

Nicholas DeSantis

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

August 30, 2017

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to work for Community Justice, Inc. this summer and pursue my interest in representing low-income individuals. At Community Justice, I was exposed to a number of different areas of law, including family law and foreclosure issues. My summer internship affirmed my desire to represent low-income clients in the future.

The area I was probably most exposed to was family law. I got to research a number of issues I had studied in my family law course the previous semester, and I was amazed at how much depth was involved in topics that we may have covered in 30 minutes of class time. Additionally, I was able to see first-hand how the policies we learned about in class can dramatically affect people's lives. For example, when we learned how difficult it is in Wisconsin to change a custody and placement order within 2 years, it seemed that this was unquestionably good policy. However, I saw an instance at Community Justice where our client was unable to change an order due to this 2-year limitation, and in my opinion it would have been best for the order to be changed. This doesn't mean I don't agree with the 2-year rule, but it does serve as a reminder that policies like these should not be taken lightly.

I had the opportunity to work on a number of different cases for short periods of time, but I was also grateful that I got to work on a couple of cases for long periods of time and get to know the cases fairly well. One such case was a divorce. There were no children involved, but there was significant disagreement about how the property should be divided, mainly in regard to credit cards debts and student loans. I had a couple of assignments on this case that involved examining and summarizing large amounts of financial information. This gave me a much better understanding of the financial aspects of divorce, and allowed me to understand how each divorce case can have completely different dynamics. I also saw that even when there are little to no assets involved, property division will still significantly impact the parties' lives for years to come.

Another case I worked on was a divorce that involved a complex foreclosure issue. I researched whether or not foreclosure could occur under our client's complex circumstances, but I was also able to use the law in action approach emphasized by the University of Wisconsin to suggest better solutions to the problem. After examining the

facts, it turned out that our client simply needed more time to be able to sell the home, which would be a more positive solution for both him and the bank. After doing the background research, it turned out speaking with the bank and [discussing] the issue cooperatively was the best solution.

I am grateful to Equal Justice America for giving me the opportunity to work for Community Justice, Inc. and provide legal services to low-income clients.

Sincerely,

/s/ Nicholas DeSantis
University of Wisconsin

Hello Katie,

I was Nick's supervisor at CJI this summer. He was one of two full time law student clerks. He did a variety of legal work, including legal research and writing, drafting, client intake, general law firm support for our attorneys, and in court support during trials and hearings. Our firm works with low and moderate income individuals and is a nonprofit, but most of our clients pay for legal fees on an hourly basis. Law clerks help reduce costs for our clients because we don't charge the clients for their work. Nick was very helpful and efficient and did a great job on all of his tasks. One project he worked on was to research a legal issue and draft a brief for a client. It seemed likely that the case would settle but it was not clear until the day before the brief was due. The client was able to save considerable fees thanks to Nick's work on the brief that did not need to be billed to the client. The case did settle and the brief was not filed but I would certainly have needed to spend considerable time on the brief due to the looming deadline if I had not had Nick's assistance. Nick worked with all seven of the attorneys on a wide range of legal issues, including family and criminal.

Nick was also always enthusiastic and worked well with our other full time clerk, volunteers, and staff in our office. We were so happy to have him and really miss his work at the firm. Thank you for providing funding so that we could have him for the summer. We so appreciate the funding for our law clerks, it is so valuable to our clients. If you have any further questions please contact me. My direct line is 608-442-3003 if you would like to contact me via phone.

Jennifer

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