

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

July 26, 2010

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer I interned at Community Legal Services and Counseling Center, a small nonprofit civil legal assistance organization in Cambridge, MA. The organization provides legal services to indigent individuals in the Cambridge-Boston metropolitan area.

I worked in CLSACC's Disability Benefits Project and Housing Law Project; the organization also provides legal services on immigration and family law matters, as well as mental health services. During the summer, I worked primarily on evictions, housing discrimination, and denials of Social Security benefits. I met with clients, performed legal research, drafted motions and briefs, and even helped revamp the organization's client intake and record-keeping database.

CLSACC's small size created a collegial and close-knit environment. As a result I worked closely with Attorney John Froio throughout the summer. Not only did John provide invaluable guidance on all my assignments, but also he did not hesitate to allow me to take the lead on cases. John was confident that I could handle my own clients, even though CLSACC clients are a diverse and challenging group: most suffer from physical and/or mental impairments, and often are at a critical and tumultuous point in their lives.

One case in particular signifies the extraordinary experience I had this summer. John offered me the opportunity to head up a client's Social Security case, which would culminate in a hearing before an administrative law judge. I worked closely with the client, keeping him apprised of developments in the case, maintaining contact with him to develop the case, and prepping him for the hearing. The issue was a challenging one – a benefits overpayment appeal – and the judge expected much from those who appeared before him. The hearing was supposed to be primarily a direct examination of my client, so as to bring out the relevant facts of the case, but things took an unexpected turn. During my case preparation, I discovered that the Social Security Administration actually may have made a mistake in its allegations. Upon bringing this to the Court's attention, the judge engaged me in a lengthy discussion that was not unlike oral argument. Though the issue was thorny, I was prepared and relished the experience. Moreover, I will continue to represent my client pro bono at his next hearing this fall.

The administrative law hearing was my first court appearance of any kind, and CLSACC made it happen. The close-knit atmosphere of a small nonprofit was the sort of environment in which a summer intern could take on substantial responsibility, and I am grateful for that. I am also grateful for Equal Justice America, because public interest work is financially difficult to pursue. The EJA Fellowship allowed me to pursue such an enriching experience.

Regards,



Daniel Beauchemin  
University of Michigan Law School  
J.D. Candidate, December 2010

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Executive Director  
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Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer Daniel Beauchemin received an Equal Justice America Fellowship to work at Community Legal Services and Counseling Center in Cambridge, MA. While at CLSACC, Dan worked with me in the organization's Housing Law Project and Disability Benefits Project, each of which provides legal assistance to indigent clients from Cambridge and neighboring communities. Dan worked on matters ranging from evictions and housing discrimination to denials of Social Security benefits. He met with clients, performed research, drafted motions and briefs, and assisted with redesigning CLSACC's client intake and records database.

I enjoyed having Dan in the office this summer, and am pleased that he was able to receive funding from Equal Justice America. Particularly during tough economic times, organizations like CLSACC are underfunded and understaffed. Taking on law students allows more work to be done, in addition to allowing regular employees to take vacation. Without funding from programs like EJA, nonprofits like CLSACC would be worse off. Furthermore, EJA allows students like Dan to pursue opportunities that otherwise would not be feasible.

Dan performed substantive work all summer, and his work contributed considerably both to CLSACC and its clients. Dan stood out by way of his willingness to take on new challenges. He was eager to meet with clients – with or without my presence – to develop their cases. Dan's maturity and his appreciation for the work showed through in this regard, since CLSACC clients are a diverse group and often are at difficult times in their lives.

Dan even appeared on behalf of a client before an administrative law judge. With no assistance from me, he performed admirably despite the judge's pointed questioning. Dan clearly enjoyed the experience, and I think his time at CLSACC greatly helped him prepare for a career in litigation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about Dan's summer experience, or about CLSACC.

Sincerely,



John A. Froio, Esquire  
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