

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

August 24, 2012

Re: Program Evaluation and Reflection for Megan Evans, Legal Intern with the Equal Justice Center

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to work with the Equal Justice Center (EJC) in Austin, Texas this summer. This would not have been possible without the generosity of Equal Justice America. The EJC recovers unpaid wages for low-income workers and taught me the critical legal skills required for this task. Over the course of the summer, I was able to directly interact with 65 individuals, and was able to successfully close cases for seven of those people. I recovered \$18,000 wages, and reached a settlement agreement for \$8,000 to be paid over ten months. I also filed a lawsuit for over \$250,000 of unpaid wages and overtime. I researched and communicated with public entities and prime contractors regarding a prevailing wage claim for over \$50,000. The case is still ongoing, but several parties have expressed a willingness to settle. Finally, I was able to educate staff attorneys, community members, and colleagues on the J-1 visa program and the ways in which employers take advantage of visa holders and skirt labor law compliance.

I feel that my experience with one client really exemplifies the time I spent with the EJC. This summer I helped a deported Guatemalan client recover lost wages. He arrived in the country illegally, and accepted a job working at a Chinese restaurant being paid about \$500 twice a month for 70 hours of work a week. The restaurant owners claimed that he agreed to that wage which excused them from paying him minimum wage or overtime. In July, the supervising attorney instructed me to re-initiate negotiations after not speaking with the defendants for several months. We met the defendants at their restaurant, but negotiations did not go as planned. The defendants cried, lied about our client's employment, and claimed they were just confused by American law and didn't have the money to pay the claim. The highlight of the meeting was when the husband explained that he had medical problems, and proceeded to take off his shoe, and place his bare foot on the table so we could see for ourselves that it was swollen and may require amputation. Finally, they made a serious offer.

My excitement was only short lived when I realized that all of the phone numbers my client provided were disconnected. I sent a letter to his last known address, but it was returned unopened. I tried his emergency contact without success. I had no way to find him. My supervising attorney said we could accept the settlement on his behalf, but we needed to document a diligent effort to contact him first. I wanted to find him though so that we could

actually give him his money instead of keeping it in the trust account. However, I had no other leads, until another intern said his Guatemalan clients were telling them about a friend who may have been deported. Their friend was my client. I used this information and was able to have the Guatemalan Consulate confirm that he had left the country and provide contact information for him in Guatemala. We will be sending him his first payment in August.

This experience showed me that justice can happen as long as people are persistent. I am still amazed that we live in a country where I am able to secure unpaid wages for an undocumented worker after he has already been deported. The fact that justice can extend that far, and is enforced against employers who try to exploit others makes me proud. I am grateful for this experience and the chance to help another human being to be given what he is owed and to regain some of his dignity in the process. I had a life-changing summer because of Equal Justice America's generosity and dedication to providing legal aid to everyone.

On a more personal level, working for the Equal Justice Center this summer restored my faith in the idea that wanting to do good in the world is enough of a reason to practice the law. That desire to fight injustice provides the motivation to dedicate long hours to a case, to research new areas of law that may be beneficial to your clients, and to overcome the fear of public speaking and confrontation because you know you are speaking for someone who would otherwise not have a voice. When I was considering law school, I spoke with current law school students, graduates, and practicing attorneys. They all told me there are other ways to help people besides law school and not to pursue that path. It would only lead to long work hours, stress, and a mountain of student loan debt. I was called naïve to think that wanting to help people was enough. I entered law school with trepidation and concern that I had made a terrible choice that I would never recover from. Frequently I thought that I was a fool to give up a decent job with health benefits, to live 3 hours away from my fiancée, and to move back in with my parents. I let this fear dominate my first year of law school. However, this life-changing summer that Equal Justice America made possible reaffirmed my belief that my desire to be a zealous advocate does make a difference, and that passion to "equalize justice" plays a vital role in the legal system. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for providing me the opportunity to learn these valuable professional and personal lessons.

My Sincerest Thanks,



Megan Evans

South Texas College of Law, December 2013



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

RE: Performance Evaluation for Megan Evans, Summer EJA Fellowship Recipient

Dear Mr. Ruben:

The Equal Justice Center was very pleased with Ms. Evans' performance during her summer internship. As a non-profit, public interest law firm we benefit greatly from the work of our interns, but Ms. Evans' contribution to our work and our clients was particularly outstanding.

Throughout the duration of her training, Ms. Evans demonstrated a strong work ethic, inquisitive nature, and dedication to seeking resolutions. These characteristics, combined with her continued pursuit of new knowledge, made her a successful advocate. Her efforts to communicate with her clients in Spanish in order to make them feel more comfortable, speaks to her emphasis placed on client relationships. She maintained a level-headed approach and was not afraid to ask the difficult questions. Throughout the internship, Ms. Evans was exposed to a variety of cases and unique situations. She effectively managed detailed suits involving multiple clients and multiple defendants. I appreciated Ms. Evans' initiative and focus in her approach to daily tasks.

Ms. Evans' collaborated well with her supervising attorney, the staff attorneys, and her peers. She developed a close working relationship with her team member, another summer intern, and coordinated their workload to meet all deadlines. She maintained a professional attitude, treated others respectfully, and was punctual.

We are grateful to Equal Justice America for providing the funding to be able to support Ms. Evans this summer and contribute to mission. We highly recommend her to any organization, and would be happy to have her return to our organization.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Beardall". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bill Beardall
Attorney / Executive Director

