

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

August 31, 2012

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I would like to thank you and Equal Justice America again for selecting me to be an EJA Summer 2012 Fellowship recipient. My summer with Neighborhood Legal Services Program (NLSP) was a great experience. I was interested in learning what it was like to work for a legal public service organization and I feel that my summer at NLSP provided me with the type of experience that I was seeking. The non-profit law firm focused mainly on helping clients with family, disability benefits, consumer, and housing law issues. While many of the experiences that I had at NLSP were rewarding, I found that providing legal information to clients who came to the Small Claims Resource Center in D.C. Superior Court was one of the most rewarding experiences of my summer. People that were interested in filing a small claims matter would come into the center to gain legal information about the process of filing a small claims matter in D.C. Superior Court. The people that I helped were very appreciative and I was able to experience first-hand the difference that NLSP makes in people's lives. I remember one client in particular wanted assistance with filing a small claims matter because she believed that while in the midst of being evicted from her apartment, the movers stole some of her belongings. The woman had her young daughter with her while she was speaking with me and she expressed concern that her daughter was very frightened by that experience and she did not want her daughter to be exposed to an eviction. It was obvious that this woman was doing what she could to support herself and her daughter but just could not come up with the resources to afford her rent payment. I was able to explain to her what she needed to do in order to recover the value of

her items that were taken from her during such a traumatic experience. She was very grateful to receive this information and I was also very grateful to be able to help this woman in any way that I could.

While at NLSP, I also conducted traditional legal research and composed memoranda for the staff attorneys outlining the possible results of our clients' legal claims. I also had the opportunity to draft a motion to amend a custody complaint. I really enjoyed working on that assignment because it gave me experience writing an actual court document that would eventually be submitted to a judge for review in the D.C. Superior Court. Additionally, I was able to draft advice letters that explained to clients, in detail, what their legal problems entailed and provided them with advice on the best course of action that they should take in order to solve their problems.

Before working for NLSP, I was fairly familiar with Northwest, Washington, D.C. Because one of NLSP's offices was located in Southeast, Washington, D.C. , I had the opportunity to be in communities in D.C. that I had never before visited. I appreciated being able to learn about a part of D.C. with which I was not very familiar. There is a huge disparity in the amount of money that people living in Northwest have compared to the amount of money that others living in D.C. have. Seeing these disparities renewed my interest in providing pro bono legal services to low-income D.C. residents, especially those living in the seventh and eighth wards of Washington, D.C. Overall, my experience with NLSP this summer was very eye-opening, rewarding, and enjoyable. The legal services that NLSP provides to low-income residents of Washington, D.C. are very important and I am grateful that I had the opportunity to work for an organization that does such great work.

Sincerely,

Janell Johnson
University of Virginia
Class of 2014