

August 23, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer I was fortunate enough to work for LAF Chicago, formerly the Legal Assistance Foundation. I was primarily involved in the HIV/AIDS Task Force. During my time at LAF, I helped low-income clients who were HIV-positive navigate public assistance programs – Medicaid, home healthcare services, as well as food stamps.

Two particular clients stood out for me this summer. The first was receiving home healthcare services from the state as a part of his Medicaid program. Our client was in the final stages of his HIV treatment. Because of his other disabilities, he was unable to self-medicate. Without any assistance, he had suffered relapses in his symptoms and was now on his final medication cocktail to which he was not resistant. However, during the latest redetermination of his case, the State decided that the client no longer needed help taking his meds. Apparently he seemed well and lucid during their inspection. Yet the client was only doing so well precisely *because* of the home care services he was receiving.

I helped draft a reply brief for the state chancery court challenging the termination of the client's care. That involved analyzing the administrative court record and rulings, as well as the other filings and motions in the case. That decision is still pending. Throughout the process, I learned an invaluable amount about the law, social services, and the true impacts of living with HIV in poverty.

Another client I helped involved a simpler question – what her rights were to access food stamps as a highschooler, but with a child of her own on the way. The jungle of policy codes and bureaucratic rules often makes simple questions highly complex or unanswerable for our clients. The differences in rules across the various public benefits are even more pronounced in rules affecting minors who had recently become emancipated or turned 18. I eventually helped the client plan for her present and future food needs.

All in all, I had a highly busy and rewarding summer at LAF Chicago. I was able to work on a complex, wide range of cases that directly impacted the lives of Chicago residents.

Sincerely,

Joseph Rosner
University of Chicago, JD 2015

August 27, 2013

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
c/o Katie
By email to katie@equaljusticeamerica.org

Re: Joseph Rosner's Fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to express my thanks for your willingness to fund Joseph Rosner's fellowship at LAF this summer. Joe was a great asset in many tasks, but he changed our capabilities in two distinct areas.

First, Joe restructured our system for assisting individuals living with HIV in applying for Social Security benefits. The documents currently used by the Social Security Administration are often repetitive and time intensive. Even with the assistance of a paralegal, many of our clients cannot complete the application process in one sitting.

Joe organized the necessary documentation into a single process and converted the forms into fillable .pdfs that automatically re-populated the parts of the forms that require repetitive entry of information. Not only does this allow our paralegals to spend more time with our clients in crafting a theory of their case, it also allows us to move a paper intensive practice into an electronic form.

The other unique task was Joe's support in preparing for a preliminary injunction hearing in federal court. This summer my organization challenged the closing of one of Chicago's public schools that had a special program for serving students with disabilities. The suit under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was complex, and the multi-day hearing had to be prepared in a month's time.

Joe was key support not only in the usual area of research, but also in preparing evidence and assisting in the courtroom. He freed hours of attorney time by preparing evidence and coordinating witnesses. He was crucial support in court, trouble shooting everything from equipment problems to last second changes in evidence. His knowledge of our claim and his understanding of methods for presenting that claim created a situation in which he recognized our needs and responded to them before we would ask. He was an important member of our trial team.

It was my pleasure to have worked with Joe this summer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles R. Petrof". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" being the most prominent.

Charles R. Petrof

Supervisory Attorney

312-229-6322

cpetrof@lafchicago.org