

August 27, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I wanted to take a moment to thank you and the Equal Justice America team again for the generous fellowship I received for my work this summer at the Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center. I truly had an outstanding experience and cannot wait to use the skills I gained in post-graduate work.

The most memorable clients this summer were at opposite ends of the spectrum: One very young, one an adolescent. Each from a different area of town. One may be able to return home. One will never be able to. However, each of these children was extremely motivating for me, and helped me solidify why I want to work as a child advocate when I finish law school. These children motivated me because of what they have in common. Each suffered because of their parents' battles with addiction. Each needs a strong advocate who will fight for them and ensure their best interests are protected.

Working with attorneys on each case demonstrated something new to me. One, the unique and extremely difficult challenges of prescription drug abuse. Approaching these cases is much different than other cases, even those involving substance abuse. The other, showed me the specific challenges that adolescents face as they get closer to aging out of the child welfare system.

The older child has made me more passionate about the obstacles that adolescents face in the child welfare system. Often struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues while wanting to be independent and no longer be part of the "system," many do not receive assistance when they really need it. Perhaps their case has closed because they asked for it to be; however, in reality, these older youth often want to come back and be able to receive assistance. The design of the system, however, often does not permit this, so these individuals end up on the streets, without services, and/or confused and overwhelmed.

My experience this summer was incredibly motivating. I worked with outstanding individuals who were encouraging, inspiring, and extremely bright. This was all while learning more about concerns for children and youth in Colorado, and beyond, and ways to improve their experiences and the system they are part of. I truly believe my experience will help me throughout my career and cannot wait to put my knowledge, learned skills, and passion to work after graduation! I am thankful for organizations like Equal Justice America that make experiences like mine possible. Without your commitment to public interest, legal internships and public service work would not be the same!

*Kristin Rouse*

Kristen Rouse  
J.D. Candidate 2014  
University of Colorado Law School



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

Re: Kristen Rouse, EJA Summer Fellow 2013

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer, the Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center had the great pleasure of hosting Kristen Rouse as a student intern with our office. I supervised Kristen over the course of her time with us. The mission of Children's Law Center is to transform the lives of abused, neglected and at-risk children through compassionate legal advocacy, education and public policy reform. Ms. Rouse was a welcome addition to these efforts over the past few months.

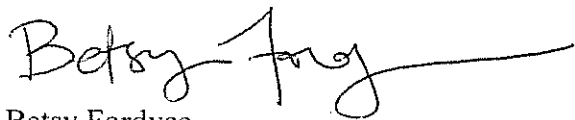
From day one, Ms. Rouse was eager to delve into the work. Her dedication to child advocacy law and the population that we serve was evident. As the summer progressed, our initial impressions of Ms. Rouse were further confirmed through her hard work and enthusiasm.

Ms. Rouse was assigned a variety of projects during her internship, such as assisting attorneys with motions, observing court proceedings, and interacting with our youth during visits and meetings. Perhaps, most significantly, she conducted substantial research on issues facing youth emancipating from the child welfare system. This was a large endeavor to say the least, but Ms. Rouse did not hesitate to get started. She asked questions and sought assistance as appropriate, but also demonstrated initiative throughout the project. When staff determined that the project needed to change course, Ms. Rouse was flexible and adaptive. She came to meetings with attorneys in our office prepared and well-versed in the research. There were no concerns regarding her work ethic or the quality of her product.

The research that Ms. Rouse conducted has helped to paint a picture of the national landscape concerning best practices for older youth. This will aid our attorneys in advocating for the best interests of their clients on a daily basis. It will also serve to inform our office's larger systemic advocacy, seeking to change the policies, procedures and practices surrounding the issue of emancipation. A nonprofit such as the Children's Law Center simply does not have the time and resources to dedicate to this sort of in-depth analysis without the benefit of students like Ms. Rouse.

I have heard countless compliments from the Children's Law Center staff regarding their interactions with Ms. Rouse this summer. We were lucky to have her and are grateful that Equal Justice America provided such an opportunity. If you have any additional questions regarding Ms. Rouse or her performance over the course of the summer, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Fordyce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Betsy Fordyce  
DU Law Child Advocacy Practicum Director  
Director of Appellate Advocacy