

August 4, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you for a wonderful fellowship experience. I spent my summer working at South Brooklyn Legal Services in New York City where I was a legal intern in the Housing Unit. It was an incredibly rewarding experience, and I learned an immense amount about practicing housing law and representing tenants. In addition, I greatly improved my research and writing skills.

Over the course of the summer, I had the opportunity to work on a variety of projects. For example, I worked with a project-based Section 8 tenant whose subsidy had been terminated. The landlord claimed that the tenant had failed to recertify properly because she had not included her sister's income on her lease, even though the tenant had repeatedly asked for her sister to be added to the lease. As a result, the landlord began charging the tenant market rate for the apartment, which the tenant could not afford to pay, so the landlord instituted a nonpayment proceeding against her. I wrote the summary judgment motion to dismiss the complaint due to the fact that her subsidy was improperly terminated. The tenant has three young children and risks becoming homeless if the landlord succeeds in his case against her. I greatly enjoyed working on this case, as it gave me the opportunity to hold the landlord accountable for his illegal actions so that the tenant and her family can remain housed.

I also had the opportunity to work on a case regarding language access issues at the welfare centers. New York City is required by law to provide translation services to clients with limited English-speaking abilities. However, the City routinely does not follow the law or its own internal policies regarding translation services. Many clients continue to receive notices in the wrong language and are denied interpreter services when they go to the welfare offices. As a result, clients are denied benefits to which they are entitled. As an intern, I had the opportunity to analyze all of the deposition transcripts in the case in preparation for a summary judgment motion. It was truly appalling how often City workers failed to follow the law, leaving limited English-speaking clients in dire situations. The assignment taught me about the importance of having legal services attorneys who can force the government to abide by its statutory obligations. Since this litigation began, the City has already begun taking steps to correct the many deficiencies.

One of my favorite experiences this summer was arguing a motion in housing court. My client was a tenant whose landlord had failed to make necessary repairs in her apartment. During the winter, there was inadequate heat in the apartment. In addition, the radiator leaked, the hot water was scalding, and the staircase was in need of repair. There were also open violations, such as a

rat infestation. Despite the fact that the tenant's lease stated she was a rent-stabilized tenant, the landlord filed a holdover petition in housing court, claiming that she did not have the right to a renewal lease and therefore should be evicted. This claim was in direct contradiction to the rent stabilization laws. The landlord ultimately decided to offer a new lease, but then demanded rent for the months during which the litigation was pending. Instead of starting a nonpayment case for the rent, the landlord tried to obtain the rent under the original holdover case, which is inappropriate and in contradiction to the law. The client felt she was entitled to a rent abatement due to the terrible conditions in her apartment. My supervisor submitted a motion to dismiss the case, and I had the chance to argue it in front of the judge. Afterward, the landlord agreed to drop the case.

My experiences this summer taught me about the importance of legal representation for low-income tenants. Landlords often have an advantage in housing court because they can afford representation whereas the low-income tenants cannot. Whenever a tenant is able to obtain representation from South Brooklyn Legal Services, she has a much greater chance of having her rights enforced and remaining in housing.

Thank you again for this opportunity. It greatly strengthened my commitment to practice public interest law in the future.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Kliff  
NYU School of Law  
Class of 2012

South  
Brooklyn  
Legal  
Services

Legal  
Services NYC

August 5, 2011

Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America

**RE: Kathryn Kliff**

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to evaluate the summer fellowship of Kathryn Kliff at South Brooklyn Legal Services. Kathryn worked 40 hours per week for 10 weeks in the Housing Unit of our office under my supervision.

Kathryn was an excellent resource to the SBLS Housing Unit this summer. She assisted me in drafting answers in eviction proceedings; preparing for depositions, including drafting a deposition outline that helped me conduct a deposition in a case regarding a landlord's intent to recover a rent-stabilized apartment for his family's use; researching complicated legal issues relating to standing for an affirmative case we are pursuing; preparing motions in eviction proceedings, including a motion for summary judgment that resulted in a settlement offer in one of our cases; and even arguing a motion in Housing Court under the supervision of one of our attorneys. All of these tasks were performed at the highest level.

Kathryn demonstrated excellent research and writing skills, and was a pleasure to work with. She was always professional towards our clients and opposing counsel. Our clients and community benefitted tremendously from the hard work and dedication of Kathryn this summer.

If you have any questions, you can reach me at 718-237-5513.

Very truly yours,



Rachel Hannaford  
Staff Attorney

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John C. Gray, Project Director

Towards justice and dignity for all – Por la Justicia y Dignidad de Todos

 LSC