

Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

May 31, 2011

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I would like to thank you and Equal Justice America for funding my internship this spring with Boulder County Legal Services. I completed my fellowship at BCLS on Thursday, May 26, but moving on has been bittersweet. This experience has proved to be not only most educational, but inspiring as well. Throughout these few short months I believe I have sincerely effected change in the lives of our clients, but have also been touched in return by their stories and profound gratitude. I look forward to taking my experiences with me in my future work and in making poverty law the foundation of my endeavors.

Before coming to BCLS, I was already committed to working for the marginalized. I had lobbied Capitol Hill for greater HIV/AIDS funding and prevention with the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, was a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate for especially serious child abuse and neglect cases, and was a student attorney in the Juvenile Law Clinic at my law school. However, BCLS gave me insight into the lives of the impoverished that I would never have been able to experience. I was privileged to work with an elderly Hispanic man who spoke no English, and who had lost his home to foreclosure due to predatory lending in a system that he could not begin to understand. Although his case proved to be an uphill-battle, his desperation and deepest appreciation made the hours of research, interviews, and phone calls beyond worth-the-while. I was fortunate also to work on a divorce and child custody case for an immigrant woman who had been systematically physically abused by her husband. Our representation was visibly empowering for this woman who had literally been beat down and belittled for years. These are just two examples of the inspiring individuals that I worked with weekly, who made my time at BCLS so much more than an internship.

Though I came to BCLS with experience in juvenile and family law, I left having gained a vast resource of knowledge in landlord/tenant disputes, foreclosure, public benefits, bank garnishment, criminal record sealing, property disputes, and civil protection orders, among others. I am now going into my last year in law school and have continued to craft my career around aiding those less fortunate than I. My time at BCLS has encouraged me to enroll in Creditor's Remedies and Debtor's Protections next semester so that I can continue to work with public benefits and consumer law. I am also enrolled in Civil Liberties Litigation and Advanced Constitutional Law so that I may better fight for the rights of the disenfranchised. My time at BCLS has shown me that this line of work is not only intellectually stimulating, but feeds the soul as well.

Thank you very much for this foundational opportunity.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Bonanno
Juris Doctor Candidate, 2012
University of Colorado Law School