

DOROTHY CHANG

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

August 21, 2012

Re: Equal Justice America Summer Fellowship Experience

Dear Mr. Ruben,

My summer with the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment was a great learning experience. It was an especially meaningful opportunity to work on environmental justice issues that affect communities close to where I was raised. The issues that I was exposed to this summer will be something that affects how I view and understand environmental issues in the future.

A great deal of my summer was spent conducting legal research for memoranda and briefs on a wide variety of matters. Research and writing were skills that I had hoped to build on during the summer, and I think that I learned a lot from these assignments. However, there were also opportunities to visit the affected communities and attend community meetings. These visits and meetings were the most important part of my internship experience.

One of the most memorable experiences I have from this summer is attending a California Department of Public Health public meeting in Kettleman City. Kettleman City is a poor, Latino neighborhood in the Central Valley of California. They are located near a hazardous waste site that accepts extremely toxic chemicals (like PCBs), and a few years earlier, residents experienced an increase in birth defects in the area. A study was undertaken to examine if the birth defects were part of a larger pattern. This summer, the California Department of Public Health released a faulty study that determined that the birth defects were not part of a larger pattern and held a public hearing to explain their study. At the hearing, it was moving to see the residents share their personal stories of family members with birth defects or personal stories of miscarriage; they said that the study was clearly wrong because they were living proof that the study was incorrect. The public health officials brushed aside these stories and relied on their flawed study as the final word on the matter. However, the attorneys that were present were able to make arguments that could pinpoint the problems with the study; the attorneys were able to describe why there was such a discrepancy between the personal experiences of community residents and the results of the study. The attorneys confronted the government officials and made it clear that this type of half-hearted study would not go unchallenged. This experience really highlighted the disenfranchisement faced by certain communities in California, and it stressed just how important legal action is to achieving environmental justice. Without legal advocates, these communities will simply be brushed aside by the government.

As an attorney, I want my work to assist communities that need legal representation, and I want my work to help create positive change in these communities. Through the EJA Summer Fellowship, I was able to get a glimpse of what some of that work might look like. Thank you for helping me experience this incredible opportunity.

Best,

Dorothy Chang
University of Michigan Law School
May 2013



CENTER ON RACE, POVERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT

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September 4, 2012

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

Re: Evaluation of Dorothy Chang

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer, the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment was pleased to have Dorothy Chang as an Equal Justice America Fellow in our San Francisco office. We were very satisfied with her work for us this summer. She worked on a variety of projects with a number of our attorneys, including researching and writing various legal memos, drafting a portion of a reply brief, and writing a letter to a government agency. Her writing and research was solid and her final work products were helpful and well put together. We found Miss. Chang's legal analysis to be accurate and thoughtful. She was engaged with the projects she worked on and she asked great questions. In addition, Miss. Chang had great time management and was willing to take on last minute projects.

Miss. Chang made a great addition to our office this summer. She was pleasant to work with and got along well with the staff and other interns in our office. We were very pleased to work with Miss. Chang this summer and so thankful for EJA's generous sponsorship. Unfortunately, CRPE is not in a position to offer our interns any compensation, and it is because of EJA's sponsorship that we were able to have a wonderful intern this summer. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to email (sparino@crpe-ej.org) or call me (ext. 301).

Sincerely,

/s/

Sofia Parino
Senior Attorney