

August 29, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I would first like to thank Equal Justice America for making my summer internship at Bread for the City possible by awarding me a summer fellowship. My summer internship as a legal intern was an incredibly interesting, exciting and rewarding experience.

Bread for the City (BFC) is a nonprofit organization in D.C. that is dedicated to serving low-income residents of the city. BFC offers free assistance in five areas: legal aid, medical care, social services, food and clothing. The attorneys have expertise in a variety of practice areas, primarily in the areas of family, landlord tenant and public benefits law.

As a legal intern, I had a large variety of assignments in all these areas of law. I was one of two summer law clerks in the Legal Clinic in BFC's N.W. office. I was able to utilize my Spanish-speaking skills on a daily basis by interpreting for clients and translating documents. On the whole, my responsibilities included managing intake calls, interviewing clients, surveying the Department of Human Services Income Maintenance Administration (IMA) centers, conducting legal research, drafting pleadings, grievances, memorandums, and client correspondence.

Every week, I spent a large part of my time working with walk-in clients, many of whom only spoke Spanish. I spent a significant portion of my time interpreting for clients and BFC attorneys. I also translated documents from English to Spanish or vice versa – usually client correspondence. The majority of the Spanish-speaking clients I assisted had family-related cases such as divorce or custody issues.

I will never forget my experience with one of my first Spanish-speaking clients from Cuba, who came to the states seeking asylum back when Castro came to power. He has suffered from a heart condition for the past ten years and due to his physical state, he is unable to work. My client had tried applying for public benefits (food stamps, SSDI, Medicare) but was unsuccessful because his Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) card was expired. I was able to assist him with obtaining his food stamps. After researching the IMA policy handbook, I determined that an expired card does not mean a person's status has expired. Per the rules of the IMA handbook, the IMA employee was supposed to look up the resident's status in the Department of Homeland Security's database. I accompanied my client to the IMA center and help him reapply. I advocated his status and ultimately we were successful in obtaining the maximum amount of

food stamps granted to a single individual. For someone who does not have an income, this was a huge victory and a weight off my client's shoulders.

In the area of public benefits law, I was assigned a set of Social Security Disability Insurance cases that were pending before the Social Security Administration. I reviewed the client files, requested documents from various health service providers and the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review, and then conducted merit evaluations. One of my most memorable clients was a young man who was diagnosed with undifferentiated schizophrenia and psychotic disorder. Although he also suffered from over a decade of illicit drug abuse, I was able to obtain statements from his various doctors that verified that his mental disability would exist regardless of his drug abuse – a requirement for establishing his disability under the Social Security Administration's List of Impairments. I obtained medical records and statements from doctors from over ten different medical service providers. I also conducted a Disability Interview with my client in person, during which time I discovered that he could not remain sitting or be inside around other people for more than twenty-minutes at a time. We conducted the majority of the one-hour interview outside in the parking lot in the rain. Although his file was complete and ready for his hearing, prior to my departure from my summer internship, we received notification from an administrative law judge that the my client had received a fully favorable decision and would soon start receiving SSDI payments – both prospectively and retroactively from that date of his initial application (which was back in August of 2008). This was great news for my client -- not only did he win his case but he also won before his scheduled hearing. In all my conversations with him, the discussion of this success was the only time I heard excitement and happiness to his voice.

I also handled several cases for tenants that had issues with the D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA). I drafted various documents for attorneys and interviewed their clients. In one case, involving an elderly woman who had an erroneous rent balance added to her account after transferring to a new Section 8 site, I drafted a Tenant Grievance against DCHA. I attended an informal conference with a BFC attorney and DCHA and we were successful in having that erroneous balance voided and our client was able to remain in her apartment.

My summer internship was an overall fulfilling experience and it helped me gain insight into what it is like doing public interest legal work at a non-profit organization. I achieved my goals of gaining experience in family law, as well as developing research, writing and client interaction skills, all while working in the public interest sector. Thank you for making my invaluable experience possible.

Sincerely,

Caroline ("Carrie") Johnson
Catholic University Columbus School of Law
Class of 2012



10th ANNIVERSARY

Northwest Center
1525 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
phone: 202.265.2400
fax: 202.745.1081

Southeast Center
1640 Good Hope Road, SE
Washington, DC 20020
phone: 202.561.8587
fax: 202.587.0537

www.breadforthecity.org
info@breadforthecity.org

August 27, 2010

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

Re: Evaluation for Caroline (“Carrie”) Johnson

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Caroline (“Carrie”) Johnson, a rising second-year student at The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law, served as a legal intern this summer at Bread for the City (BFC). BFC is a non-profit organization that provides free legal assistance, medical care, food, clothing, and social services to low-income residents of the District. The Legal Clinic practices mainly in the areas of landlord-tenant, family, and public benefits law.

As a legal intern, Carrie assisted the Legal Clinic in almost every aspect of our representation of clients. Generally, her responsibilities included interviewing clients; reviewing agency files; reviewing and evaluating the merit of disability benefits cases pending before the Social Security Administration; conducting legal research; and drafting pleadings, correspondence, and memoranda of law.

Carrie handled several cases involving the DC Housing Authority (DCHA). Her work included drafting a temporary restraining order on behalf of a tenant against DCHA, drafting requests for reasonable accommodations of tenants, and drafting tenant grievances against DCHA. Most notably, in one case, where an erroneous rent balance was attributed to our client, Carrie met with the client, drafted the grievance against DCHA, and attended an informal conference at DCHA with a Bread for the City housing attorney. As a result of her efforts, the erroneous rent balance was voided, and the tenant was able to remain in her home. Carrie’s help enabled Bread for the City to have the capacity to take on these very time-consuming cases, and Carrie’s help in these and other cases was indispensable.

Carrie also assisted our attorneys in other practice areas such as family law and public benefits. For example, she helped one of our attorneys contact Bread for the City food pantry clients to inform them of a change in the District of Columbia’s Food Stamps law that might have made them eligible to receive Food Stamps. With

these clients, she interviewed the clients to offer an estimate of the level of benefits they could receive and provided information on how to apply for these benefits.

Throughout her internship, Carrie was dependable, diligent, and conscientious. Carrie, in particular, stood out in her ability to complete many substantive assignments quickly yet thoroughly. She worked independently, yet had the judgment to know when to ask questions. She conducted thorough research and fact investigations and produced well-written work. She had no problem juggling several assignments at one time or prioritizing assignments. We never had to worry about whether an assignment would get completed in a timely fashion. Throughout her internship, she got along well with staff and developed a rapport with several of our clients. And her Spanish-speaking ability was immensely helpful in serving our clients who only spoke Spanish.

The Legal Clinic at Bread for the City was extremely pleased to have Carrie as a summer law clerk. Her commitment to serving our clients was clear, and we are glad that Equal Justice America was able to support Carrie financially with a summer stipend.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 386-7010, if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Su Sie Ju
NW Legal Clinic Supervisor