

March 9, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to thank you for generously funding my internship at the Asian Outreach Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services during the summer of 2012. This summer I was able to gain experience in the areas of employment law, family law, immigration, and welfare law. I conducted weekly client intakes and was able to directly interact with over twenty-five clients whose primary language was Cantonese, a dialect of Chinese. Over the span of eleven weeks, my biggest accomplishments included: (1) preparing and providing full legal representation to a client at an unemployment insurance hearing (2) helping clients receive back their welfare benefits from the Department of Transitional Assistance and (3) doing legal research for a class action suit against an employer for wage theft and other illegal employment acts. My internship at the Asian Outreach Unit provided me broad insight to a number of civil legal issues that the Asian immigrant population faces and the continuous need for bilingual attorneys and legal advocates in the immigrant community.

My time at the Asian Outreach Unit also reaffirmed my original decision of going to law school, which is to be able to serve the low-income population better and to help bridge the social and economic gaps that exist in our society. There is one client that I feel truly exemplifies the importance of having a nonprofit legal aid. The client came to us because the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) had terminated his welfare benefits for failing to complete his verification interview. The client did not speak English and had limited mobility. Over the course of nine weeks, I acted as a liaison between DTA and the client. I had to advocate for my client and demand that DTA provide reasonable accommodations for my client including having them conduct the interview by phone and also an interpreter. Without the help of a legal aid, my client may still be struggling to receive the welfare benefits that he is legally entitled to.

During my internship, two staff members from the unit took us on a tour of Chinatown in Boston, MA. On a street, they pointed out to us how families use to post their surname in front of the apartment complexes that they lived. This was done so that new immigrants from China could find their family name and seek help from individuals who shared the same surname as them. Today, I would like to think that the Asian Outreach Unit of Greater Boston Legal Services serves as a common family name for all Asian immigrants to come and seek help for their legal rights. Thank you again for generously financing my summer internship at the Asian Outreach Unit of Greater Boston Legal Services and helping me give back to the Asian and public-interest community.

Sincerely,

Ellen Emily Lau
Northeastern University School of Law
Class of 2013



GREATER BOSTON
LEGAL SERVICES
...and justice for all

August 20, 2012

SENT BY EMAIL TO: katie@equaljusticeamerica.org

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

RE: Ellen Emily Lau Evaluation

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Ellen Emily Lau (“Emily”) was a legal intern in the Asian Outreach Unit of Greater Boston Legal Services from May 29, 2012 to August 14, 2012. The Asian Outreach Unit provides free legal services to Asian immigrants in the areas of immigration, family, employment, welfare, and housing law. I am the managing attorney of the Asian Outreach Unit, and I was Emily’s primary supervisor. She also worked with two other attorneys and a paralegal. Emily was an outstanding legal intern, and consistently performed her duties in a highly professional manner.

During her internship, Emily performed a variety of job duties. She conducted weekly community based intake interviews at a Chinese immigrant workers center in Cantonese (a Chinese dialect). She performed a substantial amount of legal research in the areas of bankruptcy, wage and hour, preemption, summary judgment, and immigration law. Emily served scores of individual clients. In her most significant cases, she helped two elderly Chinese couples win reinstatement of their welfare benefits, and she represented a restaurant worker in his administrative hearing to determine eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits.

Emily is a hard worker and performed all assignments, big and small, with a high level of professionalism. She came in early and stayed late if necessary to complete her assignments. She has strong legal research and writing skills. In support of a motion for summary judgment, she researched case law in multiple jurisdictions, and provided a summary of all cited cases. Her research was thorough, and her writing is well organized and clear. Emily was diligent in her performance of her duties, whether the advocacy needed was informal negotiations with the welfare department or an administrative hearing before the unemployment office.

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Emily improved her Cantonese language skills and showed perseverance in overcoming barriers to serving her immigrant clients. Although Cantonese is Emily's second language, and it was a challenge for her to communicate with her clients in Cantonese, Emily did her best to prepare for client communications. She studied potential vocabulary that commonly arises in our cases, practiced a script, and worked hard to develop a meaningful rapport with her clients. She was largely successful in her client communications, but when appropriate, Emily knew to ask for help.

Thank you very much for EJA's funding which enabled Emily to work at Greater Boston Legal Services this summer. Emily was productive member of the Asian Outreach Unit, and she was a pleasure to work with. I would welcome the opportunity to work with her again. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 617-603-1720, or cmark@gbls.org.

Very truly yours,

/s/Cynthia Mark

Cynthia Mark
Managing Attorney
Asian Outreach Unit