



Dan Ruben, Esq.
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
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Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explore immigration law by funding my fellowship this summer! For ten weeks, I worked at International House, a non-profit organization in Charlotte, NC, which serves low-income immigrants, refugees, and asylees. Even though I had grown up in Charlotte up until high school, I did not experience the expanse of Charlotte's diversity until I started working at International House. I've met people from all around the world, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Nepal to Cuba.

I was first drawn to International House through its mission to build an inclusive community in which all people feel welcome and have the tools necessary to succeed. Its law clinic helps with family reunification and proving stability for recent immigrants, whether it be helping a refugee bring the rest of her family to America or helping an asylee obtain an Employment Authorization Document. As someone who has lived in the same city for eighteen years of her life, I cannot even begin to imagine the experience of someone who was uprooted from the community they called home, because of war, conflict or atrocities. Before working at the law clinic, I had heard about the experiences of refugees and asylees, and even tutored children from refugee families, but I had never heard first-hand the experiences of a refugee.

Though the nature of our work is very streamlined and often does not require us hearing our client's complete story, I have always treasured the opportunity when I had it. I will never forget the man that I met during my first week of this fellowship. Prospective clients typically call our office to complete intakes, where we gather their background information to see how and if we can help them. There was a man who showed up to our office in person, and I was assigned to speak with him. After gathering the necessary information, this man told me his story. He was from Iran, a country where 99.4% are Muslim and the freedom of religion is not protected. He had become a Christian, and eagerly started a church, which quickly grew from a couple of people to more than a hundred. However, the Iranian government felt threatened by his Christian leadership, and put him in prison for a few months. Later, he was to serve another year-long sentence, but he managed to flee to Turkey. He had a little boy, his wife was pregnant, and he was hoping to get either his parents or his wife's parents to America to help take care of the newborn. However, this would not be possible until he becomes a U.S. citizen. Although we could not help him with his specific request, we are helping him with apply for green cards for him and his family, which is the first step. Meeting this man opened my eyes to how people in the world are truly persecuted for their faith, and I can easily take my freedom to practice my faith for granted.

Even though I was not able to prepare this man's green card application, I prepared green card applications for other clients. A green card allows one to live and work permanently in the United States, and provides the stability that refugees need after being placed in such unpredictable and strained circumstances.



Most of my time at International House has consisted of assisting in the evaluation of legal issues in cases accepted by the clinic, evaluating documents to be used as evidence in immigration cases, and preparing of cases for filing, including assessing evidence. Since I am not yet practicing attorney, I could not give legal advice, but I observed client consultations, completed research, and made copies of legal documents. Words cannot express my gratitude in you in investing in my future as an attorney who seeks to serve marginalized populations and “the least of these.” Thank you.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Chang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Chang
North Carolina Central School of Law
Juris Doctor Candidate, 2018