



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Cameron Sheehan
LAW SCHOOL	University of Richmond Law
ORGANIZATION	Blue Ridge Legal Services

Update 1: As some of you may know, I'm spending my summer interning with a legal aid firm. If any of you have hired a lawyer before, you know that they cost a lot of money. For a huge amount of the population, that cost is prohibitive. Legal aid organizations exist to provide legal services to people who, otherwise, would not be able to afford a lawyer of their own.

I've been working for two weeks, and it's been an amazing experience. I've been to court almost every day, sometimes several times a day, and I've gotten to learn hands-on from attorneys who specialize in many different areas. I've written memos, done research, and worked hands-on with clients.

Over the past two weeks, I've gotten to do some really important work to help people reduce or escape from debt. Debt is a force that often grows faster than people can pay it. I've been really fortunate to assist people in helping fight that force, and I look forward to the rest of my summer.

As important as this work is, this is not a paid position for me. I am grateful for the support in funding not only from my school, the University of Richmond Law, but from Equal Justice America. EJA is committed to funding law students like me throughout the country who have taken positions doing important work for people who need it.

Update 2: If you haven't seen my last post, I'm spending my 1L summer interning at legal aid firm. As I'm sure many of you know, a lawyer can cost thousands of dollars; for a lot of people, that's an inaccessible amount of money. Legal aid organizations work hard to provide legal aid services to people who can't afford that amount.



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I'm almost halfway through my internship (woah!) and it's been an awesome experience. I've been to half a dozen different courthouses, watched several trials, and drafted several court pleadings.

I'm also getting the chance to do some important work that makes a real impact on people's lives. One of the most interesting things I've gotten to do is help finish a former law clerk's project: helping people without housing obtain copies of their birth certificates. Anybody who has ever applied for a passport, gotten married, or gotten a job understands how important a birth certificate is. I'm so grateful to get the chance to do something important.

Update 3: If you haven't seen my previous posts, I've been interning at a legal aid firm this summer! Legal aid provides free legal services to people who make under a certain income threshold; anybody who's ever had to hire a lawyer knows just how expensive they are.

My internship is over halfway over, which feels crazy to say. I've gotten to do some really awesome things over the past couple of weeks. A huge highlight of the summer was watching one of the attorneys I work have a Motion to Strike granted, which then got the entire case against our client dismissed! (This is a pretty rare thing to see-- she said it was her first Motion to Strike that had ever been granted! Super cool!)

I'm really grateful for the chances I've had this summer. I've been to several different courthouses around the valley, and I've seen everything from visitation hearings to jury selection for a criminal trial! I can also safely attest that the new Augusta County courthouse is really, really nice inside. I'd tell you all to check it out, but I'm sure a trip to the courthouse is not as exciting to most of you as it is for me.

Update 4: As we're coming up to the end of my internship, I'm writing to keep y'all updated. If you've managed to miss my last posts, I've spent the majority of my summer interning at a legal aid office! Legal aid provides free legal services to people who don't meet a certain income threshold; if you've had to hire a lawyer, you understand how expensive they can be. (And if you've been inside a law firm, you understand just why that cost can be so high!)

Next week will be my last week, which feels wild! I've gotten to dip my toes into so many different fields this summer: family law, housing law, debt buyer cases, elder law, and beyond. A real highlight of my summer has been getting the chance to meet (and observe) so many guardian ad litem-- if you've ever heard me talk about what I want to do next summer, you've probably heard my entire spiel about why GAL work is so important.

I'm incredibly thankful to have had the chance to work in this office. I've met a lot of great people and learn so much. This week, all the law clerks in my office got a tour from the



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Rockingham Circuit Clerk of the Court himself, which was so cool. I also got to see my seventh (!!) courthouse. All in all, this summer has been incredible; I've learned so much, and I've been able to do so much work that felt like it really mattered.

Final Reflection: As many of you know, I recently finished a ten-week summer internship at Blue Ridge Legal Services in Harrisonburg. BRLS is a legal aid organization in the Blue Ridge Mountain area. Their work serves the low-income population of the area; legal services are incredibly expensive, and for most people, those fees are prohibitive. Legal aid organizations help bring that legal assistance to people who would otherwise not be able to afford it.

This was, without a doubt, one of the most transformative summers of my life. I just do not have the words to explain how much this job meant to me. My goal for the summer was to spend it doing work that actually mattered—and this job let me do that. The legal system can have so much power over people's lives, and I am so grateful that I got to watch it change people's lives for the better. I saw parents keep custody of their children, I saw women get much-needed protective orders, and I saw people have years of life-ruining debt wiped. It was a truly life-changing experience, and I cannot imagine having ended up anywhere else this past summer.

Not to mention that I learned so much! I got the chance to hone both my research and writing skills, which gave me such a great chance to familiarize myself with the particulars of Virginia law. I was able to draft memorandums, court documents, and demand letters. I also got to practice working hands-on with clients.

One of the most exciting parts, however, was how much time I got to spend in court. I watched cases in seven different courthouses over the entire summer. While I was there, I saw some of the coolest things—watching an entire case get dismissed after a Motion to Strike was perhaps the highlight of my entire summer, made even better by just how elated our client was over the result. (It was a big win!) Getting to win in court is exciting in of itself, but it feels even better when that win really makes someone's life better.

Of course, I could not have done this without the Equal Justice America fellowship, who helped fund my time at Blue Ridge Legal Services. That funding allowed me (and Mitchell!) to rent a place to stay and stock the fridge! I am incredibly grateful for not only their financial support, but the mentorship their organization offered me. At the bottom of this post, I am attaching a link to their fundraising page where you can support their incredibly important mission.

I hope you all had an amazing summer, and that the school year brings exciting things for you all!