

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

Re: My 2014-2015 EJA Fellowship Experience

Dear Mr. Ruben,

My name is William Clayman and I am a graduating 3L at the Yale Law School. I received an Equal Justice America fellowship for the 2014-2015 school year and am writing to thank you for your support of me, the Yale Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) Project, and the New Haven Legal Assistance Association (NHLAA). With the guidance of NHLAA, the Yale TRO Project staffs an office year-round at the New Haven Family Courthouse, guiding victims of domestic violence through the temporary restraining order application process—a process that many applicants find daunting, confusing, and unmanageable without the help of the TRO Project volunteers. Each year, the TRO Project utilizes the support of dozens of Yale Law students to assist hundreds of women, men, and children (many of whom come from low-income neighborhoods in the New Haven community) seeking relief from domestic violence. Through the generous support of Equal Justice America's fellowship, I have been able to help these victims of abuse firsthand. Additionally, and on a more personal level, this fellowship has allowed me to take part in the most rewarding experience of my law school career.

As a student director of the TRO Project, I took on a number of tasks over the past academic year. I helped the other directors organize the day-to-day workings of the office, I took part in recruitment and training of new volunteers, and I continued a recently-developed tradition of inviting different legal scholars and practitioners working with family law and domestic violence organizations to host lunch talks open to the greater law school community. Aside from these administrative and community-building tasks, I've worked directly to improve the resources available to victims of domestic violence by staffing the TRO office at the New Haven courthouse.

While staffing the office, I provided direct service to clients by assisting them in completing TRO applications, guiding them around the courthouse, and working with marshals to have their TROs served on respondents. Over the past three years, I've worked with dozens of applicants coming from all walks of life. Most recently, I worked with an older woman who had been dealing with an abusive former partner for over a decade. The abuse began when the two lived together in Florida, and she had travelled all the way to Connecticut in an effort to escape it, but to no avail. We spoke for over an hour about her abusive relationship and her troubles accessing the appropriate means of relief from the legal system, and I helped her successfully apply for a TRO against her former partner in New Haven. While talking with her was a welcome change of pace from the often tedious and isolated academic environment fostered in law school, it represented far more than just that. It provided me with an invaluable opportunity to open the doors to legal aid for someone in desperate need. I hope that my presence in the

office left her feeling more secure in the resources available to her should she ever find herself in need of them again, and I am grateful that I have been able to help applicants like her with the support of the Equal Justice America fellowship. The work that I did through the fellowship will undoubtedly stay with me for years to come.

Thank you so much for your support,

William Clayman  
Yale Law School, Class of 2015