

3544 Springhill Road
Birmingham, AL 35223

August 7, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to complete a Summer Fellowship at The Door's Legal Services Center. Not only was I able to contribute substantively to the Center's cases and projects, I also was able to acquire valuable skills and knowledge that will help me both in law school and in later public interest positions.

Most of my summer was spent interviewing, advising, and advocating on behalf of young people facing foster care, education, housing, employment, public benefits, and immigration problems. I interviewed clients and worked with them to figure out the best way to address the difficulties they faced. I wrote a letter to the District Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) explaining why she should grant deferred action for (i.e., agree not to remove) a young woman with spina bifida, scoliosis, and kidney failure, who required hemodialysis three times a week in order to live. I helped immigrants who had been abused, neglected, or abandoned to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, and I assisted other immigrant youth in applying for permanent lawful residence in the United States. I facilitated a young man's entry into foster care before his legal guardian moved across the country and left him without a place to live. I also wrote letters to university financial aid administrators on behalf of young people who experienced "unusual circumstances" at home, allowing them to apply for financial aid as independent students. For some of them, being deemed independent enabled them to attend college. I helped a young mother apply for housing and look for a job so that she would be able to reunify with her son, who was in foster care. I assisted a student who was not receiving the special education services guaranteed by his Individualized Education Program to get private, one-on-one tutoring paid for by the Department of Education. I also worked on a research project examining how and when gang persecution can serve as the basis for an asylum claim. Additionally, I attended several court proceedings and hearings, as well as trainings conducted by the attorneys at The Door.

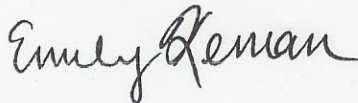
One of my favorite parts of the summer was working on the Foster Youth Peer Education Project, which was part of the larger Leadership Development Institute (LDI). LDI is a summer program consisting of a variety of courses designed to provide young people with leadership skills, including self-awareness, communication, teamwork, and reflection. As part of the LDI curriculum, the Foster Youth Peer Education Project trained young people to conduct legal rights workshops with an attorney at foster care agencies around city. I helped to organize and plan for each training session; to engage group members in team building activities, role plays, and

discussion; and to prepare for and lead a day-long workshop at a Residential Treatment Center. I also led a session on sibling visitation in the foster care system, training the peer educators about the rights of children and youth in foster care to be placed with, to visit, and to communicate with their siblings.

Through my work at The Door, I developed skills interviewing, advising, and representing young people, and I expanded my knowledge about the child welfare system, public assistance, housing, immigration, education, and aging out of foster care. My work on the Foster Youth Peer Education Project allowed me to work closely with and develop relationships with individual young people and to learn from their experiences, interests, and goals. It also helped me to develop my ability to lead and advise a group of young people and to expand my knowledge of foster care in a way that otherwise would not have been possible. Overall, working with and observing the young people and the staff at The Door was both inspiring and instructive, and I felt very fortunate to be surrounded by such talented, motivated, and devoted people every day.

After graduation, I plan to pursue a career in child advocacy. I am currently in the process of applying for fellowships to work at Lawyers For Children, another organization in New York that provides direct legal services to children and youth. I will carry with me the knowledge and skills that I gained through my internship at The Door as I continue to work with children and youth in law school, at Lawyers For Children, and throughout my career. I feel fortunate to have been given the opportunity to work at such an admirable organization, and it would not have been possible without your support. Thank you for helping me to take part in such a worthwhile experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Kernan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Emily Kernan
Harvard Law School
June 2007