

August 11, 2015

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I have been an active volunteer with the Center for Disability and Elder Law (CDEL) since October 2014. When I first became involved with CDEL, I was instantly amazed and inspired by the legal services they provided for the disabled and elderly community. Through the Equal Justice America Fellowship, I was not only able to be part of the CDEL mission, but I was able to understand the significant impact CDEL has had on so many lives.

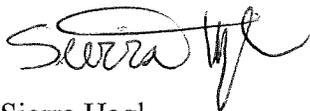
Each and everyday the Center for Disability and Elder Law provides legal services to low income seniors and disabled persons. For instance, at CDEL volunteers and attorneys help clients, at weekly Senior Center Initiative (SCI) workshops, complete their power of attorney forms for healthcare, property, and living wills. These workshops enable clients to gain control of their lives even after they are no longer able to make decisions for themselves in the future. At CDEL's (Senior Legal Assistance Clinics) SLAC appointments, which are conveniently located near a client's residence, volunteers and attorneys finalize Simple Wills, Transfer on Death Instruments (TODI), and interview potential clients who seek representation on debt collections, evictions, simple divorce, consumer fraud, and property rights. CDEL also has a help desk at the Daley Center in downtown Chicago, IL, where volunteers and attorneys help clients everyday file for Adult Guardianship Pro Se. At CDEL's main office, volunteers and attorneys actively work on current cases while also interviewing new potential clients. If CDEL cannot help a candidate directly, then CDEL will find organizations that are better able to help the candidate and will refer that candidate to those organizations. As can be seen, CDEL does everything possible to reach as much seniors and disabled persons in the community.

During my fellowship with CDEL, I was able to take part in each and every one of the many aspects of CDEL that I described above. For example, at one of the SCI workshops that was located in a predominantly Chinese community I was able to help various clients, who did not speak English, complete Power of Attorney forms for healthcare, property, and living will with the help of an interpreter. For one of CDEL's SLAC appointments, I drafted a small estate affidavit for a client who lost her husband and was trying to get her finances in order. I also traveled to one of the SLAC appointments to help a client complete, sign, and notarize her Last Will and Testament, which I drafted at CDEL's main office. On multiple occasions, I also volunteered at CDEL's help desk at the Daley Center. At the help desk I was able to help clients file for adult guardianship for their siblings, parents, children, and other loved ones. These four experiences were very meaningful because I was able to put what I learned in Law School into real life situations, help a handful of people in a significant way, and most importantly put a sense of comfort and security back into people's lives.

There are two cases that I worked on with the help of a CDEL attorney that were the most memorable. For instance, one of the clients that I helped was involved with an adverse possession case. My client had been in possession of a small piece of real property for at least seven years. The client invested a large sum of money into this property only to find out many years later that she did not legally own the property. With the help of a CDEL attorney, I filed an appearance and answer, so that we could later figure out a solution that would allow our client to obtain legal ownership of the property. This case was so memorable because it was an interesting case where I had the opportunity to help someone legally obtain a piece of property that she invested so much time and money in and help her relieve a significant amount of stress. Another case that was extremely memorable was a case where I helped a person deal with entrapment. In this case, I filed a motion to dismiss based on entrapment. After filing the motion to dismiss, the attorney that helped me with the case went to court and the Judge ruled in favor of our client. As a result, all of our client's charges were dropped and the case was dismissed. Our client was extremely grateful for our legal services, which was very meaningful because I was able to make a difference in this person's life.

CDEL is not just a law firm; CDEL is a place where seniors and disabled persons can turn to for relief, security, and closure. Clients can turn to CDEL for relief because CDEL will do everything in its power to give the proper help and legal services necessary. Clients can turn to CDEL for security because CDEL provides various services that help people gain control of their lives legally even after they have lost control physically and emotionally in the future. Clients can turn to CDEL for closure because CDEL is able to help those in the most difficult situations such as death, close that chapter of their lives and start fresh. Most importantly, CDEL is a place that guides people to the end of a long and sometimes painful journey, reassuring them that efforts are being made toward a solution. I would have not been able to be part of this wonderful experience at CDEL if it was not for the Equal Justice America Fellowship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sierra Hagl". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "S".

Sierra Hagl  
DePaul University College of Law, 2017



## Center for Disability & Elder Law

August 20, 2015

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you very much for allowing the Center for Disability & Elder Law (CDEL) to host Sierra Hagl's fellowship for Summer, 2012. Ms. Hagl began volunteering at CDEL earlier this year, conducting client new client screenings and we were thrilled when she was granted an Equal Justice America fellowship. I was Ms. Hagl's direct supervisor and coordinated her fellowship this summer. I was impressed with her work and her dedication to CDEL while she was with us this summer.

Since 1984, CDEL, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) legal service organization, has been dedicated to serving the legal needs of low-income residents of Cook County who are over the age of 60 and/or those with a permanent disability. As a volunteer-based legal service, CDEL is always looking for law student fellows/externs to support us in this mission. We are pleased to work with partners such as Equal Justice America in providing opportunities for deserving law school students to obtain practical legal experience while still in law school.

Ms. Hagl was a prominent part of our summer program. Ms. Hagl worked on a number of legal matters at CDEL, including assisting with the representation of low income tenants in landlord/tenant actions, working with clients in collection matters, working on a complex title issue with City of Chicago, and drafting advance directives for low income seniors. Ms. Hagl worked with CDEL on a number of projects, including CDEL's Senior Center Initiative (SCI), Senior Tax Opportunity Program (STOP), and Pro Se Adult Guardianship Help Desk located at the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Thank you, once again, for allowing us to host Ms. Hagl's fellowship. We look forward to working with Equal Justice America in the future. If you have any questions, please feel free contact me.

With regards,

Thomas C. Wendt  
Legal Director