

August 17, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I was privileged to have the opportunity to intern this summer at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia (CLS) with the support of an Equal Justice America fellowship. As a result of the fellowship and my experience at CLS, I not only grew in my lawyering skills but I also developed a strong rapport with the clientele I served.

At CLS, I primarily helped clients obtain monthly property tax payment agreements so they can stay in their homes. These plans allow clients to avoid legal action against their properties. It was gratifying to be able to successfully secure these plans for our clients given how fundamental homeownership is to many individuals' sense of financial and physical security.

Through this work, I strongly connected and empathized with our clients who appreciated the helping hand they received from CLS. I enjoyed this opportunity to engage in meaningful direct client service particularly because it is the kind of work I wish to focus on in my legal career.

Further, I was able to serve our clients through drafting deeds, appearing in front of the Tax Review Board, and writing research memos. Throughout this process, I became more cognizant of the concerns of low-income citizens in Philadelphia. I gained a stronger understanding of how difficult it is for these individuals to make ends meet especially when factors beyond their control consume their lives.

Indeed, many of our clients saw their incomes fluctuate as a consequence of unforeseen events in their families and other changed circumstances that resulted in their inability to keep up with expenses like property taxes. Beyond those occurrences, CLS clients also saw their city change dramatically in ways that increased their property values such that they could not keep up with their obligations.

These stories show how it is crucial that there be robust legal aid services to connect the disadvantaged with life-saving resources. As such, my experience in this fellowship only strengthened my desire to work in public interest law so as to be that critical lifeline.

Sincerely,
Omeed Firouzi
Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law
Class of 2018



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

Re: Omeed Firouzi's summer internship at Community Legal Services

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Many thanks to Equal Justice America for sponsoring Omeed Firouzi's summer internship at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia (CLS). As both a legal services attorney and a former Equal Justice America summer fellow, I appreciate your organization's willingness to invest in the futures of aspiring public interest lawyers.

Omeed worked with me in the Homeownership and Consumer Rights Unit at CLS, where my practice focuses on property tax foreclosure defense for low-income Philadelphians. He came to the office every day eager to make a difference and practice poverty law. Omeed showed a passion for public interest work that I have rarely seen. He has an affable personality and seems equally comfortable interacting with attorneys, clients, and his peers. He has a natural affinity for meeting clients where they are and putting them at ease. This skill makes representation go more smoothly and is hard to teach. It will serve him well as he continues in his legal career.

I met with Omeed regularly to provide detailed instruction and feedback regarding his work. Omeed showed dedication to the practice of law and a willingness to incorporate constructive criticism to constantly improve his work and do better. Omeed's commitment to public interest law and his desire to make a difference will make him an asset to the profession one day. Thank you again for your support.

Kind regards,

Catherine M. Martin
Staff Attorney
Homeownership and Consumer Rights Unit
Community Legal Services
1410 W. Erie Avenue
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