

August 27, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to thank you for awarding me the Equal Justice America Summer Fellowship as it allowed me to have a wonderful summer experience. I spent ten weeks working as an intern with Rappahannock Legal Services in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Rappahannock Legal Services, Inc is a non-profit corporation that provides free civil legal assistance to low-income individuals and families. A large percentage of their work is devoted to family law, particularly custody, support and domestic abuse cases.

During my time there I was paired with a supervising attorney, Amanda Reid. Working closely with Amanda was hugely beneficial as I got the chance to go to court on a regular basis and experience the legal process first hand. Getting involved with the cases also gave me some insight into the plight of individuals and families who are dealing with difficult and harrowing issues such as domestic violence. As I got to know the clients and their individual stories, I saw that many people feel neglected by the legal system and I became aware that it is often children whose interests are lost in a sea of legal issues. The experience I had consolidated my belief that the welfare of children, as the most vulnerable members of society, should be given prominence in all family issues.

One of the most exciting and valuable experiences I had while working at Rappahannock Legal services was representing clients at Virginia Employment Commission appeals. It amazed me to see what a difference legal representation can have to a person's case and I feel privileged to have helped some of the most disadvantaged members of the community navigate their way through what can be an intimidating and complex system.

My experience at Rappahannock Legal Services was both challenging and rewarding and I know that it will continue to have an impact on me in the future. The internship has strengthened my ambition is to work in the public sector, and I now hope to focus my career on providing legal assistance for underprivileged families. I am so grateful to Equal Justice America for giving me the opportunity to have such a worthwhile experience.

Sincerely,

Grainne Mc Ananey
Washington and Lee School of Law, Visiting Student 2008-2009