



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Final Reflection:

This summer at West Virginia Legal Aid has been more than an internship. It has been a window into the soul of public interest law. I have sat beside clients navigating some of the hardest chapters of their lives: a mother fighting to regain custody after surviving domestic violence and parental alienation, a grandmother stepping up to raise her grandson when his parents could no longer care for him, and a disabled client struggling to access SSI after years of health setbacks. Each story was different, but the stakes were the same—security, dignity, and the hope of a better future.

Although I was not the one leading these cases, I was present. I listened. I learned. I watched seasoned advocates transform fear into clarity and confusion into empowerment. I saw how legal knowledge becomes a lifeline when paired with compassion. One moment that stays with me is watching an attorney gently guide a grandmother through the guardianship process. Her love for her grandson was palpable, and the lawyer's steady support turned an overwhelming legal maze into a path forward.

Another day, I observed an advocate break down SSI eligibility rules for a client who had been dismissed and discouraged for years. The advocate's patience and respect reminded me that advocacy often begins not with argument, but with listening.

These experiences have deepened my understanding of what it means to serve. Legal Aid is not just about courtrooms. It is about justice, access, and standing beside those who might otherwise face the system alone. It is about showing up with care and staying long enough to make a difference.

Thanks to Equal Justice America's support, I was able to fully engage in this work without sacrificing the financial stability my family depends on. Their funding made it possible for me to grow as a future advocate while honoring my responsibilities as a parent.



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Professionally, this internship has sharpened my vision of the lawyer I want to become—grounded, empathetic, and deeply committed to justice. Personally, it reminded me why I chose this path in the first place: to help build a world where no one is left behind simply because they could not afford a lawyer.

I am leaving this summer with gratitude, clarity, and a renewed sense of purpose.