

August 20, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Rubin,

I want to thank you for funding my summer experience and giving me the amazing opportunity to work at a public interest organization without feeling a financial burden. My work at Bet Tzedek Legal Services this summer was not only extremely rewarding, but gave me the chance to experience and work on so many different areas of the law in such a short period of time. It was also extremely comforting to know that when I walked into work everyday, I would be working with individuals who loved what they did and did it with such high energy and a positive attitude.

Bet Tzedek's mission is to provide free legal representation to low-income, elderly, and disabled individuals. I feel like I fully lived up to that mission statement in regards to the clients I interacted with and was able to serve. Since Bet Tzedek does public interest work in so many fields, I had the opportunity to rank which specific project I wanted to work on before I started my internship. Because of my previous experiences and interest at the time of ranking, I chose the Kinship Care Project, the Holocaust Restitution Project, and the Housing Conditions Project.

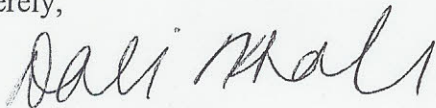
Much to my surprise, on my first day of orientation, I found that I was placed with the Caregiver Project, which meant specifically working with caregivers who were caring for elderly or disabled individuals and also dealing with a wide variety of Elder Law matters. I asked my supervisors why they had chosen me for that project, and they stated it was because my resume reflected that I had an interest not only in law, but social services and policy as well. Because of that, they thought I would be best suited to work with them. While I never had exposure to the Elder Law or even considered Elder Law as a possible field to work, over my 10 weeks at Bet Tzedek, I was opened up to a legal field that is largely growing. I realized my supervisors were correct and that the field was really well suited toward my personality. I also realized how much attention the field needs in the legal community. Most of all, I had a great time working with my supervisors and our clients.

Even though I had a wonderful experience working on the Caregiver Project, I was fortunate to be able to have exposure to the other projects as well. Since I was assigned to do general intake once a week, I had the opportunity to interview and counsel clients who came to us for cases dealing with conservatorships, guardianships, consumer fraud, landlord/tenant disputes, and employment discrimination, just to name a few. But I did keep extremely busy working on cases with my supervisors, especially dealing with In-Home Supportive Services disputes.

One specific In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) case I worked on dealt with a client who had severe dementia and was ambulatory. Even though his doctor stated that he had severe deficits in memory, judgment and orientation, and needed 24 hour supervision, his IHSS worker would not increase the amount of allowed hours to have a caretaker care for him. His daughter had to quit work to stay with him because of his need for constant supervision. I attempted to communicate directly with the IHSS worker, but she refused to speak with me. Because of that, we requested a hearing, in which I represented the client in front of an ALJ and was able to increase his IHSS hours from 101 to 283 a month. His daughter, who had to quit her job, now does not need to make the decision between caring for her father full-time and going back to work in order to support herself and her family.

I have never been told "Thank You" as much in one job by my clients as I was told this summer at Bet Tzedek. Not only was the client gratitude extremely rewarding, but the constant supervision and guidance by the staff and attorneys far surpassed my expectations. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to work at a non-profit organization such as Bet Tzedek this summer. Whether or not I decide to take on public interest as a full-time career after law school, you can be sure to know that I will volunteer my services to clients like those that I served this summer – the clients who need our help the most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dalia Khalili".

Dalia Khalili
UC Hastings College of the Law
Expected Graduation: May 2007