

October 12, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I spent this summer with Legal Advocates for Children and Youth (LACY), which is a program of The Law Foundation of Silicon Valley. LACY advances the legal rights of children and youth, empowering them to lead healthy and productive lives.

During the summer I often said that LACY is a “buffet of knowledge,” because I had the opportunity to learn about many of LACY’s issue areas: commercially sexually exploited children, special education, emancipation, guardianship, juvenile dependency, medical-legal partnership clinics, pregnant and parenting teens, and minor’s counsel for family law.

The two areas that I chose to focus on were special education and family law. In both areas I worked on one primary case that spanned the full summer, allowing me to get to know the clients and all of the details of the cases.

Special Education. I decided to start law school at age 38, having six children and a very full life, because my eight year old daughter has cerebral palsy. Our experience within the school system had been dismal so I wanted to make a meaningful difference for her and the other children in the special ed “system.” After a week at LACY, I realized that my daughter’s experience with the special education system was difficult, but nowhere near as egregious as the cases that come into LACY. My summer spent with LACY’s clients and the dedicated attorneys have made my determination to right the special education wrongs even stronger.

Family Law. I had the opportunity to work on a move-away case that was complicated by allegations of child sexual abuse, domestic violence, and a biased child custody evaluator. Developing a strategy to help a little girl move with her mother to a safer place was a rewarding, yet often heartbreaking, experience.

My time with LACY has solidified my commitment to public interest law and I’d like to thank Equal Justice America for the fellowship that made it possible.

My best,

Trisha Cobb Baker
Santa Clara Law
J.D. Candidate 2019