

August 6, 2015

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Due to the generous assistance of Equal Justice America, I have had the distinct pleasure of spending the last ten weeks at an incredible legal aid organization, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia. As a public interested-minded law student, the opportunity to secure a summer fellowship while simultaneously working to increase low-income Philadelphian's access to legal services was a dream come true. I am very grateful that Equal Justice America selected me for this opportunity.

I feel especially fortuitous to have been given the opportunity to work at the well-oiled machine that is Community Legal Services. For close to 50 years, Community Legal Services has provided free civil legal services to low-income Philadelphians, working towards their very admirable motto of "Equal Access to Justice." Community Legal Services is also unique as a legal aid organization, as it does not accept Legal Services Corporation funding. They therefore can undertake policy advocacy and impact litigation in addition to providing high quality direct representation for their clients. As a legal intern in the Aging & Disability unit, I was fortunate to be able to participate both in direct legal services and policy advocacy.

The policy advocacy project that I worked on this summer was focused on improving the quality of care for Pennsylvania's elderly population in nursing home facilities. I read through hundreds of Pennsylvania Department of Health nursing home inspection reports to look into the enforcement of nursing home regulations. One problem that was identified was the concerning number of instances where the DOH mischaracterized the scope and severity of harm to a nursing home resident. For example, one resident with significant physical limitations was illegally discharged from the nursing home to her house by herself. She was found days later undernourished and was rushed to the hospital. The DOH rated this as minimal harm, the lowest possible classification that indicates harm to the resident. The classification of harm is important because the DOH reports this data to the federal government which is then compiled into a database for consumers to use when selecting a nursing home. Therefore, Pennsylvanians were

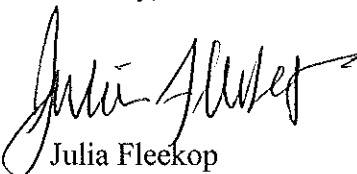
using inaccurate and misleading data when making important decisions for their loved ones health and wellbeing.

My research was compiled into a larger published report on the state of nursing home regulation enforcement. Since then, Community Legal Services has conducted a huge media push to bring awareness to this issue. In the weeks following the release of the report, the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health announced the creation of a Nursing Home Quality Improvement Taskforce, an interagency team working on improving long-term care in the state, and the Pennsylvania Auditor General has announced that there will be an investigation into the state's nursing home inspection procedure. It was very rewarding to take part in a policy project that quickly garnered the attention and response that it deserved.

On the legal services side, I worked on a range of public benefits cases, such as SSI eligibility cases, SSI overpayments cases, and increasing access to home and community based care for the elderly and people with disabilities. One gratifying case I worked on was assisting a single mother with a young child who was born with a rare and severe genetic illness. Her son needed around-the-clock care because of his debilitating health condition and as a single mother she was the only one who could take care of him. This meant that his mother was unable to work or go to school (and often times she was unable to get a full night's sleep) because she had not been able to get Medicaid approval for nursing care for her son. I was able to successfully work with the primary care physician and Medicaid to approve daily nursing care for her son, in addition to getting a nurse to help train the mother in how to better care for her son's demanding medical needs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to work at such an exceptional organization doing extremely rewarding work. I could not have asked for a better summer internship, filled with passionate mentors, worthy clients, and a better understanding of how the legal profession can help to alleviate injustice in America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julia Fleekop", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julia Fleekop
Fordham Law School
Class of 2017



August 7, 2015

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
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Midlothian, VA 23112

I am writing to express what a wonderful pleasure it was to have Julia Fleekop as an Equal Justice America fellow this summer. Julia was one of the best interns I have worked with during my career. She is smart, funny, and passionate about legal services. Julia repeatedly completed tasks and assignments quickly and efficiently. Her work product was exceptional. Additionally, she interacted often with clients. She treated them with respect and professionalism. Community Legal Services wishes all interns were of her caliber.

Julia worked on a variety of projects this summer. The major project she worked on was a report CLS issued on the failures of the Pennsylvania Department of Health to properly protect nursing home residents. Julia came to CLS just when we began to prepare and analyze data. She quickly caught on to what we were looking for. Without her assistance the project would have taken significantly more time. She was able to work independently and efficiently. She was instrumental in issuing the report. As a result of the report, the issue has gotten both statewide and national attention. The Pennsylvania Department of Health has announced the creation of a nursing home task force and asked for an audit of nursing home inspection procedures.

Additionally, Julia worked closely with clients regarding SSI benefits. She worked with one gentleman who had his benefits stopped because he had received a settlement for a car accident. Julia worked with him by documenting how he spent the money (they put together over 60 receipts) and then wrote a letter to the Social Security Administration, which resulted in his benefits immediately being reinstated.

I also gave Julia writing assignments, specifically appeal briefs regarding denials of SSI benefits by Administrative Law Judges. Julia learned fast, even though she had no experience with SSI issues. She wrote a high quality appeals brief that was exceptional in draft form. I was able to give Julia the file and the regulations. She then was able to study both and draft briefs with little input from me.

Julia exhibited an exceptional understanding of the issues and hardships that confront low-income Philadelphians. She showed a compassion that is rare in a law student. As you can tell, I cannot say enough good things about Julia. The legal services community would be

August 7, 2015
Page 2

fortunate to have her as an attorney in the future. I hope her experience here will motivate her to pursue a legal aid career. I would also like to thank Equal Justice America for funding Julia's fellowship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes that form a stylized, cursive name.

Samuel Brooks
Supervising Attorney