

August 5, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing regarding my fellowship experience in the HIV Unit of South Brooklyn Legal Services. This summer, I worked with clients on a wide variety of issues. The HIV Project helps people who are HIV positive with housing problems, welfare benefits problems, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability (SSD) problems, family law problems, consumer law problems, and discrimination or breach of HIV confidentiality.

My first client was forty-two years old and HIV+, with very low CD4 counts, a serious ankle injury, and chronic depression. He had tried to work, but his physical impairments led to frequent absences and, ultimately, his termination. Nevertheless, he had been denied his application for SSD and SSI. I drafted a memo in support of his application and represented him at his Administrative Hearing. A few weeks later, we heard that he had been found eligible for both SSD and SSI. This income was vital to his ability to pay his rent, food, and medical expenses.

Another client was an elderly HIV+ individual who received the entirety of her income from HRA and HASA. Her electricity was sub-metered, and charged by her landlord rather than by ConEd. Her landlord charged her electricity as added rent instead of a utility charge, and threatened to evict her when the electricity was not paid. I drafted a motion to Housing Court that argued that this added rent was, in fact, an electricity bill, and therefore not a valid grounds for eviction. When we reached settlement with the landlord's attorney, I then drafted a grant request to HRA, arguing in favor of an arrears grant that would compensate her landlord and prevent her eviction. After negotiations with HRA and HASA, our client was granted her arrears, paid the landlord, and was able to stay in the apartment that she had lived in for almost twelve years.

These two clients exemplify the wide range of services offered by South Brooklyn Legal Services, and the wide range of problems faced by HIV+ individuals in New York. I was fortunate enough to make a positive impact on the lives of many HIV+ people, which is a testament to the power of legal representation for individuals navigating the often-hostile world of landlord-tenant law and public benefits. Unfortunately, most HIV+ people do not have access to legal representation, and South Brooklyn Legal Services has limited resources. I can only hope that inspiring organizations like South Brooklyn continue to receive adequate funding, because I can think of no better way to use my legal education upon my graduation.

Sincerely,

Katie Poor
NYU School of Law, J.D. Candidate '13

South
Brooklyn
Legal
Services

Legal
Services NYC

August 4, 2011

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

Re: Katie Poor

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to evaluate Katie Poor's summer fellowship experience in the HIV Unit of South Brooklyn Legal Services. The HIV Project helps people who are HIV positive with housing problems, including evictions and those who need help getting repairs in their apartments, welfare benefits problems, including HASA, Food Stamps, and Medicaid, SSI or SSD problems, family law problems, including foster care, visitation, custody, or guardianship, consumer law problems, including student loan problems, attachment of bank accounts, or bankruptcy, and discrimination or breach of HIV confidentiality.

Katie worked under my supervision and under the supervision of Cathy Bowman, the Unit Director of the HIV Unit. Katie and I worked primarily on housing law issues. Her work included drafting motions to present at Brooklyn Housing Court, attending trials at Housing Court, communicating with and preparing clients, and researching New York landlord-tenant law. In conjunction with the housing law work that she did, Katie also drafted grant requests to HASA, and communicated with case workers at HRA. She also participated in a variety of trainings, including a training that I led on New York law concerning HIV confidentiality.

Under Cathy's supervision, Katie worked on a variety of welfare benefits and SSI/SSD issues. This included drafting memos and representing clients in Administrative Hearings before the Social Security Administration, representing clients in Fair Hearings for Public Assistance, and corresponding with government agencies on public assistance, SSI/SSD, and ADA compliance issues. She also attended Family Court on several occasions, and researched a variety of welfare benefits questions. When Cathy was out of the office, Katie communicated with Cathy's clients in her absence.

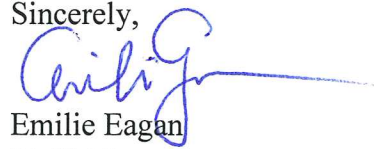
South Brooklyn Legal Services
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John C. Gray, Project Director

Towards Justice and Dignity for All – Por la Justicia y Dignidad de Todos



If you have any questions about Katie's summer fellowship experience, please don't hesitate to call me at (718) 237-5566.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emilie Eagan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emilie Eagan
Staff Attorney