

770 5th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
September 4, 2007

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My summer experience with the DC Law Students in Court Program, which my generous fellowship helped make possible, was invaluable. As an intern in the Civil Division, my main responsibility was interviewing the individuals who called or came into the walk-in clinic and advising them of their legal rights and responsibilities. I loved that I was given so much responsibility right away; from the moment I interviewed a potential client, I became highly involved in that person's case. I drafted pleadings for *pro se* litigants, wrote persuasive letters to landlords and management companies, negotiated with opposing counsel, and advised litigants at the Landlord and Tenant Branch of the DC Superior Court. Additionally, I performed investigations for on-going cases at clients' homes, administrative offices, and the DC courts. Based on these investigations, I also prepared to testify at hearings when necessary.

As I became more familiar with the issues we dealt with regularly and the legal process associated with them, I was able to take on even greater responsibilities and needed less guidance from my supervisors. My crowning achievement of the summer was writing an entire civil action by myself for a client that had a week left before the statute of limitations ran in her case. I also wrote her *in forma pauperis*, which many of our low-income defendants needed. One of my most rewarding experiences was during my last week with the program, when I went to court with that client to file her complaint. Despite the fact that my supervisors thought our *in forma pauperis* had no chance, it was granted. Seeing her relief and excitement as she hurried down the court hallway holding the order bearing the judge's signature triumphantly over her head, and knowing that I helped contribute to that, was the perfect end to my summer experience.

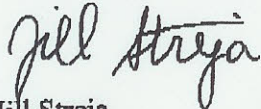
During my orientation at Law Students in Court, each supervisor spoke about her career path and her experience with the program. One supervisor said a common problem she found was that clients seemed to not value a service so much if it was free. She said that she dealt with this problem by putting her many impressive credentials on her wall to show her clients that her advice was worth just as much as a high-priced attorney's. However, to my surprise and amazement, I had the opposite experience; many clients that came into my little student office with its blank wall, facing a young law student with no experience whatsoever, hung onto my every word. They smiled and thanked me profusely, even when I felt like I had done nothing, or worse, when I had just delivered the hopeless news that there was nothing the organization could do to help them. This

continued to confuse me until I realized that even though I felt helpless sometimes when presented with a dire situation that I could do nothing to fix, either because the law provided no remedy or because the problem was outside the scope of the organization's work, I still had something to offer that had nothing to do with the law. I listened carefully to my clients, I sympathized with their situation, I reminded my supervisors to check in on their cases, and I genuinely tried to appreciate the full magnitude of what they were dealing with everyday. I think that when they thanked me and told me that I would make a good lawyer someday, when I did not feel like I had done anything "lawyerly" at all, this is what they were really thanking me for. I hope to remember this and continue to be just as attentive to my clients in the future, regardless of whether they are in these kinds of desperate situations or in highly privileged ones.

I am very grateful to Equal Justice America for helping to make this experience possible for me. I learned a lot not only about real-world litigation, but also about interacting with clients and what it means to serve your client's best interests. I count myself extremely lucky that I was able to have this opportunity.

Thank you very much again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill Streja".

Jill Streja  
Georgetown University Law Center  
Class of 2009