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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	South Jersey Legal Services, Inc.

Update 1: I have completed almost 2 weeks at my legal summer internship at South Jersey Legal Services and it has been a very exciting and insightful experience. From contacting clients, attending landlord/tenant court, reading new legal documents, conducting research on niche issues and going to an outreach event, I have gained a lot of knowledge of what it is like to practice law after law school. Rutgers Law School has really prepared me for what I have been and will continue experiencing during my 1L summer and I can't wait to see and do more!

Update 2: During this week, my experience at the courthouse was unlike no other. It was time for the clients that I have been speaking with on the phone and emailing to attend court. The attorney, that I had been working closely with, that was representing these clients allowed me to shadow him in the personal and settlement meetings with them. It truly like like I was making a difference, being able to see the clients and support them in making the best possible decision for themselves.

One of the eye-opening experiences I had was witnessing the strategic skills necessary for settlement meetings. I've always known that one should not divulge all their information; however, there is much more to it than that. Keeping composure when the opponent tries to get in your head and play with your emotions is huge. Also, paying very close attention to the composite of the opponent, especially when you are speaking with the same one for multiple cases that day.

Overall, the experience I had from going to the courthouse really puts into perspective how the law is used outside of law school.

Update 3: Reflecting on the previous couple weeks, I encountered my first challenge that lead me to feeling inadequate when I struggled to find research on a very specific topic. I have certainly had challenges so far; however I have continued to overcome with the help of working hard and asking questions along the way. Although I did those same things this time, when it



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came to one specific research assignment I felt like I was at a loss. After having time to reflect on this, I know I am not inadequate and can do this work well; however, I tend to put a lot of pressure on myself. The continued help and support from the attorneys in the office proves what I have learned thus far about the benefits of working with a team in the legal field.

On another note, witnessing the judge in landlords/tenant court last week make a ruling on a specific motion demonstrated how important professional responsibility is as well. Although the case was not clear cut, the judge ruled in this way when one attorney did not appear and there was no adjournment and prior communication that the attorney was not going to be there. The judge illustrated his frustration and made it clear that because the opposition was not present to oppose the other side's claim, it was clear to him to rule in their favor.

I continue to learn more every week and I cannot wait to see what else this internship has in store.

Update 4: These past 2 weeks I was able to have even more diverse experiences than I thought was possible during this internship. I attended the Annual Constituent Services Fair at Camden County College. Public services from all over Camden County tabled at this event, to provide information about their services and help people use them as well. Transportation was provided to people from all over for this event, making it a very busy and successful one.

During this event, I was able to inform many individuals about the services that South Jersey Legal Services provides and how to contact us and open a file if they need to speak with an attorney. While tabling this event, I recognized how much I learned about the services South Jersey Legal Services provides.

I have spoken with many clients over the phone during my internship, so speaking with people in person about what South Jersey Legal Services can help them with was a great experience, as it was beneficial and easier to appeal to someone's emotions when they are describing something so personal to themselves face to face.

While I'm upset that my internship will be over this week since I learned so much about certain practice areas and skills, I'm excited to continue my law school journey and become closer to being a practicing attorney.

Update 5: As I reflect on my 10 weeks at SJLS in Camden County, I recognize just how amazing this internship was for me after my 1L year at Rutgers Law School. My current interests are very broad so I knew that I wanted my internship to cover a lot of different practice areas and skills within public interest and litigation, and my time with SJLS provided me just that.

My workload primarily encompassed housing law, as that is the majority of the cases that SJLS receives. I was also able to dip my toe into consumer and DV law. One of the most valuable parts of my internship was that I was never doing just one type of task. I called numerous clients about a wide variety of issues, I conducted legal research on very niche concepts within housing law in NJ that allowed me to enhance my legal writing skills by writing memos, and I attended



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multiple outreach sessions, where I was able to connect with many local people and share what SJLS does that could help them. I also attended landlord/tenant court and DV court, where I witnessed trials, motions and settlement conferences.

I worked closely with numerous attorneys in the Camden office, which was such an enriching experience. I was able to observe different practice styles, all while feeling comfortable and supportive enough to consistently ask questions about my own work and inquire about theirs. These attorneys provided such a warm learning environment that not only made either easier to learn from them, but they also acted as role models for the type of attorney I would like to be one day.

Not only did I learn more about certain practice areas during my internship, but I also learned about all different public service organizations and the services that they provide. This was something I did not anticipate learning about, but as I reflect on my time, it makes sense since we often would either refer clients to these organizations to seek help for their case or help after their case was over. I didn't realize before just how much legal services intermingles with so many public services organizations.

I wouldn't give up my experience with SJLS for anything and I cannot wait to see how my enhanced knowledge and skills will benefit my going forward.

Thank you, Equal Justice America, for the support, it has been an honor to be a recipient, as the work you do is just that important!