

August 7, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I want to thank you and the rest of the staff at Equal Justice America for helping me have the opportunity to work as a legal intern this summer at the Family Violence Law Center (FVLC) in Oakland, California.

As a legal intern, I assisted the Legal Team at FVLC with almost every aspect of their work. I completed initial intakes with clients who called the crisis hotline, drafted declarations and prepared paperwork for clients who wanted to pursue restraining orders against their abusers, conducted legal research to help the attorneys prepare for their hearings, and observed restraining order hearings almost every week. I also researched some family law issues and observed child custody and visitation hearings in Family Court. In addition, I wrote a brief policy memo on the issue of why a petitioner's affidavit is sufficient for the court to grant a restraining order without any independent corroboration. FVLC shared this memo with the coalition of groups which make up the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, and the coalition used my research to inform their legislative advocacy priorities.

One of the most rewarding parts of my job, however, was working directly with survivors of domestic violence. The diverse group of women, and a few men, who I advocated for demonstrated that domestic violence is an issue that affects people across lines of race, social class, and sexual orientation. Our clients also showed me that domestic violence can occur outside of the marriage or dating context, and in some instances I assisted survivors in filing restraining orders against relatives.

In one case, I worked with a woman who had been abused by a relative as an adult. After she fled the home due to the physical abuse, the relative refused to turn her children over to her care. Our client contacted the local police department, but the officers told her that it was in the best interests of the children to stay with the relative, even though he had no custodial rights to the children. When our client first came to our office, she was understandably very frustrated and upset. I talked to her about the situation and wrote a declaration that FVLC filed in court, along with her request for a restraining order. After our client's temporary restraining order was granted, I called the local police and arranged a civil standby on her behalf so that she could safely remove her children from the home. I also talked to the client to prepare her in advance of her court hearing and provided moral support by sitting next to her before she testified. Our client remained calm in front of the judge and was granted a five year restraining order against her relative, protecting herself and her children from his abuse.

Although I am still unsure about exactly what area of law I plan to practice after I graduate from law school, working for FVLC spurred my interest in Family Law and Domestic Violence Law. In the fall semester, I plan to take a Domestic Violence Law class with Nancy Lemon, who is an expert in the field. While my work this summer was challenging both emotionally and intellectually, I honed my legal research skills in a real world context and gained more experience providing direct services to clients. I know that what I learned at FVLC will serve me well in my future career as a public interest attorney.

Sincerely,  
Anna Kastner  
UC Berkeley School of Law  
Class of 2015

August 31, 2013



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

***Re: Anna Kastner Final Evaluation, Equal Justice America Fellowship***

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am contacting you regarding Anna Kastner. In the summer of 2013, I had the pleasure of directly supervising Ms. Kastner in her role as a legal intern with the Family Violence Law Center (FVLC) of Oakland, California. FVLC is a non-profit organization serving domestic violence survivors in Alameda County. We employ a comprehensive service model that includes both prevention and protection initiatives to eliminate abuse, including legal services, police and medical site advocacy, and emergency housing and relocation services.

As a full-time legal intern, Ms. Kastner managed her own caseload, taking bi-weekly (or more) legal appointments with clients seeking Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA) restraining orders. She personally provided direct services for dozens of clients, conducting interviews, preparing legal paperwork, and assisting with intensive case management. Ms. Kastner was an exemplary intern in every regard, from her professionalism to her excellent work product and expanding grasp of domestic violence and family law. During her time with us, Ms. Kastner had the opportunity to interact with several difficult clients in complex cases and circumstances, and she was a patient and invaluable resource for those clients and for our staff. Ms. Kastner is a distinguished writer and produced for us a quite impressive brief on the level of independent corroborating evidence required for the issuance of a DVPA restraining order; this brief has been used by our Associate Director in drafting and evaluating legislation as well as by our legal staff in oral argument. Anna's attention to detail and overall grasp of legal issues made her one of the most efficient and capable interns I have ever supervised, particularly for a student entering her second year of law school. Her work is clean and thorough, and she learns quickly and instinctively with minimal direction, making her an obvious choice for assignments that are complex and/or time-sensitive. Finally, Ms. Kastner's overall professionalism, evident compassion, and clear work ethic made her a staff favorite who was greatly relied upon and truly missed at the completion of her time at FVLC.

If I can provide any further information regarding Ms. Kastner's performance, please feel free to contact me by phone at (510) 208-0220 x327 or by email at [spenrod@fvlc.org](mailto:spenrod@fvlc.org).

Sincerely,

Stephanie Penrod  
Staff Attorney  
Family Violence Law Center