

Mr. Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
Summer 2014 Fellowship
Fellowship Reflection
August 31, 2014

Mr. Ruben:

Thank you once again for the Fellowship award I was granted for my work at The Legal Project this past summer. I had an incredible experience working with The Legal Project and learned more about civil litigation that I ever anticipated.

My experience working with The Legal Project this semester has not only been an enjoyable and educational one, but one that has become a turning point for me in my legal education. Entering law school, I, like so many others, was uncertain of what direction my career would ultimately follow. However, after only a brief few months with The Legal Project, I can confidently say that I have found my direction. The important and often undervalued public interest work that The Legal Project does for victims of domestic violence is something that I strive to emulate in my own career, to continue to bring life-changing relief and respite to those who need it the most.

As a student, I have been exposed to new and interesting areas of the law that I had not yet encountered in my legal education, as well as learning invaluable lessons about the practice of law that I will take with me when I begin my own legal career. I have had the opportunity to gain a much stronger familiarity with aspects of family and matrimonial law, as well as with procedural matters associated with practicing law in New York State.

Additionally, I have had the benefit of developing and improving my writing skills, something that is crucial for a young lawyer. Through drafting documents for submission to court, briefing important family and matrimonial law cases, and gaining experience in grant writing, my writing skills have significantly benefitted from the feedback and guidance of my supervising attorney, who works tirelessly to ensure that all of the student fellows receive the most beneficial experience possible – something I am extremely grateful for.

Perhaps more important than the wealth of knowledge I am gaining, however, is the unique experience working in the field of public interest law that The Legal Project has provided me. I have been fortunate enough to sit in on client consultations with victims of domestic violence whose financial situations do not allow them access to a majority of legal services the rest of us take for granted.

I have always felt that working in “people law” was something that I wanted to do, however, hearing the heartbreaking stories of pain and strife that our clients have endured provides me with even greater inspiration and ambition to be an effective

advocate to secure for them the justice that they deserve. It is my belief that everyone is entitled to legal representation, irrespective of his or her economic condition, and The Legal Project does an incredible job of providing desperately needed legal assistance to those most in need.

I am forever grateful to The Legal Project, not only for the training and education they have imparted on me, but also for helping me to define my mission as a new attorney. I have developed a greater understanding of the dynamic field of domestic violence, have obtained insight into the practice of public interest law, and have seen firsthand the magnitude of the impact that this type of representation has on the lives of those we serve. My goal as I begin my own legal career to emulate the philosophy of The Legal Project and to use my education and training to leave a positive impact on the lives of those in my community, as The Legal Project does every single day.

And I am grateful to EJA for allowing me to make this experience a possibility.

Very truly yours,

Joseph Williams
Albany Law School
May 2015