

Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
Building II, Suite 204  
13450 Far Boundary Rd.  
Midlothian, VA 23112

September 17, 2011

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer, I worked as a law clerk at the Family Law Project. Located in downtown Ann Arbor, the Family Law Project is a legal service organization that provides free legal assistance to survivors of domestic violence in Washtenaw County. Most of their clients are referred from SafeHouse, the nearby domestic violence shelter, and cannot otherwise afford legal representation to protect themselves from their partners and spouses. The Family Law Project primarily assists clients with divorce, custody cases, and personal protection orders.

This position provided me with a wide range of responsibilities. There were three staff attorneys and three law clerks, so I had plenty of hands-on guidance and supervision. I worked on all aspects of family law cases: interviewing clients, drafting pleadings, performing discovery, and appearing at motions, evidentiary hearings, and settlement conferences.

My proudest experience this summer was preparing for and appearing on an evidentiary hearing for a custody case. The client was a 24-year-old mother whose former partner was physically abusive during their high school relationship. She and the father shared joint custody of the child in question. The child was of the age to enroll in kindergarten, and the parties had to decide with whom she would live during the school year since they lived four hours away. My first task in this case was to draft the requests to admit and interrogatories during discovery. Then, my supervisor and I decided what we wanted to submit as exhibits for the trial and whom we wanted to testify as witnesses. I prepared the direct testimony of my client and the re-direct. I learned an incredible amount during the experience about civil procedure and trial technique. It is certain to be something I will always remember.

Working at the family law project gave me a closer look at poverty and legal issues facing the poor. I had some experience working with low-income communities in the past, but I had never had the opportunity to help low-income clients recognize and enforce their rights. Working with this particular community, domestic violence survivors, was especially meaningful to me because I have always been passionate about women's issues. Day-to-day, I found fulfillment by helping to make their lives better and being an advocate for their needs and rights.

The particular office where I worked was organized, professional, and committed to the cause of helping survivors of domestic violence. They were friendly and always available to give guidance to the law clerks in the office. One of the most encouraging things for a law student in such an early stage in her career is that they all truly loved their jobs. The head attorney in the office is considered to be a statewide expert in the field of Family Law, and has even written the chapter on domestic violence in the Michigan Family Law Practice book.

This experience has inspired me to follow my heart and pursue a career in public interest law. I especially loved working in direct legal services and working with clients one-on-one. From what I've learned this summer, working in a legal aid office would not only give me the professional opportunity to appear in court frequently and take on a lot of responsibility at a very early stage in my career, but more importantly, it offers the satisfaction of staying connected to

the realities of poor communities and working toward alleviating their hardship.

I am incredibly grateful that Equal Justice America helped make this summer workable by funding my internship. This source of support has encouraged me to believe that a career in public interest law is viable and that there are organizations to support those who want to pursue a career advocating for low-income communities.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Luce  
University of Michigan

# LEGAL SERVICES OF SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN

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Family Law Project • P.O. Box 8294, Ann Arbor, MI 48107 • (734) 998-9454 • FAX: (734) 998-9125

July 30, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

During the summer of 2011, we were pleased to have Cheryl Luce as an EJA intern at the Family Law Project (FLP), an office of Legal Services of South Central Michigan. Our office priorities include providing legal advice and representation to indigent survivors of domestic violence in family law cases. Cheryl was hired as a full-time summer law clerk.

As a summer law clerk, Cheryl assisted the staff attorneys with all aspects of our work. Cheryl interviewed clients, drafted pleadings, drafted letters, conducted legal research, filed pleadings with the court, arranged for service of process, and appeared in court to represent clients at motion hearings under Michigan's student practice rules. Cheryl excelled in each of these areas. She is eager to learn, professional, resourceful, responsible, able to juggle several different tasks, and empathetic toward our clients. She jumped at every opportunity to take on additional cases and went above and beyond her duties as a law clerk. For example, she volunteered to assist with an evidentiary hearing several weeks after her 11-week internship ends.

Because of Cheryl's participation in the EJA program and her work at FLP, we were able to assist more survivors of domestic violence during the critical stage of separation from their abusive partners. Cheryl gained valuable experience particularly in working with poverty clients and we are confident she will build on these skills in the next few years in law school and post-graduation.

Sincerely,

Alyson Robbins  
Staff Attorney

cc: Cheryl Luce

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