

August 31, 2015

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building 2, Suite 204
13540 E. Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Dan Ruben,

This summer, I had the privilege of interning at the Children's Law Center in their Guardian ad Litem Special Education Project. The Guardian ad Litem Special Education Project is dedicated to working to "secure the services necessary to improve educational outcomes for children involved in DC's child welfare system as well as children who have a disability or developmental delays which have an adverse effect on their education and health."

In my capacity as an intern, I had the opportunity to work with the gifted and tenacious attorneys who comprise the Special Education Project. In addition to writing legal memos, researching pertinent topics, attending court hearings, participating in trial trainings, and making sure our students were properly registered for school and other summer programs, I was also assigned a handful of cases by each of the five attorneys under whom I was working. Even if there was not necessarily work for me to do on these cases, I was invited to engage with the cases and clients. I got to play board games with a client who was going through a hard time with his foster care placement, tour a potential new school placement with a student who was worried about changing schools, attend Individualized Education Program school meetings and community planning sessions with students.

While I could elaborate on how each of these different experiences opened my eyes to the struggles of the students and the way in which the Children's Law Center effectively advocates for their educational rights, I was repeatedly reminded, throughout my internship, that Washington D.C. is a small city and any details shared could be a violation of confidentiality.

I came to law school after an administrator at the high school at which I was teaching told me that I should, "stop worrying about trying to get [my] students' Individualized Education Programs (IEP), [because] it [wasn't] like any of their parents kn[e]w a lawyer." The most exciting thing about my internship this summer

was the optimism that grew inside of me when I watched my supervisors advocate for children. After a particularly heated IEP meeting at a school, the lawyer with whom I was working apologized for the way that I had seen other adults behave. I looked at her incredulously, because many of the IEP meetings I attended as a teacher were just as or more contentious than the one I had just witnessed, but I had never before been to one where there was a lawyer present advocating for the child.

In my capacity as a teacher, I tried my best to advocate for children while getting you're-going-to-get-fired-if-you-keep-talking looks from my superiors. My supervisors this summer are doing the work that caused me to want to go to law school. Learning from them confirmed for me that I made the right decision.

Thank you for the opportunity to have done this internship with slightly less financial stress. I want to dedicate myself to public interest lawyering and programs like EJA make it possible for me to do so.

Sincerely,
Claire Chevrier
Georgetown University Law Center '17