

August 31, 2014

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I first wish to thank Equal Justice America for the fellowship that I received this summer. It was pivotal in enabling me to do the kind of work that I wanted to this year and I deeply appreciate the organization's contribution. I spent the summer at the Legal Aid Justice Center in Charlottesville and I can safely say that it was a very worthwhile experience.

I like to describe my summer at the Legal Aid Justice Center as illuminating. I had worked professionally before, being a Foreign Service Officer before I began law school, but this was the first time that I was around a legal environment in the sense of doing pure legal work. I was absolutely thrilled that I was able to do this type of work this summer as it really solidified to me that I do enjoy the law and that I want to be a lawyer. Further, we were able to become involved in substantive legal work at the LAJC and I believe that this furthered my growth as a law student and as a future attorney, and really engaged me mentally throughout the summer.

The LAJC was particularly adept at allowing us to do as much as we could with cases and clients, especially considering the fact that we were not practice certificate holders and so could not stand up in court. That said I felt that I was able to get deeply involved with cases this summer and see them through. Granted, there were cases that we could not close because they involved ongoing matters but for the most part I was really able to engage with clients and provide assistance where needed in an efficient and productive manner. The cases that I worked on were mostly housing issues that stemmed from a level of mismanagement of public housing by landlords and I was also able to have some involvement in a class action lawsuit filed by the LAJC against the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women.

The lawsuit against the FCCW was absolutely fascinating to me in terms of learning how a class action was conducted and also how important resources are to the LAJC. The LAJC filed a class action suit against the FCCW alleging gross medical mismanagement of prisoners' health care, which the complaint stated, constituted cruel and unusual punishment. The organizations being sued responded to the request for discovery with what seemed to be a metric ton of data – both useful and completely useless. It then became our job to sift through this data and sort it so that it would be useful to the attorneys during depositions and at trial. Were it not for the assistance of the interns in documenting this entire mound of discovery during the summer, the case would have been that much more unwieldy for the attorneys as there was so much information to digest and dispose of.

I think one of the most important things that I learned from that case was that in litigation, size can and does matter. The companies responsible for prison health care and the Virginia Department of Corrections were the metaphorical Goliaths who could afford lengthy legal battles and expensive legal teams. LAJC on the other hand, depends on pro bono attorneys and grants. They do not have

vast resources and often rely on volunteers. This can really impact a case, and I believe that as someone who wants to be an attorney in the future, understanding the cost of justice was an extremely important part of my training.

I also chose this particular case as my focus because it struck a cord with me in terms of how we treat prisoners. Throughout my reading of the discovery material, an implication that seemed almost pervasive was the idea that prisoners did not deserve the best care. It really made me ponder the idea of whether prison was meant for punishment or rehabilitation or both. The health care provided in prison made it seem as if because these people had been convicted of crimes, they no longer deserved adequate care and medication. I must admit that it was quite an unsettling realization and really peaked my interest in prison conditions and human rights. The case will go to trial later this year and I am eagerly monitoring its progress.

Overall, I am very grateful for the time that I spent at the LAJC this summer I will likely continue to volunteer there for the next two years that I spend in Charlottesville until graduation.

Sincerely,
Dana A. Wallace
University of Virginia

September 9, 2014

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

Re: Dana Wallace's Equal Justice America fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Dana A. Wallace recently completed a summer internship with Legal Aid Justice Center. Dana worked with the Civil Advocacy program in the Charlottesville office under the supervision of myself and three other staff attorneys for 10 weeks, beginning on May 19. The Civil Advocacy Program (CAP) provides assistance to individuals and families in Central Virginia who face legal dilemmas related to housing, public benefits, employment, consumer protection, or the rights of the elderly, and engages in systematic advocacy with and on behalf of low-income people in these issue areas.

Dana worked directly with our individual clients and families, interviewing, negotiating, and writing pleadings and letters. She was particularly helpful in a series of administrative hearings on housing choice voucher terminations for alleged drug related criminal activity by the voucher holder. Dana drafted thorough memorandums to the hearing officer presenting our legal and factual arguments and helped prepare witnesses and document evidence for the hearing. Dana also worked extensively on a federal class action against a state prison for failure to provide adequate medical care to its prisoners. This work involved complex document management of medical records and administrative grievances as well as attending and summarizing depositions. Dana and her fellow interns' organization and attention to detail were critical in our office's preparation for trial of this very important case.

Finally, through her work this summer Dana became interested in the largely unregulated area of rent-to-own contracts for homes in Virginia. Dana is currently helping my co-worker Brenda Castañeda prepare a presentation on the subject for a statewide conference attended by nearly all of Virginia's legal aid attorneys, who will benefit from Dana's work.

We are lucky to have Dana as a continued presence in our office and are grateful for Equal Justice America's financial support which made her internship this summer possible. If you have any questions, please contact me at 434-529-1841 or kim@justice4all.org.

Sincerely,


Kimberly A. Rolla
Lewis F. Powell Fellow and Attorney