

August 20, 2007

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you so much for your support – without Equal Justice America, I would not have been able to pursue a public interest internship this summer. I had an absolutely amazing summer at Make the Road by Walking (MRW). For the first time, I was able to use the legal skills that I learned during my first year of law school and use them in a practical and effective way to advocate on behalf of indigent communities. My supervisor was wonderful and entrusted me with significant responsibilities.

This summer, I worked on a range of issues relating to racial profiling, advocacy on behalf of arrested youth who, policy research on a campaign to stop the over-criminalization of youth in public schools, and legal services relating to public benefits. Most of my time was spent wearing the hat of the social security disability intern where I provided direct legal services to low income women and children who were impaired by physical and/or mental disabilities.

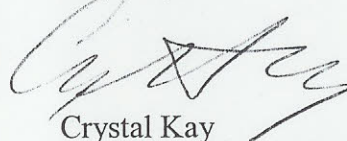
Under the guidance of my supervisor, I worked on four cases and became very familiar with the federal social security statutes. This included becoming very familiar with a range of medical impairments, gathering the medical evidence from doctors, which also included drafting letters for them, and analyzing applicable statutory and case law authority. Finally, before the hearing, I also prepared briefs and exhibits to send in advance to the administrative judge. Normally, if a on the record decision is made, then the client won't even have to go to the hearing at all. Thus far, I have won two victories for our clients. The other two are still pending.

In the past, MRW had helped its members appeal cases relating to physical disabilities. But the clients I helped to represent had mental disabilities and in particular, one of them was a child. I was given the task to research what the statutory regulations were for these types of cases and also prepared a "how to" guide for my supervising attorney as well as future interns.

One case that stood out in particular, was one relating to a young boy of fifteen. Facially, the case was very weak. Even when we consulted with another attorney at Advocates for Children, he didn't seem to think the case was winnable. Despite that, we decided to go ahead and appeal the case. We didn't hear from the judge before the hearing date which meant that we would have to go to the actual hearing. My supervising attorney was ready to let me handle the appeal and argue the case. However, at the start of the hearing, the judge informed us that because our brief had been so persuasive, he was ready to make an on the record decision. Furthermore, he even went on to comment on several strong points made in the brief. We were absolutely floored and it was so gratifying to see the look of relief and happiness on the family's face.

It feels really good to know that I made a direct difference in someone's life. I don't think that I would have been able to work on such significant work had I been working at a large firm. No doubt, my summer at MRW has solidified my intent and desire to pursue an interest in public interest law. Thank you Equal Justice America!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal Kay', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Crystal Kay  
Candidate for J.D. Degree, May 2009  
Rutgers-Newark School of Law