

August 14, 2012

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

Dear Dan Ruben,

I had an amazing summer at The Family Center and I am so thankful that Equal Justice America is around to support these opportunities in the non-profit sector. The Family Center is a full service non-profit organization. It provides health, social, and legal services for families that have been impacted by HIV/AIDS and cancer. It also provides services for non-biological caregivers. It is a direct service agency that primarily works with low income individuals. A lot of the legal assistance revolves around correcting benefit allocations, housing matters, advanced directives, and family law (guardianship and divorce).

I never thought that I would find my place within the legal profession at an organization that dealt with people who are impacted by serious illnesses. When applying to legal jobs, I did not imagine myself asking people about their health, how they came into contact with diseases, and how they were providing for their family. As the internship went on, I found myself more comfortable with clients and better able to ask the questions that would allow the attorneys to render the best advice possible to the clients. Even though interactions with clients posed potentially emotional situations, it was great to know that I had a part in our agency making a positive difference in what turned out to be very difficult times in the lives of some of our clients.

My day to day tasks varied. I would talk to clients, help the lawyers find information or draft documents, and go to various courts to file documents. It's a small office, so the lawyers depended on the work that the interns did for the organization. Sometimes the attorneys would give me independence and I would be the one directly working with the client. Often times, I would be the one asking for information, meeting with the clients, and following up with them if they had any questions. It was great being in an environment where I was entrusted with taking care of clients' needs while knowing that I had the support of the attorneys if I took a misstep or didn't know exactly what I was doing.

The projects were definitely challenging and satisfying. The staff attorneys were passionate about helping their clients and often that desire turned into research projects that took me from the Connecticut Surrogate's Court to the Chinese Consulate. Whether a potential client was able to receive

services from our agency, or needed to look elsewhere, The Family Center worked to guide him into making decisions that were in his best interests given the circumstances. Although I may not have always found an answer to every quandary, these exercises showed me how important it was to take into consideration the needs and desires of the clients. I not only became more familiar with the law, I also became aware of what it means to efficiently serve a client.

The Family Center provided me with a variety of legal and personal learning experiences. It was exciting to learn about the areas of the law that clients who were served by The Family Center had to deal with and how it impacted their everyday experiences. In addition, it was a humbling experience. Not only did I see people coming to terms with their circumstances, I also observed how clients volunteered to care for family members who had been impacted by tragedy. This summer, I not only learned what it meant to be a Lawyer with integrity, but also what it meant to be an honorable person.

In closing, my summer at The Family Center has not only prepared me to talk to potential clients about sensitive information, it has also encouraged me to be a more compassionate, patient, and caring person. I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to work with this organization. It is great that Equal Justice America encourages law students to pursue these avenues of interest and I hope other law students take advantage of this opportunity.

Thank You,

Jennifer Anderson  
Columbia Law School  
Class 2014

**Adam J. Halper, Esq.**

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August 8, 2012

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America

*Re: Jennifer Anderson.*

Mr. Ruben,

I am the Director of Legal Services at The Family Center (TFC), a multidisciplinary legal and social services organization. I write to this letter on behalf of Jennifer Anderson, a Columbia University Law School student whom we had the privilege of hosting this summer

Since 1994, The Family Center has worked with individuals and families affected by illness, grief and loss. Our organization is dedicated to assisting some of New York City's most vulnerable and disenfranchised communities with quality legal, social and medical case management services. In our model of service, lawyers work hand-in-hand with social workers, case managers, medical personnel, and others not only to address the legal issue, but also to address the many psycho-social and economic issues that come with a diagnosis of serious illness.

This model of service means that our work with clients generally does not begin in the courts. Often, the place where our cases commence is in hospitals, hospices, local CBO's and in client's homes. Our referrals come from oncology and virology departments, home care agencies, welfare job centers and any institution you where would expect to find people struggling with serious illness. We have formal and informal agreements with medical providers across the city and they refer clients to us for a host of legal issues including housing, government benefits, family and matrimonial law matters and trust and estates. TFC's Legal Services Department has a high volume of both transactional and litigation work. That work is conducted with clients in their living rooms and kitchens; we help them execute wills at their hospital beds, we are their advocates in courts across New York City.

So, this work is not for everyone. It poses challenges to intellect, but also to one's comfort. It is one thing to draft an advance directive. Executing it with a client, at their hospital bed, is another.

Jennifer is about to enter her second year of law school at Columbia. She earned her undergraduate work at Brown. She is exceptionally well educated and it shows. Her research, writing and the manner in which she both asks and answers questions consistently demonstrates that she is a mind at work. This summer, our clients benefited from her internship with our office. Interns at TFC do a great deal and learn to do so quickly.

It is difficult to describe all of her work with our agency so I'll begin by cataloging some of it. Jennifer conducted client intake (inside and outside of the office), drafted advance directives, guardianship and divorce papers along with a will. She researched questions on issues including the complexities of the

Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Enforcement Act, due diligence, client capacity, personal jurisdiction, private insurance, housing and government benefits issues. She helped clients execute documents connected to their health and provided attorneys with research and guidance on innumerable legal questions. Jennifer's work product was excellent. Her thoughts were always well-considered and my staff trusted her in the completion of any task, whether it was the drafting of papers or filing them in court.

Jennifer was a pleasure to have in the office both because she was an excellent worker, but also because everyone on my staff found her to be thoughtful and intensely interested not just in the welfare of clients, but also in the understanding of how it is they arrived at our doorstep. In my experience, most law students want to get to the right answer, write the memo and win. They want to do everything in the right way, but understanding the larger context of how a legal problem developed seems of less importance.

That seems appropriate except that when dealing with impoverished clients who struggle with illness, incarceration and instability in housing, income and health (to name only a few areas) knowing the context of why a problem developed is crucial. Legal problems often seem to merge together for many of our clients and Jennifer wanted to know why. In one of our supervision sessions she asked me for book recommendations about these issues. That was the first and only time, a student ever asked me for reading selections about poverty law. It was a reflection of her dedication to understanding the "why," of a situation. This attitude informs her work and as I noted, that work was superb.

Jennifer could have done anything she wanted this summer. Without question, she could have worked for a law firm. She chose to do non-profit work and regardless of where she ultimately finds herself after law school, I'm confident that she's going to accomplish big things. I don't know what that will be, but I look forward to reading about it one day. Staff and clients here at TFC spoke well of Jennifer this summer. This is not surprising. I think that those who come into contact with Jennifer on a professional level in the future will do the same.

To the extent that Jennifer was able to secure EJA funding for the summer, I suppose the most important thing I can say is that it was money well spent. Jennifer assisted my office and our clients in ways that are difficult to quantify. I could go on about her many, many hours of service on behalf of clients, the content of that service and the results for our clients, but it is easily summarized. She helped changed client lives for the better.

I thank her for her service and I and my agency thank Equal Justice America for helping to make that happen. Equal Justice America has the gratitude of my agency and its support.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

S//:

Adam J. Halper  
Director of Legal Services