

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

Re: Summer Fellowship 2010 – Children’s Law Center

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer, I was a law clerk for the nonprofit legal services organization The Children’s Law Center (CLC). My summer clerkship was made possible through the generous fellowship stipend from Equal Justice America. I entered law school over a year ago with an interest in pursuing a career in public interest, and my experiences this summer reaffirmed my desire to provide legal services to those who need them most.

CLC is a nonprofit that provides legal representation and advocacy for under-resourced D.C. residents. CLC focuses its efforts on improving the family by providing advocacy for better access to health and education services, as well as guardian *ad litem* representation for children suspected to have been victims of abuse or neglect. I worked specifically with education attorneys in the guardian *ad litem* project. In this role, I brought my prior experience as a D.C. special education teacher. Education attorneys at the CLC advocate for students who aren’t receiving the special education services they deserve. This usually involves attending IEP meetings and representing students in administrative hearings. In addition to educational representation, I participated in abuse and neglect proceedings by preparing briefs, motions and research.

My main duties involved researching and writing on specific legal issues for staff attorneys in the office. In this capacity, I became intimately involved in client cases. Specifically, I helped to advocate for a fourteen year-old middle school student who needed educational supports. She had been in the D.C. foster care system since being removed from her biological mother at the age of eight. This particular child had disrupted placement with foster parents many times, and had understandable emotional difficulties that impacted her performance in school. By performing legal research under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, I aided staff attorneys who ultimately secured an IEP for this student as she entered high school this fall. Hopefully, this type of educational support will positively influence this child’s life as she continues to work towards permanent placement with a parent or guardian.

Overall, my experience at CLC reaffirmed my desire to provide legal assistance for those in need. I’m not exactly sure what I want this to look like after graduation from law school. I do know, however, that a public interest career provides an opportunity to lead a fulfilling professional life. The opportunity to help others is something I’m deeply committed to, and I am grateful for the chance to have my experience at CLC this past summer. I would like to thank

EJA for this opportunity, and I value the work that your organization does for law students across the country that have similar professional goals as mine.

All the best,

Dan McGraw
Catholic University of America
Columbus School of Law 2012