

Summer Fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben,

As a continuously striving *social engineer* at Howard University School of Law, I believe that society and the law owe a duty to its communities to work in the best interests of its citizens. With this in mind I have spent my summers trying to combine both my organizing and legal skills from law school with my desire to help create social change in minority communities.

Last summer I had the privilege of working for Women Empowered Against Violence, WEAVE, Inc. The organization's stated mission is to work closely with adult and teen survivors of relationship violence and abuse to provide an innovative range of legal, counseling, economic, and educational services that leads survivors to utilize their inner and community resources, achieve safety for themselves and their children, and live empowered lives. The organization's Legal Services Program provides representation to clients in civil protection order, child support, custody, divorce, and immigration matters related to their abuse. WEAVE also provide advice and referrals through several walk-in legal clinics.

Understaffed and underfunded, the organization runs three offices in the Washington, DC area that work to assist those in need of escaping domestic violence situations. As one of the organizations only legal intern this summer, I spent the summer split between two offices, D.C. Superior Ct. and United Medical Center/ Greater South East Hospital. While working for WEAVE I provided direct services to clients in the form of Protection orders and referrals to legal services or other programs as needed. My clients consisted of men, women and children of various incomes. My primary job at

Kinshasa Hillery
2009

Howard University School of Law, Summer

WEAVE was to write and file TPO's-temporary protection orders, CPO's-civil protection orders, and modification and/ or supplements to civil protection orders against individuals who had physically and verbally assaulted them.

Providing direct services to clients allowed me to enjoy person-to-person interaction (which I enjoy more than research or writing) with clients. There were, however, some frustrating aspects working directly with clients that I hadn't anticipated. I found that it was sometimes those very same clients that you wanted to help that hindered the process of you helping them. Ironically, I found that many of the clients were ambivalent about the process and about taking the necessary next steps to ensuring their safety, which made the process more difficult. The truly frustrating part was turning away clients, when I knew they needed help, and not having the staff to take all the cases that came through the door. While recognizing the internship had its drawbacks the work was both rewarding and necessary. I regret the need of an organization that assists individuals in flight of domestic violence, but I was glad that I was there and able to help clients in their transition to a better life.

Sincerely,

Kinshasa Hillery
Howard University
J.D Expected May 2010