

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

June 10, 2010

Dear Mr. Ruben,

The Equal Justice America Fellowship was the most valuable experience of my first year of law school at Stanford. My fellowship in the immigration department of Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto brought the core principles of my first year curriculum to life. It served as an opportunity to not only explore an area of law I find stimulating, but also as an opportunity to give back to the Bay Area immigrant community.

The quality and depth of the legal experience I received was unparalleled. I worked directly with an attorney on pressing U-Visa and asylum cases. I worked on these cases from the moment the client was referred through filing. I was able to meet with clients in juvenile detention. I coordinated with probation officers and various community organizations in order to push a client's case forward. I also conducted research on asylum and analyzed the probability of success in one client's case.

My work with one client in particular has been especially fulfilling. I began working on her case at the beginning of my fellowship and continued working on her case through the end. I felt honored to be able to assist this deserving girl in her quest to stay in this country. Touring the juvenile detention facility in which she stayed for months because of a minor parole violation was a rude awakening. It brought to light the problems in our immigration system and made me question how and why we criminalize the immigration status of children who were brought to this country by their parents. As part of my fellowship, I was also given the chance to research the DREAM Act. I now believe this act is the first step towards a just immigration system in which children will not be deemed criminals based on their parents' actions.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to serve my community that the Equal Justice America fellowship provided me. I would recommend the fellowship to any law student who is looking to gain valuable legal experience and have a direct impact on the Bay Area community.

Sincerely,
Ellie Dehghan
Stanford