

JESSICA M. RIVERA

September 13, 2009

Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, Virginia 23112
Attn: Mr. Dan Ruben, Executive Director

Re: Summer Internship at Essex-Newark Legal Services

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I would like to thank you and Equal Justice America for the wonderful opportunity afforded to me this summer. If it were not for the generosity of your organization, I would not have had such a wonderful experience. This summer I worked at Essex-Newark Legal Services in the Expungement Section.

Within the Expungement Section, I was able to meet and interview several clients who waited over five or even ten years to file for an expungement. Many demonstrated that they had completely reformed their lives and desired a second chance.

While not all of our clients were eligible for receiving an expungement, I learned at legal services that no client should leave our office hopeless. One of my most memorable moments this summer was helping a client who had been arrested for a drug possession charge at the age of twenty-one. He was sitting in our office, now twenty years older, telling me how he now lectures at different shelters and organizations speaking about the dangers of drugs and the hope there is for anyone who desires a better life. Even after we told him that he would not be eligible for an expungement, we provided him with resources of different organizations that would help him find a job despite his criminal history. Afterwards, he smiled and mentioned that he would keep doing the best that he could to better his situation, no matter what obstacle came his way. I was truly amazed at his strength and perseverance.

Another great aspect of my internship was working with my supervising attorney and mentor. From the moment I began, she treated me as an equal, as her associate. We worked side by side and tried to service our clients the best we could. During my last week, my attorney fractured an ankle and I was entrusted with our entire workload. Before I left, I was able to provide the Director of Essex-Newark with a client list, which informed him of each cases' status.

This wonderful opportunity could not have been made possible were it not for your support. I am blessed and honored to be a Fellowship recipient of Equal Justice America. Once again, thank you and I remain,

Respectfully yours,

Jessica M. Rivera