted by the familiarity of their circumstances.

As a Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, a certain percentage of our clients must have an income within 250% of the poverty level. Many of our clients came from rough neighborhoods, betrayed by the sly business tactics of those who prey on the lower class. Many clients I spoke with admitted to making false claims on their tax returns because their tax preparer told them it was a good idea. These clients knew their tax preparer was making more money by feeding them misinformation but never wished for their preparer to suffer any repercussions. I helped clean up the mess that greed left behind.

One experience I cherish had me on the phone with the IRS for several hours. My client came in and she was feeling very depressed. She was injured at work due to the careless actions of a coworker. Not only was she in and out of the hospital, but her employer showed no sympathy and was pressuring her to return to work. On top of all this, the IRS was withholding her refund largely because she was previously the victim of identity theft. For the both of us, calling the IRS was exciting, new, and intimidating. This excitement was quickly abated when we were placed on hold. During that long time period, we connected on a human level. We had a conversation about where we were from, our families, and our aspirations. We even talked about the Frida Kahlo exhibit at the Bronx Botanical Gardens. When we hung up the phone, we truly celebrated as a team.

I am very grateful to have been given this opportunity. I feel as though I spent my summer very wisely. I was able to help those who come from the same neighborhoods as me while at the same time my financial burden was substantially eased.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Joshua Colón".

Joshua Colón

Fordham University School of Law

Class of 2017