

August 2016

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I had the honor of being an Equal Justice America Fellow this past summer while interning for Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC). MAC has been a leading force in providing an effective voice for children facing barriers to equal educational and life opportunities for more than 45 years. Through its advocacy, MAC played a critical role in creating the Massachusetts Special Education Law – the first of its kind in any state, and which later served as the model for the first federal special education law.

Through the development of both the State and Federal Special Education laws, students with learning disabilities and special needs have been able to gain access to free and appropriate public education. I had the opportunity to work with MAC attorneys representing students with disabilities and their families. On one particular egregious case, I was able to support a MAC attorney in settling a mediation in favor of a student for an extra year of compensatory and remedial services for special education and transition services beyond the age of 22, when the student would have aged out of Special Education rights. Because of this settlement, a student who had been overlooked by a district for several years, will now be able to gain remedial support to hopefully gain academic and living skills he will need to become more independent in life.

On another case, I joined a MAC attorney in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team meeting to discuss putting in place supportive transition services between middle school and high school for our client. MAC was able to help secure summer program funding, transition support services, and increased specialized professional development and training for teachers at the receiving high school. By advocating for the needs of one student, hopefully it will have a positive ripple effect upon others within the school who might also need the same support.

Altogether, I was able to provide assistance and support in over a dozen cases this summer through direct client cases overseen by staff attorney and through MAC's helpline. I reviewed evaluations from specialists and proposed IEP plans, connected parents and families to outside agencies and attorneys whenever possible, and met directly with parents and students to provide immediate technical assistance. MAC taught me to quickly gather information, assess a situation, and correctly seek and provide assistance to those in need. I was presented with a range of educational and children rights issues and never did the same thing two days in a row.

Prior to joining MAC, I knew the intersections of a myriad of laws (criminal, housing, labor, education, etc) affected access to schooling and a child's well-being. MAC allowed me to delve deeper into these issues and helped me to broaden my own hopes of using a legal education to make positive changes to various sectors of law. I learned a great deal this summer which helped to increase my commitment to public interest law beyond education and children's law. Thank you to EJA for your generous support in making this summer possible.

Sincerely,

Angela K. Doan
Boston College Law School
Class of 2017

MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCATES *for* CHILDREN

Via Electronic Mail



September 7, 2016

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

RE: Angela Doan

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This letter serves as an evaluation of Angela Doan's summer 2016 fellowship at Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC). We are appreciative of Equal Justice America for generously funding Ms. Doan's law school fellowship.

During her summer fellowship at MAC, Ms. Doan handled Helpline calls and provided legal special education advocacy to low-income families of children with disabilities. Special education cases are time intensive and often involve complex litigation strategy and long-term involvement. Ms. Doan provided legal special education advocacy on behalf of six clients during her time at MAC. She attended multiple special education (IEP) team meetings, a mediation session, and drafted legal correspondence on behalf of clients.

Ms. Doan was a tremendous asset to our organization during her fellowship. She was hard-working, engaged and clearly committed to the work. Notably, she was a very fast learner and able to jump into difficult assignments with relatively little guidance, producing impressive results. Ms. Doan worked intensively on one case in particular involving a 22-year-old Haitian student with Autism and an intellectual disability. She helped substantially with preparation for a mediation session in this case by reviewing all of the student's progress reports, MCAS testing results, and independent evaluations. She attended the all-day mediation, taking meticulous notes, and actively supporting the attorney handling the case. As a result of her contributions, a stronger settlement agreement was reached in the case. Ms. Doan was sensitive and thoughtful in her approach to working with clients, often considering how to best navigate cultural, linguistic and other barriers.

Ms. Doan carried herself with confidence, and contributed at a very high level for a second year law student.

Thank you again for supporting Angela Doan to complete her fellowship at MAC. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Liza Hirsch, Esq.

Board of Directors

David Barone
Jacquelyne J. Bowman, Esq.
Christal Fenton, Esq.
Michael Fleischer, Esq.
Margareth Frayne Sodre
Ann Guay, Esq.
Eileen Hagerty, Esq.
Sharon Hamel
Richard Howard, Esq.
Matthew J. Iverson, Esq., Chair
Dr. Renald Raphael
Carlos Rojas Alvarez
Rob Shusterman
Meghan Streff Spring, Esq.
Tee Thach-Hasan

Emeritus

Hubert E. Jones
Lawrence Kotin, Esq.
S. Stephen Rosenfeld, Esq.

Executive Director

Jerry Mogul

Senior Project Directors

Susan Cole, Esq.
Kim M. Janey
Julia K. Landau, Esq.
Janine Solomon, Esq.

Massachusetts Advocates for Children

25 Kingston Street, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02111

Tel. 617.357.8431 · Fax 617.357.8438 · www.massadvocates.org



Massachusetts
Legal
Assistance
Corporation