

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I worked at Tompkins-Tioga Neighborhood Legal Services (TTNLS) in Ithaca, New York this summer. I primarily worked on housing, criminal reentry, and divorce cases, but also assisted on a couple public benefits cases. I worked with attorneys who are certainly among the best in the area. They have a true passion for their work and are extremely skilled at obtaining positive results for their clients.

Within housing law, I worked on several different eviction cases and a fair housing case. Within criminal reentry law, I assisted with applications for certificates of good conduct and certificates of relief from disabilities, which increase the chances of employment for grantees. I also helped clients clean up errors on their rap sheets. Within divorce law, I assisted on numerous uncontested divorces and interacted with clients very frequently. Because New York does not have a no-fault divorce provision, it was often difficult for clients to come up with grounds for divorce, even where they had been separated for more than ten years. New York is the only state without a no-fault provision, and although a no-fault divorce bill has been passed by both the New York State Assembly and Senate, it has not yet been signed by David Paterson. This made it an interesting, yet often frustrating time to assist people with divorce paperwork. I was also involved in our office's semi-annual Pro Se Divorce Clinic, which helped more than 10 people with their divorce paperwork in a single day.

Although I worked on numerous divorces, the bulk of the day-to-day work I did this summer was on housing cases. While I never quite made it to court in an eviction proceeding, I worked on cases that were settled at the eleventh hour. For example, I once reached a settlement at 4:50 PM where the deadline to withdraw an action was 5:00 PM. Helping a family remain in their home is an incredible feeling and seeing the joy on their faces was something I will never

forget. I also worked on a fair housing case for the entire month of July, which allowed me to develop a very close relationship with the client.

TTNLS provides invaluable services to the local communities, and its impact must not be underestimated. During my internship, I felt that I really made a difference. I helped people get out of abusive and unhappy marriages; I helped prior offenders improve their chances of employment and reintegration into society, and I helped people stay in the homes they spent years making for their families. I truly enjoyed my experience this summer and am thankful to have had the opportunity to serve these communities.

Sincerely,

Charles Guzak

Cornell Law School

Class of 2012