

August 25, 2015

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I have now begun my second year at Loyola Law School, and as I resume the frenetic pace of my academic life, I cannot help but think back to how differently I felt during my first year of law school. Although I knew that I wanted to end my year with an ability to pursue a worthwhile public interest internship, I am now starting this year with a renewed sense of purpose for the type of impactful work I can have on my community. I have my internship with Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County to thank for this.

My internship endowed me with a deeper understanding of the challenges that public interest attorneys face when representing clients with a variety of legal issues. More specifically, I learned that a good attorney not only tries to address the specific type of legal issue that an indigent client may be asking about, but any other issue with which the attorney can assist. This is the reason why my internship evolved into both an exercise in health consumer law and housing law.

I started my internship with NLS's Health Consumer Center, where I focused mainly on researching issues related to health insurance coverage and medical debt alleviation practices for our clients. One of our clients, a child from a low income family, required an extensive, medically necessary procedure which his dental provider refused to charge to his state insurance dental plan. The Staff Attorney, Gerson Sorto, assigned me to research the child's rights under the state dental plan. The plan did in fact afford the child coverage for the procedure, in addition to any other adjunctive procedures required for the child's condition. I was happy to know that this exact research was used in communicating the child's rights to the health provider.

In addition, I interviewed and provided pro per assistance to many litigants as part of NLS' weekly medical debt clinic in Boyle Heights. One of our litigants, a young dental student, could not obtain the financing she needed for her education because of an unpaid medical debt her health provider failed to inform her of years prior. I researched the matter, and found that although the medical debt was valid, she did qualify for a charity care program which would allow her to pay off her debt without affecting her ability to finance her education. She has pursued enrollment into this program and is now continuing school.

While working in the Health Consumer Center, I was approached by another Staff Attorney, Shoshana Krieger, who also represented indigent litigants who came to NLS for representation with housing law issues. She offered me the opportunity to contribute to the discovery proceedings in a forcible detainer action. In this case, our client, a single mother, was being evicted by her landlord, who alleged that she was a squatter and never had rights to live on the premises, even though she had been living there for over four years. I catalogued and searched through various discovery documents and other pieces of evidence to find anything that might suggest that the landlord knew of and recognized our client's tenancy. As we found more and more documents that established a timeline of our client's presence on the premises, the court allowed a stay of the action, which has afforded our client the opportunity to remain in her home while litigation continues.

It was precisely these types of victories that motivated me to pursue an internship with NLS. I knew that the attorneys at NLS would afford me real opportunities to contribute directly to the alleviation of serious legal issues. What I find even more rewarding is the fact that I could help people who felt the burden of their legal issues even more greatly than others due to their indigent status.

What's more, I have come to develop an even greater respect for the type of legal prowess and dedication that the attorneys at NLS exhibited in every case they worked on. At this point in time, I really do have a better understanding of the type of attorney I want to be, and I have this internship to thank for that. For these reasons, I really want to extend my most sincere appreciation to Equal Justice America for not only funding my internship, but also allowing me to be part of a fellowship that values this type of dedication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gustavo Cubias II', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gustavo Cubias II
Loyola Law School Class of 2017