

August 22, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for making my summer of service at the Child Advocacy Law Clinic at the University of Michigan School of Law possible. I am a mother of young children and working with no compensation was not an option, yet I had a strong desire to continue to work in Public Interest law, and specifically, child welfare law, which has been my clear focus since beginning law school. It is a challenging area of law that serves clients at vulnerable chapters of their lives. The clients I served this summer were no exception. This summer, I primarily served two types of clients.

The first type of client I served was children in foster care. I represented these children as their Lawyer-Guardian ad Litem (L-GAL). In one case, I was able to advocate for a non-verbal autistic client to have the state provide an iPad for him to use at his residential facility. This young man is full of joy, but needs consistency to thrive. His school uses an iPad and visual communication program to help him communicate his needs. Unfortunately, my client did not have the same type of device available for his use at his residence. By advocating for the same device to be provided at his residence, my client now has consistent access to the communication program. This gave him both a tool and the consistency he needs to continue his growth.

Another example of my work as an L-GAL was advocating for the return of three children who had been removed from their parents. This was a happy case of parents who heeded the wake-up call, proactively participated in services, and made it clear that their children were their priority. My young clients were able to tell me that they want to return to their parents and they got a kick out of being my boss.

The second type of client I served was relative caregivers of children. Most of these cases involved guardianships. Two of them were appeals of the denial of guardianship subsidies. I worked closely with the caseworkers and the clients to craft more precise answers for the required paperwork. We successfully received the subsidy in one case and are still waiting in the other case. The approved subsidy will help our client, the children's grandmother, afford to care for the children while living off her social security check. Our client is providing a stable loving home for the children and just needed some financial help to provide for the children. I was able to secure that help for her.

Additionally, I helped another grandmother get a guardianship over three grandchildren. In this case, the parents, who struggled with drug addiction, were not able to provide a stable home for the children. The grandmother had been the primary caregiver of the children for at least five

years and wanted legal protection for this role. In the past, the parents had taken the kids and placed them in unsafe environments. The guardianship we obtained will prevent the parents from leaving with the children, but does not terminate the parental rights. This is a middle ground that allows for stability for the children while leaving open the possibility that the parents may be able to have a productive relationship with their children in the future.

These are some of the success stories from this past summer. Unfortunately, in this area of the law there is also a lot of heartbreak and failure. Despite these challenges, my work this summer has confirmed my desire to continue serving clients in this area of the law. I am now pursuing fellowship applications to fund this type of work after I graduate law school. The funding that Equal Justice America provided me was key to making this summer a possibility. Without funding, I would have had to seek paid employment outside of child welfare work. Thank you for your tireless work in raising funds to support law students like myself who are dedicated to careers in public interest work.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Rogers', followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that extends to the right.

Lauren Rogers
Michigan State University College of Law
May 2018, expected graduation

**EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA –
Fellowship Questionnaire**

**YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE & LETTER MUST BE EMAILED
BY AUGUST 31, 2017 TO:**

KATIE@EQUALJUSTICEAMERICA.ORG

(Your supervisor should send his/her letter to the same email address.)

Part I

In the form of a 1-2 page(s) typed letter addressed to Dan Ruben, Executive Director at Equal Justice America, please summarize your Fellowship experience.

- **MAKE SURE A SIGNIFICANT PART OF YOUR LETTER FOCUSES ON THE CLIENTS YOU SERVED, THEIR STORIES, HOW YOU WERE ABLE TO HELP THEM AND WHAT IT MEANT TO YOU.**
- Under your signature on the letter, please indicate your law school and anticipated year of graduation.
- Do **NOT** include your address or email address on your letter as some of the letters we receive from EJA Fellowship recipients are used on our website, in our Annual Reports and are sent to donors and potential donors.
- Letters should be sent as a Word document only!

Part II

Please have your supervisor write a 1-2 page letter, also addressed to Dan Ruben, evaluating your fellowship.

- Your supervisor should send this letter to us separately by email.
- Your supervisor should send his/her letter on letterhead and as a Word document only!

Part III Please circle the answers to the questions below.

1) How would you rate your overall Fellowship experience?

- ☒ a) Outstanding
- b) Very worthwhile
- c) Worthwhile
- d) Fair
- e) Disappointing

Comments

Excellent supervision, hands on learning,
real casework, huge difference in the client's lives.

2) In what areas of law does your organization primarily involve itself? Please circle all answers that apply.

- a) Housing
- b) Public Benefits
- c) Family Law
- d) Immigration Law
- e) Children's rights
- f) Consumer Law

☒ g) Other Child Welfare

Comments L-GAL & guardianship, relative caregivers

3) Approximately how many clients did you serve during the course of your fellowship? 25

REMINDER - PLEASE MAKE SURE A SIGNIFICANT PART OF YOUR LETTER FOCUSES ON THE CLIENTS YOU SERVED, THEIR STORIES, HOW YOU WERE ABLE TO HELP THEM AND WHAT IT MEANT TO YOU.

4) Circle below the activities that best describe how you spent most of your time. Please circle all answers that apply

- ☒ a) Interviewed clients Court
- ☒ b) Represented clients at Administrative Hearings
- ☒ c) Research and writing
- d) Community outreach
- e) Ran errands

☒ f) Other Visit clients at home

Comments _____

5) How would you describe the quality of the supervision and training you received?

- ☒ a) Outstanding
- b) Very Good
- c) Fair
- d) Poor
- e) There was no supervision or training

Comments _____

6) Has your experience affected the likelihood of your pursuing a career in poverty law or some other area of public interest law?

- ☒ a) I am now completely committed to a career in public interest law.
- b) I am more likely to pursue a public interest law career.
- c) The experience had no affect on my likelihood of pursuing a public interest law career.
- d) I am less likely to pursue a public interest law career.
- e) There is no way I will ever work in the public interest again.

Comments _____

7) Is there anything that could have been done by Equal Justice America or by your sponsoring organization to improve your fellowship?

Keep up the good work!

Name

Lauren Rogers

Law School

MSU College of Law

Legal Services Organization

U of M

Child Advocacy Law Clinic

Date

8/30/2017