

August 28, 2014

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to express my deepest gratitude to you and to Equal Justice America for funding my summer work with Atlanta Legal Aid Society (ALAS). With your support I was able to provide direct legal assistance to a number of low income individuals while working alongside some of the finest legal services attorneys in the country. This experience solidified my commitment to public interest work and would not have been possible without EJA's support.

This summer I worked in ALAS's General Law Unit. This unit primarily handles housing, consumer, and public benefits cases. From my first day with the unit I was struck by the passion and energy with which the attorneys and staff approached their cases. Their dedication to the clients and to the legal services mission served as a constant inspiration throughout my time with ALAS.

Though I was able to work with many clients this summer, my experience with one stands out as especially impactful. This particular client was a middle aged woman facing eviction from her subsidized housing complex for nonpayment of rent. Although the client had attempted to explain that her missed payment was due to a costly family hardship, she was ignored by her landlord and served with an eviction complaint. When the client came to ALAS and showed us the complaint we noticed that the landlord had hired an eviction services company to prepare and file it with the court. We also noticed that the landlord had included some hidden fees in the costs it was asking our client to pay. Both of these practices are illegal under state law, but rarely caught by tenants.

At our client's court hearing I was able to negotiate with the landlord's attorney and secured a consent agreement that allowed our client to keep her apartment for the small cost of a late fee, hundreds of dollars less than the landlord had demanded from her. A few weeks later, I referred our client to a private attorney who was in the process of identifying potential plaintiffs for a class action suit against the company that had filed the eviction complaint in our client's case.

Handling this case gave me invaluable insight into the unfair and deceptive practices that plague low income tenants in major cities. Without the help of ALAS it is likely that our client, who did not have the money her landlord was demanding, would have been evicted and possibly become homeless. Meanwhile, her landlord would have profited from a high volume eviction practice that illegally employs contractors to serve complaints on often unsuspecting tenants. This experience reinforced my belief in the power of aggressive legal services attorneys and their ability to protect and assert the rights of vulnerable individuals against abusive practices.

I could not have asked for richer experience this summer. As I begin my legal career I will look back on my work with ALAS as having provided the foundation for a life-long dedication to protecting the rights of the less powerful. I would like to thank Equal Justice America for enabling me to embark on this journey.

Sincerely,

Fuery Hocking  
Georgia State University College of Law  
Class of 2015

Managing Attorney  
Anne E. Carder

# ATLANTA LEGAL AID SOCIETY, INC.

FULTON COUNTY OFFICE

General Law Unit

151 Spring Street, N.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-2097  
(404) 524-5811  
TDD / TTY (404) 577-3727  
Español (404) 377-5381  
Fax (404) 614-3997

Staff Attorneys  
Margaret Hayman  
J. Erik Heath  
T. Brian Green

Housing Hotline  
Margaret L. Kinnear, Manager  
Monica Y. Hood, Paralegal

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September 3, 2014

Direct Line  
(404) 614-3982

Katie Toman  
Equal Justice America  
Bldg. II, Ste. 204  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: *Fuery Hocking*

Dear Ms. Toman:

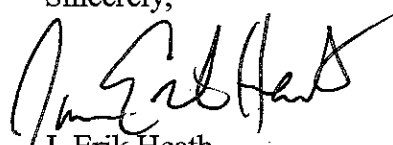
As you know, Fuery Hocking was an Equal Justice America fellow in our office over the past summer. During that time, Fuery's contribution to our office was enormous.

Because of Fuery's fine work product, we treated him more as a colleague than as an ordinary intern. He would help our attorneys screen new cases, help research complex issues, and he was even assigned his own caseload. One of his cases involved a court proceeding, where Fuery represented a client under my supervision in court and at mediation. Because of his representation, our elderly client was able to avoid homelessness and maintain her affordable housing.

Not only was Fuery's work of the highest quality, but he was also clearly enthusiastic about advocating for those who have no other voice. He was highly engaged in our staff meetings, and was always interested in discussing strategic ways to help get our clients some relief.

We are greatly appreciative of Equal Justice America's support of such outstanding students. It was truly a pleasure to have Fuery in our office, and we wish him the best.

Sincerely,



J. Erik Heath  
Staff Attorney