

August 18, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer, with the generous support of Equal Justice America, I completed 400+ hours of service at the Immigration Center for Women and Children (ICWC) in San Francisco, California. ICWC provides affordable legal services to immigrant victims of violent crimes, representing primarily Spanish-speaking clients in pursuance of U Nonimmigrant Status and VAWA legal status for review by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

My experience at ICWC this summer confirmed my interest in and intention to pursue public interest immigration law. Under supervision of ICWC Directing Attorney Susan Bowyer and Staff Attorney Jessica Farb I served as the primary representative of twenty-four clients and guided them through the process: phone screenings to determine eligibility, initial intake, declaration-writing, and completion of appropriate forms.

I most valued the interaction with my clients. Initially, I found their recountings of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and felonious assaults overwhelming. I felt awful as I questioned my crying clients about the details of their horrendous stories—Lidia, who was physically abused by her ex-boyfriend for five years; Victoria, whose daughter was sexually assaulted twice by a family friend; and Juana, who was robbed and brutally attacked on the street with a high-heeled shoe.

I recognize how important ICWC's work is. Although the process is difficult, out of these violent, depressing histories come something so empowering: legal status. No longer do these women have to live under the radar, in constant fear of deportation. Everything changes. In addition to confidence and security, legal status means employment authorization, and eligibility for public benefits and services. One of the most gratifying parts of my internship was when clients, some of them crying happy tears this time, came in to pick up their approval notices and employment authorization cards. After three years with U Nonimmigrant Status, they will be able to apply for permanent residency.

I was sad to leave my internship—the attorneys, my co-law clerk, and, especially, my clients. Thank you to Equal Justice America for making this experience possible. Without funding from EJA, I would not have been able both to work at ICWC and to pay my living expenses. I would have never met Lidia, Victoria, and Juana (and the twenty-one other clients with whom I had the pleasure of working). In relying on EJA and choosing ICWC, I am confident that I made the right decision.

Sincerely,



Christina Reggio

J.D. Candidate, 2013

UC Hastings College of the Law



August 31, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing with my evaluation of Christina Reggio's EJA-sponsored summer legal clerkship with the Immigration Center for Women and Children. I have worked with hundreds of law students and lawyers in 20 years of public interest practice. Tina's work stood out among the very best of them. She learns exceptionally quickly and does a stunning amount of extremely high quality work.

ICWC provides direct legal representation of immigrant crime victims in application for lawful immigration status. Our goal is to reach and serve as many people as we can, while maintaining a 100% approval rate for applications and treating clients with dignity and care. Tina handled a huge caseload of 16 clients and assisted ICWC staff with 18 additional cases. She conducted dozens of eligibility screenings, and her analysis of callers' eligibility was superb.

Tina has a deeper understanding of the scope and nuances of U Visa law than most experienced practitioners in this very new field of practice. She frequently raised issues that challenged my understanding or interpretation of a provision or approach in this very new field. Even more important, she suggested solutions that invariably incorporated the most salient purpose of the applicable provision and reflected her client's reality. The declarations she wrote with clients were relevant, clear, compelling and authentic. Tina also wrote requests to law enforcement agencies for endorsements of crime victims' immigration applications. Those requests were persuasive, and the certifications she drafted for law enforcement endorsements were clear and compelling. Tina is also very skilled at explaining complex legal concepts in Spanish to clients so they can be effective partners in building their cases and minimize retrauma.

Tina is also an outstanding team player. She was both eager and exceptionally competent at handling whatever our new office needed in order to work at greatest efficiency – from building furniture and planning office space use to mentoring new volunteers. Her attitude and work habits were all far beyond my expectations, and she has been a joy to work with.

Our team here at ICWC is extremely grateful to EJA for making it possible for Tina to spend her summer working with us on legal status applications for the most vulnerable immigrants.

Sincerely,

Susan Bowyer
Directing Attorney