

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

My summer fellowship at LifeSpan was an incredible experience that gave me the skills I will need as a public interest attorney. Their internship set-up allowed me to gain the most possible knowledge; all twelve attorneys could give me assignments so I was able to learn several different styles and approaches, as well as working on many different types of assignments. The most important two skills I learned during the summer were client interaction and litigation, both of which will help me immensely with my career.

I had the opportunity to observe and then conduct client meetings. The attorneys modeled for me the ways to empower their clients, domestic violence survivors, through these meetings. One attorney said to a client who was questioning her actions, "You're the expert in your life. Only you know what's best for you!" I'll never forget that line and how it helped the client gain autonomy as she took steps to divorce her abusive husband.

I also had the opportunity to observe and then use litigation skills over the summer. At the beginning of the summer, I was introduced to family law by preparing default divorce documents, but by a few weeks later, I was able to see how those documents worked in practice by conducting default divorces in court. In another instance, I conducted research on a disputed legal topic in our case, and then used oral advocacy to argue why my research meant a positive outcome for our client. This was definitely one of the most useful experiences because many of the opposing parties in our cases are pro se, but in that case I had the opportunity to argue against an opposing counsel. The judge ended up ruling the way we wanted, so I had a taste of my first courtroom victory.

Additionally, I had the opportunity to litigate an order of protection case on behalf of a high school student. When her ex-boyfriend showed up at the hearing, I had to use my client interaction skills to make sure she still wanted to go forward and prepare her for testifying despite her fear of him. I asked her direct examination questions, and had to respond to the judge's multiple interruptions. The judge ended up ruling in our favor, and the client was extremely relieved that her ex-boyfriend would no longer be able to harass her.

These skills, client interaction and litigating, are essential to my future career plans, which are advocating for sexual assault survivors. I am extremely grateful I had the opportunity to work at LifeSpan through Equal Justice America's generous fellowship. The attorneys at LifeSpan were outstanding and taught me so much, but most importantly, gave me the chance to learn how to think on my feet in court, which is an important, lifelong skill for a lawyer.

Very truly yours,

Myka Held
Georgetown University Law Center, 2015



September 4, 2014

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

Dear Dan:

Thank you for awarding an Equal Justice America Summer 2014 Fellowship to Myka Held. Life Span Center for Legal Services & Advocacy and the clients that we serve benefitted immensely from Myka's dedication, drive and commitment during her ten week internship. Myka enthusiastically took on research assignments from various attorneys in the office, met with clients, drafted pleadings and used her student practice license to represent survivors of domestic violence, in both divorce cases and civil order of protection cases.

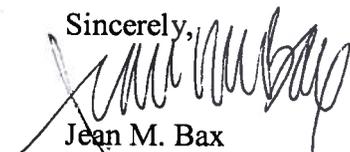
After researching a particular issue, Myka successfully argued and advocated for a client and obtained a favorable ruling from the judge on behalf of that client in a divorce proceeding. This is commendable on its own; however, Myka achieved this success against a licensed attorney who represented the opposing party.

Additionally, Myka represented a high school student in a hearing for a civil order of protection. Myka eased the client's fears about testifying, supported the client in determining whether or not the client wished to proceed with the case and persuaded the judge to grant the civil order of protection. I have great confidence in her future as a litigator on behalf of survivors of sexual assault.

Myka was thorough in completing assignments and eager for additional work. Myka worked well with the entire staff of the agency and was a motivated and conscientious worker who inspired trust in colleagues and clients alike.

Life Span Center for Legal Services & Advocacy was fortunate to host Myka as an Equal Justice America Summer Fellow.

Sincerely,



Jean M. Bax
Attorney at Law