

August 31, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thanks in part to funding from Equal Justice America, I had the great privilege of interning this summer with the Aging and Disabilities Unit of Community Legal Services of Philadelphia. I provided assistance on about 30 cases involving clients who faced problems with their Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. My internship experience was a formative one, and I am now more committed than ever to pursuing a career in direct legal services.

One highlight of my internship was writing a letter brief to the Social Security Appeals Council that resulted in a waiver of our client's \$8,000 SSDI overpayment. Our client was a single mother of two young children who would have faced severe financial hardship if forced to repay the \$8,000. Yet an Administrative Law Judge had originally denied our client's request for a waiver. Tasked with identifying arguments against the ALJ's decision, I analyzed legal provisions, the ALJ's written opinion, documents in our client's file, and a recording of the hearing. Eventually I discovered that the ALJ had committed several factual and legal errors, which I explained in a brief arguing for waiver of our client's overpayment. Happily, a few weeks later we received a fully favorable decision from the Appeals Council. The Council had overturned the ALJ's decision and granted our client a waiver. The client was overjoyed, and it was gratifying to know that we had made a tangible, practical difference in her life by relieving her of what would have been a heavy financial and emotional burden.

Another memorable case involved yet another overpayment, but this time one of mysterious origin. Our client came to CLS seeking help with an SSI overpayment of about \$5,000, insisting that it was a mistake. According to him, five years ago the Social Security Administration alleged that they had overpaid him in SSI benefits; he supposedly possessed assets beyond the resource limit. SSA then reduced his monthly SSI checks. Our client had been trying to fight the overpayment on his own but had failed to find help or cooperation at his local Social Security office. He was angry and adamant that he had never lied to Social Security about his income.

He was right. I called our client's local office and spoke several times to a claims representative about the case. I asked the representative to explain the history of our

client's SSI payments and was surprised to learn that Social Security had indeed made a mistake—a significant one. Specifically, they had misapplied one of their own rules about how to count financial resources. Our client had never been overpaid! Therefore, I submitted a brief to the office requesting that our client start receiving the full SSI amount as well a refund of all the money that had been erroneously withheld. Although my internship ended before the case could be fully resolved, I am confident that our client will eventually collect the money that he is entitled to and finally gain closure to a frustrating, years-long episode.

In addition to these two cases, I had the chance to meet and work with a variety of other clients during my internship. Working one-on-one with different individuals and developing relationships with them was a rewarding part of my summer. I saw clients when they were at their best and most hopeful, but I also saw them at their most anxious and disheartened. This affected how they related to me during meetings or conversations over the phone. As a result, I gained valuable practice in using empathy to effectively communicate with and counsel different personalities.

Throughout the summer, I received support and guidance from inspiring attorneys who are now my role models. My supervisors were passionate about their work and showed me through their dedication what it truly means to be an advocate for clients and their interests. I aspire to follow my supervisors' example and know I was extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with them.

I am so grateful for my summer with Community Legal Services. I loved the challenges and rewards of my work, interacting with clients, and learning from passionate advocates. Thank you for recognizing the value of legal services work and funding internships like mine. I am happy to say that this internship was key to cementing my decision to pursue a public interest career, and I am excited about what lies ahead.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Kye
Class of 2014
University of Virginia School of Law



COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES
OF PHILADELPHIA

August 27, 2012

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

Re: Jennifer Kye
Summer Internship

Dear Mr. Ruben:

We are writing concerning the summer internship for Jennifer Kye. We supervised Ms. Kye jointly over the summer. She was an intern in our Aging & Disabilities Unit. Our unit handles a variety of issues, including SSI disability work, Medicare and Medicaid eligibility and access, skilled nursing facility access and rights, and Social Security non-disability related work. Jennifer was one of the best interns we have had in recent memory. We were both very impressed with her intelligence, her work ethic, and her passion to advocate for our clients. It was a delight to work with her and we would not hesitate to work with Jennifer again.

Ms. Kye worked closely with Sam Brooks on several SSI disability cases. Mostly, these cases involved appeals of decisions made by Administrative Law Judges. In one case, Mr. Brooks had taken the denial of a request that the Social Security Administration (SSA) waive the collection of an \$8,000 dollar overpayment to an administrative hearing. The judge denied the claimant's request. Mr. Brooks then filed an appeal of this decision. Ms. Kye extensively reviewed both the paper record and the recording of the hearing, and provided a brief reflecting the errors the judge made. This brief was submitted to the Appeals Council of SSA and the judge's decision was overturned and the client's request to waive the overpayment was granted. This will greatly benefit the client, as her home was in foreclosure and she needed all of her monthly income to pay her mortgage. Ms. Kye's work on this case was the reason the appeal was successful.

On several other occasions, Mr. Brooks gave her extensive research assignments to prepare appeals of judge's decisions denying client's application for SSI. Ms. Kye approached these tasks zealously, and produced briefs that went beyond Mr. Brooks' expectations and will be essential to filing, and hopefully winning his appeal. Mr. Brooks was repeatedly impressed with Ms. Kye's ease of learning and the thought she put into her work. She was easily one of the best interns he has supervised.

Ms. Kye also worked closely with Mr. Whitelaw on a number of projects. She performed impressively in all of her assignments and demonstrated poise and sophistication in her work.

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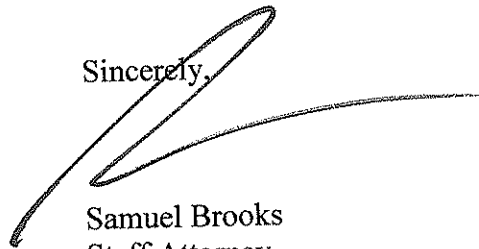
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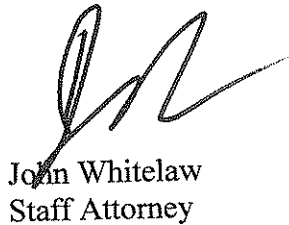
She met independently with clients and needed little supervision before taking on difficult problems. She acted with poise and maturity, demonstrating compassion and empathy for our clients. She was not perturbed by meeting with some of our most challenging clients.

Ms. Kye's written work was excellent, requiring little editing. She quickly grasped complicated regulatory schemes and was able to produce highly effective, persuasive work on short notice. In addition to the very high quality of her work, I was equally impressed with her passion and commitment to our clients and the work we do. Jennifer was an excellent colleague who fit in well with all of our staff here. I have no doubt that Jennifer has all of the tools to become an outstanding public interest attorney. It was truly a pleasure to work with her.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Brooks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Samuel Brooks
Staff Attorney

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Whitelaw', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Whitelaw
Staff Attorney