

August 25, 2016

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you and Equal Justice America for providing funding for my time as a Summer 2016 law clerk with Disability Rights Texas in Austin, Texas. Disability Rights Texas is a nonprofit organization that fights to protect the rights of individuals with a broad range of disabilities. Disability Rights Texas (DRTx) not only provides direct legal representation to clients, but also is involved in advocacy and policy initiatives. This summer, I had the opportunity to experience a variety of these aspects of DRTx.

Most of the work I did involved indirectly serving clients. However, I was able to visit several clients. On these visits, I had the chance to observe how my supervisor interacted with clients in the foster care system. On our first visit, we visited a client in a juvenile treatment center who expressed her frustrations with living there. I listened to my supervisor explain to her the situation and what she needed to do to minimize her time at the center. I could hear the frustration in her voice, but also saw how happy she was when she talked about what she hoped to do after she returned home. She asked us how attending UT is and shared her desire to attend college. It was meaningful to know how important a simple conversation with a client can be. I could tell it was important to her that we took the time to visit and listened to her concerns. We also visited clients, who were non-verbal, with the main purpose of ensuring that the client was healthy and not suffering abuse or neglect at the facility he or she was at. One of my favorite moments was seeing how happy one of the clients was when he got to throw around a football with our supervisor.

Furthermore, I was able to work on projects that indirectly allowed me to serve clients. One such project that stood out to me was writing a portion of a due process complaint for a child receiving special education services who was often isolated by the school district. Although I was unable to participate in a phone call with the client's parents, my supervisor informed me of their conversation and their concerns. Hearing about these concerns made me appreciate even more the significance of the work we were doing to help them.

Working with Disability Rights Texas only reminded me again why I love public interest work and reaffirmed that I know I want to become a public interest attorney. Thank you again for all the support Equal Justice America provided me with this summer.

Respectfully,

Reema Ali
J.D. Candidate, Class of 2018
The University of Texas School of Law

Via Email Only

August 10, 2016

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

Re: Evaluation of Reema Ali's Fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben:

As Reema Ali's co-supervisor this past summer, I am happy to tell you that Reema's fellowship was a great success. Reema's work was uniformly excellent, and she was extremely interested in and enthusiastic about her projects, our clients, our mission, and public interest law. Our attorneys and our clients derived great benefit from Reema's time with us this summer. Reema worked on about a dozen projects this summer, including:

Drafting a due process complaint (special education);

Researching and drafting a memorandum on school and transportation options for homeless students with disabilities;

Researching and drafting portions of an amicus brief that was filed with the Texas Supreme Court concerning an employment disability-discrimination issue;

Researching and drafting memorandums on: statute of limitations (tolling for service members), successful Section 504 and ADA cases (special education), and sheltered workshops (including proposing language to be added to the statute governing such workshops); and

Researching and drafting case summaries for the special education team.

I believe that Reema has a bright future in public interest law. Based on our experience with Reema and the other EJA fellow, and those fellows who have preceded her, Disability Rights Texas would welcome the opportunity to host other fellows in the future.

Thank you again for making these fellowships available. I believe they are invaluable to both the student and the organization. If you have any other questions, please email or call me at 512.407.2745.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Hofer", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Hofer
Senior Litigation Attorney