

September 15, 2007

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben,

I would like to thank you for granting me the Equal Justice America Fellowship for my public interest work in the summer of 2007. I worked at both the Cook County Public Guardian's Office and the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic.

Both experiences were especially fulfilling. At the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic, tens of clients would come in daily seeking same-day Emergency Protection Orders. I interviewed potential clients and prepared affidavits and petitions for daily hearings. Although Emergency Protection Orders are temporary, an Emergency Protection Order was oftentimes the first act of strength victims took against their long-time abuser. I had the opportunity to assist, encourage, and stand with such clients through this difficult first step--a step that determined the future of many.

I especially loved my work at the Office of the Cook County Public Guardian, where I worked with seven lawyers who alone represented over 780 abused or neglected children. It was incredible to learn how much an individual could do to better so many aspects of a child's future. The lawyers I worked with advocated for getting children into good homes, into schools, helped teen mothers care for or reunite with their babies, and expunged juvenile criminal records that prevented teens from getting jobs. I gained an extraordinary amount of legal experience--I wrote motions, memorandums, and arbitrated between caseworkers and teens. The lawyers I worked with ensured I received as many diverse legal assignments as possible. Additionally, they invited me to visit clients with them, attend court hearings, attend meetings, and training sessions. I particularly remember my conversation with the lead attorney on Calendar 10 who, while having worked at the office for over 18 years, was still so inspired by a standard training session the office provided. Each and every lawyer on Calendar 10 of the Public Guardian's Office served as a great mentor and welcomed me to their team. Never in my life had I worked with *such* sincere professionals, who with every minute spent in the office, sincerely and fervently worked towards bettering another's life.

Again, I thank you so much for granting me the opportunity to work with these two offices this past summer through your funding. Through this work, I have learned my interests and obtained a background in areas of law that I earnestly hope to contribute to in the future.

Sincerely,

Yusra Gomaa  
University of Illinois College of Law  
Juris Doctor Candidate, 2009  
The University of Chicago  
Bachelors of Arts, 2006