

August 18, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I wanted to express my gratitude to your organization for granting me an Equal Justice America Fellowship for the summer of 2009. Through the generosity of your organization, I had the opportunity to work at Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Legal Services in New York City for ten weeks, which proved to be an amazing experience for me.

As a summer intern at Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Legal Services, I represented clients in housing and Social Security disability cases. The work was incredibly rewarding to me, and I felt like I was able to positively impact my community and make a difference in the lives of my clients even in the short time I was there. In two of my Social Security disability cases, I was successful in winning benefits for my clients, who were in desperate need of financial help. I interviewed each of these clients and then wrote pre-trial memos to the Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) in each of their cases. In both cases, the ALJ made a disability finding for my clients based solely on my pre-trial memos and in lieu of conducting a hearing. I cannot describe how amazing it was to inform my clients that they had been granted the benefits for which they had fought so long and hard.

In the area of housing, I had the opportunity to write numerous motions, which were filed in court with my name attached. This small detail made me feel like the work I was doing was valued and appreciated. In particular, one motion I wrote led to the dismissal of my client's case, meaning that she no longer had to face eviction from her home. This client was a domestic violence survivor who had no other place to go, and it was an incredibly moving experience to be able to fight for her and save her home when she had almost lost hope. With this client, I learned that oftentimes being an attorney means much more than just practicing law – sometimes, what your client needs more than anything else is someone to listen to them and give them hope.

In another housing case, I had the opportunity to argue before a housing court judge, which again led to the dismissal of the case against my client. This particular client had lived in her home for over ten years, only spoke Spanish, had two young children, and lived in horrible conditions. Her landlord had tried to take advantage of her ignorance of the law and have her evicted in an improper manner. I felt so proud to be able to stand up for her in court and argue a motion based on insufficient notice on her behalf. Within 48

hours, the judge handed down a decision in our favor, and we were able to inform our client that she could stay in her home.

Ultimately, I had an incredible experience working at Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Legal Services this summer. I feel so lucky to have had the opportunity to do substantive work and practice the law for the good of the surrounding community and the people in it. My experience helped me to realize that I would like to pursue a career in public interest in the future, because there really is no better way to use the law while at the same time making a positive impact in people's lives every day.

Thank you again for your generosity and support.

Sincerely,

Kate Hicks  
Harvard Law School  
Class of 2011