

August 31, 2014

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I write to give a brief evaluation of my summer fellowship at the Eastbay Community Law Center (EBCLC) in Berkeley, CA providing legal services to a number of low-income residents in Alameda County while working in the Health Practice. This was in large part due to the funding provided by the Equal Justice America Fellowship.

While working at EBCLC I was able to get hands-on experience in many of the different aspects of providing direct services for clients, ranging from client intakes to full representation at an administrative hearing.

I represented clients ranging in ages of 18 months to 50 years old and each of them came in with their own unique set of obstacles that I was able to help them with. One of the most compelling stories was my second client; he was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS within the last year and soon after was diagnosed with Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy (PML), a rare degenerative brain disorder that rapidly decreases your motor functioning capacities among other things. Many people diagnosed with PML often die within a year of being diagnosed, so it was no surprise that when I met with my client he was already in a wheelchair and barely able to sign his name on authorization forms at the office. Before being diagnosed with PML, my client had two jobs and had his own apartment in Oakland, CA. By the time he came to the office, he was living with his mother who attended to him around the clock. She was worried that there would not be enough money to pay for his medical expenses so she came to us so that we can help file his disability claim with Social Security.

Due to my client's medical conditions, his application was eligible for expedited processing with Social Security Administration (SSA); I was able to write a letter on his behalf requesting that the field office and SSA flag his case and process the claim as soon as possible. As a result, my client's application was approved within a month, a very short amount of time considering a normal disability application takes around 6 months for it to be processed by the SSA.

I was also able to advocate for a toddler and his mother's claim for disability on his behalf. The child was born prematurely weighing 1200 grams, the cut off for presumptive disability for premature babies. Had he weighed a fraction of a gram less than he was at birth, he would have automatically qualified for SSI for at least the first year of his life, instead his mother had spent the past 18 months in and out of the doctor's office trying to

provide the healthiest environment for her son. By the time I came to work at EBCLC this client's claim had gone through the initial and appeal stage of the claim process, so I had the opportunity to represent the child and his mother at an administrative hearing in Downtown Oakland, CA. At the hearing I was able to examine the mother, a social worker assigned to monitor the development of my client, and a medical expert. Unfortunately, the case has not been closed at this point but I am confident that it will be settled in favor of my client.

I would like to thank Equal Justice America for providing funding for my summer internship, without it I would not have been able to dedicate the majority of my time as an advocate for those living in the underserved communities of Alameda County, CA.

Sincerely,

Raul Galan
Brooklyn Law School
Class of 2016



September 8, 2014

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

Re: Fellowship Evaluation for Raul Galan

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I write to share my evaluation of Raul Galan's summer fellowship with the East Bay Community Law Center's Health Practice.

Under my supervision, Mr. Galan provided full representation to clients referred from Children's Hospital Oakland and also from local HIV/AIDS medical providers. Mr. Galan advocated for numerous clients in a variety of ways, including representation of a toddler at an administrative hearing for social security disability benefits. Mr. Galan wrote and submitted a brief on behalf of our client and had the opportunity of examining witnesses during the hearing.

Mr. Galan also conducted weekly client interviews and legal assessments of potential clients. He presented these cases to the team at case rounds, where we were able to further assess each client's situation.

Mr. Galan also wrote several cover letters requesting expedited processing for disability benefits from social security for patients with severe medical conditions; one of which was successful and the other is currently pending.

It was a pleasure working with Mr. Galan. I appreciated his enthusiasm for learning, and his clients benefitted from having a strong and compassionate advocate.

Please contact me at erinle@ebclc.org or (510) 548-4040, ext. 312 if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Le", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erin Le
Staff Attorney & Clinical Supervisor