

ROBIN GRAY

August 29, 2015

Dan Ruben
Executive Director, Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road; Building II, Suite 204
Midlothian, VA 23112
Dear Mr. Ruben:

Working at Bet Tzedek has been a truly life changing experience. I have been looking forward to my career in law for some time and it was very engaging having the ability to learn about so much of the background during my first year of law school. However, law school cannot teach you everything you need to know about working with real clients and real judges on real time lines.

This summer truly put into perspective so much of what I had been learning all year. It was easy for me to take an idealistic vision of the law during my first year of law school. As crazy as it may seem, I really thought that any attorney would jump at the chance to represent any person who needed help and that those people—that justice—would ultimately prevail. The reality is that the system we have to work within has many failures and many shortcomings, and that helping people to achieve justice is hard work but work that needs to be done. I am so grateful that I was able to spend my first in-depth encounter with the law in a place that fights so hard for what is right and I hope to be able to bring this same passion to everything that I do with the power of my legal degree.

One of the most rewarding experiences was being able to help a group of tenants at a building with truly deplorable conditions. I spent much of the summer working to help clients living in some of the most uninhabitable buildings in Los Angeles (essentially, suing slumlords). One of our cases involved a building where the units consisted of mostly low income families. These families had been living in a building with inadequate plumbing, vermin infestations (including all of the usual suspects: bed bugs, rats, cockroaches, etc.), inadequate fire safety equipment, broken locks on the front door, and more. We were able to help the families finally leave these terrible conditions by getting them large settlement funds to aid with their relocation. Getting to participate in such a life changing event for these families was truly one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Another rewarding experience comes from the time I spent in the call center. Once a week in the mornings I would help do client intake over the phone. One of the clients I interviewed had been consistently being denied her duly owed government benefits. She found herself at a very difficult point in her life where her family had abandoned her and she was forced to take care of her special needs son all on her own. Through her tears, she shared with me what she had been going through and she shared how badly she needed Bet Tzedek's help. I was able not just to help do the intake so she could receive her benefits, but I was also able to listen. She had literally no one else who she could talk to, no one else who knew her story, and no one else who cared. I learned that sometimes, even just the simple task of being there for someone is need, is so truly powerful in their life.

Sincerely,



Robin Gray
UC Irvine School of Law, Class of 2017