

August 25, 2005

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I went to law school specifically with the idea of someday practicing immigration law in a public interest firm in Chicago. Imagine my delight at being able to work full-time at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago in their immigration department and actually get paid. As a community organizer in Chicago several years ago, I regularly sent community members to LAFMC for legal aid; thus, I was familiar with LAFMC's reputation as one of the primary legal aid organizations in Chicago.

This summer strengthened my interest in working in a public interest firm, and it confirmed my resolve to work on behalf of immigrants in Chicago. I am now confident that I will be able to do so upon graduation.

At LAFMC, I got to work on immigration cases that I had learned about in my immigration law classes the previous spring. This is because LAFMC works on groundbreaking and important cases. Each task I was given was a complete project, and although the results take some time to occur, I will be able to see the effects of my work.

I worked on several different projects. I prepared a comprehensive packet of information for legal permanent residents representing themselves in deportation proceedings, where their only offense was a one-time drug possession conviction. The state of the law for such offenders is uncertain, and it depends on a major case currently in the courts. LAFMC is working on that case, and until it's decided, immigrants will be using my packet to hopefully appeal any unfavorable decisions.

I also prepared petitions for immigrants who faced deportation because of the fraudulent actions of notary publics, who misrepresented themselves as immigration experts. In order to prepare the petitions, I met with families and I learned their life stories. I then attempted to compile, in pictures and words, the most compelling tale of this history, in order to convince the government to favorably exercise its prosecutorial discretion. By doing so, the immigrant would be allowed to remain in the U.S. with his or her family.

Thanks to Equal Justice America for allowing me to have a fun and interesting summer working at LAFMC.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Crook
Loyola University Chicago School of Law
Anticipated graduation: January 2007