

Amanda Evans

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to thank you and inform you of my experience this summer as an Equal Justice America Fellow for the summer of 2013. My fellowship was spent working for Central Virginia Legal Aid Society, Inc. in Richmond, Virginia. This experience was a remarkable training ground for my legal career, as well as a great opportunity to assist the disenfranchised members of my own community in Richmond.

One of my most memorable experiences was being given the opportunity to represent a CVLAS client at a Virginia Employment Commission unemployment compensation hearing. The client was a 50-year-old woman, who lost her job from virtually no misconduct of her own. She was affected by diabetes, which caused her to be very emotional and anxious about how she would make ends meet if her unemployment benefits were denied. I was able to interview her concerning her job loss and ultimately prep her for testimony in front of the Appeals Examiner.

I successfully represented this client and received a favorable opinion from the Appeals Examiner at the conclusion of the hearing. Cross-examination of her employer revealed the fact the original decision was grounded in to be untrue. Since the client knew what to expect, was able to stay calm, and I was there to represent her, a positive outcome was accomplished. This was not only a wonderful experience for the client, who otherwise would not have had representation during this hearing, but for me as a lawyer in training. The opportunity to speak in front of a judge, cross-examine witnesses, and provide a closing argument was invaluable.

This case and the entire summer were remarkably rewarding experiences. I was also able to assist an older gentleman living in subsidized housing with avoiding an eviction, through negotiations and conference with his landlord. Each client I worked with made me realize further how powerful the law can be, but how out of reach it is for many people living in poverty. Without the resources to understand and enforce the law, many people have no opportunity to fight for their rights.

After this summer, I am further committed to using my law degree for social justice, in addition to whatever else I may do with my career. This summer at CVLAS opened my eyes to how the law fails so many disenfranchised populations, and lawyers truly have the power to prevent this. I cannot thank EJA enough for funding this opportunity, the experiences and memories of which will travel with me for the rest of my legal career.

Sincerely,

Amanda Evans
University of Richmond School of Law, 2015
Summer 2013 EJA Fellow

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September 20, 2013

Dan Reuben, Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II - Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Re: Amanda Evans, EJA Fellowship Recipient Evaluation

Dear Mr. Reuben:

Thank you for providing a fellowship for law student intern Amanda Evans. It was our pleasure to have Amanda work with us for ten weeks this summer. Amanda was enthusiastic and a hard worker. She worked on family, housing, consumer, and unemployment compensation cases. She gave telephone advice, interviewed clients in our office, wrote briefs, drafted motions, and composed client letters.

Amanda had the opportunity to participate in two hearings at the Virginia Employment Commission. Because non-attorneys have the ability to represent clients at the VEC, she conducted a first level appeals hearing. She questioned our witness, cross-examined the opposing party, and gave a closing statement. She also participated in a second level appeals hearing and gave oral arguments. The Special Examiner gave her many compliments and said that her performance was as good as or better than the majority of attorneys that come before her. Amanda did an excellent job in both of these hearings.

Another skill that Amanda brought to our office was her ability to develop a rapport with clients. She conducted several initial interviews with clients, both on her own and under my supervision. She also helped me prep clients for hearings and fielded telephone calls to answer clients' questions about upcoming cases. She was empathetic towards clients.

Finally, Amanda assisted us with legal writing and research. She wrote several memos to the Special Examiner of the Virginia Employment Commission. She drafted two Bills of Particular and several motions. She also assisted in drafting discovery requests and evaluating answers.

Amanda was an invaluable resource this summer and truly one of the best interns I have had. I thoroughly enjoyed having her in our office. Thank you for providing the funding for this student. The promise of funding helps us to recruit strong candidates. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 200-6037. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jessica W. Thompson
Staff Attorney

