

August 21, 2013

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

RE: Equal Justice America Fellowship, Summer 2013

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to express my gratitude for receiving the Equal Justice America (EJA) Fellowship, which allowed me to work in the Employment Unit at Community Legal Services (CLS) this summer. My time at CLS provided me with invaluable legal training and strengthened my commitment to public interest legal work in the future. During my time at CLS, I worked on over 20 cases, more than half of which involved Spanish-speaking clients.

Many of the cases I worked on during the summer involved reducing barriers to employment through criminal record expungements, pardon applications, and child abuse appeals. In one memorable case, I worked with a client who was facing charges of child abuse for making a decision about her son's medication without consulting a doctor. Our client was a single parent who worked full-time to support her six-year-old autistic son. Listing our client on the child abuse registry would have prevented her from earning an income by working in daycares, the work she had been doing for over a decade. I interviewed our client and potential witnesses, conducted research, and helped prepare the case for our client's hearing to appeal maintaining the report on the child abuse registry. When our client later sought help with SSI benefits for her son, requesting time off from work under the Family Medical Leave Act, and seeking representation for her son's special education needs, I also assisted her with those issues. This was one of the many cases that reminded me how one individual's life presents many distinct but related legal issues that need attention.

I also worked on a few cases involving wage theft when an employee had not received payment for work performed, had not been paid minimum wage, or had not been paid overtime. In one case, our Spanish-speaking client had been working at a restaurant for less than minimum wage and without overtime pay. He had also not been paid for nine days of work. I interviewed the client, conducted research, wrote a demand letter to the employer, and eventually scheduled a meeting with the employer and client to negotiate payment for our client. I was able to resolve the case and get our client paid the wages owed, including overtime, and part of a fine.

My internship at CLS taught me a lot about how to be an effective advocate for our clients and prepared me well for future public interest legal work. Thank you again for the incredible opportunity to serve with Equal Justice America.

Sincerely,

Claire Grandison

J.D. Candidate 2014
American University, Washington College of Law



August 19, 2013

Katie Toman
Office Manager
KATIE@EQUALJUSTICEAMERICA.ORG

Re: **Claire Grandison, Employment Unit,
Community Legal Services**

To Whom It May Concern:

Claire Grandison worked as a legal intern in the Employment Unit at Community Legal Services from May 29, 2013 through August 9, 2013, and I served as her direct supervisor. Claire worked very closely with me on a number of cases. Additionally, Claire was assigned significant work by at least 4 other attorneys! whose work was assigned directly. Claire did excellent work for our unit in a number of areas. We would be remiss if we failed to express our gratitude to EJA for providing funding for law students such as Claire! Thank you very much.

During her 10 week internship, Claire was an amazing addition to our Employment Unit. She worked on 26 cases, more than half of which were for Spanish-speaking clients. Claire primarily spent time on two areas of the Employment Unit's work: reducing barriers to employment, and wage claims. Outside of these areas, Claire also worked on cases related to employment discrimination and arbitration.

First, Claire assisted numerous clients reduce barriers to employment. These barriers included both criminal records and civil child abuse records. Claire assisted clients by working on pardon applications, expungement petitions, and by closely working with the undersigned in preparation for a contested hearing appealing a civil record of child abuse. This client had several other legal issues on which Claire worked as well. These cases required Claire to interview clients and potential witnesses, write advice letters to clients about various legal issues, draft expungement petitions, conduct legal research, and write legal memoranda. Claire also carried out research and wrote a legal memorandum for an *amicus* brief for an appeal regarding the standard of proof required to maintain an indicated report of child abuse on the child abuse registry.

Second, Claire worked with clients whose employers who committed wage theft by failing to pay workers for time worked. Claire interviewed clients, researched their employers, and wrote demand letters to the employers. When demand letters did not resolve the cases, Claire prepared cases for filing in court or wrote advice letters to clients informing them how to file *pro se*. Claire also negotiated a settlement agreement between one Spanish-speaking client and his employer to get the client paid wages and statutory penalties. For cases that had reached the collections stage, Claire communicated with clients and defendants to coordinate payments, conducted research about defendants, and prepared documents for court in order to enforce judgments. In support of her cases,

Claire researched and wrote legal memoranda about both state and federal wage laws related to overtime, independent contractors, and on-call work.

Finally, Claire was involved in additional cases outside these primary areas of work. Claire interviewed a client and prepared a filing for an employment discrimination claim against a company that denied employment based on a juvenile criminal record. Claire conducted research and wrote a legal memorandum related to enforcement of an arbitration clause in an employment contract in preparation for an appeal in that case. Throughout the summer, Claire also observed various court proceedings related to wages, vacation of decades-old forfeited bail judgments, child abuse, and expungements.

Other comments by two other attorneys follow:

A. Claire worked on two substantive pieces for me. The first involved the issue of whether it is possible to prove the absence of a legal marriage for purposes of a pension where two women were claiming a deceased husband (or ex-husband's) pension. Claire used enormous initiative in doing both legal research and simply getting on the phone to find out what she could from family lawyers and City Hall. I had not asked her to write up anything, but in a very short time she had written up an informal memo to me outlining what she had learned and additional possible areas of inquiry. I was impressed by both the quality and the speed of her work.

Claire researched and drafted a significant piece of the legal argument section of an amicus brief to be filed in the PA Supreme Court. She did excellent work. Her research and writing are comprehensive and clear. She took on enormous amounts of work in a short period of time and always followed each new piece of the assignment with "What can I do to help you now?" She is also a pleasure to work with.

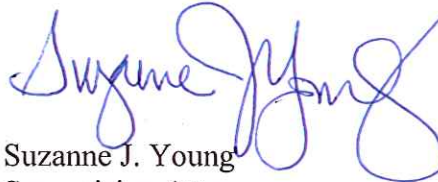
B. Claire did outstanding work for me this summer. She was quick, efficient, and able to handle multiple assignments from multiple attorneys. She handled at least a dozen cases for me, primarily involving direct client contact, phone calls, letters, etc. She had a very pleasant demeanor with the clients, and her Spanish language skills served her well in communicating with many immigrant clients with wage theft claims. She doggedly researched claims for our clients in order to calculate wages, find employers, etc. Because of her persistence in continuing to track down leads, we were able to follow through in a number of cases that we may not have had the resources to otherwise pursue. Her work with me also required her to write demand letters and negotiate directly with employers. Her written advocacy was very good and she was able to turn around assignments surprisingly rapid manner.

In her direct communications with employers, she had one case in particular where a number of phone calls as well as a face to face meeting with the employer (in Spanish) resulted in a fantastic result for our client, a restaurant worker who was not paid for his final 9 days of work and not paid properly for overtime over a month. The client received an excellent settlement in which he was paid everything he was owed under the law, plus part of a fine. Client received his money quickly, without the long delays that can occur with taking the case to court. I was quite pleased with her eagerness to take on this new experience, and she displayed a knack for strategic thinking when carefully planning for the meeting.

As her supervisor, I found Claire to be very bright, mature, thoughtful, very quick on the uptake, very quick in completion of all assignments, and a joy to work with. Claire was consistently communicative with attorneys and yet able to work independently. I heartily concur but will not repeat what other attorneys had to say about Claire (above), Claire was a huge help to our unit this summer.

Please do not hesitate to call me (215-981-3754) or email me syoung@clsphila.org if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Suzanne J. Young". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping line extending from the end of the name towards the top right of the page.

Suzanne J. Young
Supervising Attorney