

LAURA GARCIA

8/18/15

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I want to thank you for granting me an Equal Justice America Fellowship. Without this stipend, I would not have been able to fully immerse myself in my summer position at Kids in Need of Defense without worrying about having to take on a second job. My work at KIND has been gratifying, inspirational, and immensely educational.

Kids in Need of Defense provides free legal services to unaccompanied children in immigration removal proceedings. These services are provided through placement with pro bono attorneys or through representation from three direct representation attorneys. I spent the majority of my internship working closely with one of their attorneys on her asylum cases. Some of my responsibilities this summer included conducting two or three intakes a week, drafting memos, drafting asylum applications, and drafting letter briefs in support of such applications. All of the clients KIND serves are well below the poverty line and have suffered some form of trauma.

While I had several short-term projects with KIND, my long term project included applying for asylum for one of their clients. This client was a little boy who was subjected to labor trafficking by his own father for most of his life. I met with him on several occasions and spoke with him on the phone. It was clear that he was with a family that loved him here in the United States and that he was fearful of returning to his country. I also worked with a young girl who was abused physically and sexually by her family in her country. Thanks to the summer interns at KIND, the office was able to place more than double the normal amount of children with pro bono attorneys. Working with these clients throughout the summer and seeing the effect I have made on their lives has changed my entire perspective on my career and life in general.

Upon starting this position I was determined to help these children get the same opportunities that were given to me when I came to this country almost twenty years ago. Thanks to this fellowship, I was able to do just that. I thank you very much.

Best Regards,

Laura Garcia
Rutgers School of Law-Newark
Class of 2017



Sarah Plastino
Kids in Need of Defense
c/o Lowenstein Sandler LLP
65 Livingston Ave
Roseland, New Jersey 07068

July 31, 2015

Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America

Re: Laura Garcia, Summer Fellowship Letter, Kids in Need of Defense (Newark, NJ)

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I write to evaluate Laura Garcia's Equal Justice America Fellowship, per the request from your office. Laura Garcia is a rising second year law student at Rutgers School of Law in Newark, New Jersey. She interned this summer with my office, the Newark, New Jersey office of Kids in Need of Defense (KIND).

KIND was founded in 2008 as a *pro bono* movement of law firms, corporations, nongovernmental organizations, universities and volunteers to provide free, high quality counsel to unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children in the United States. KIND serves children who are under 18 and "unaccompanied" – i.e. children who arrived in the United States without a parent or legal guardian. All of KIND's clients are 200% or below of the poverty line. The majority of children served are from Central America's Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Nearly all have experienced some form of trauma, most often child abuse, neglect, abandonment, sexual violence, gang violence or recruitment, or trafficking. New Jersey received 2,680 of the 68,541 such children in FY2014 who fled their countries of origin for safety in the United States.

This summer, Laura interned full time with our office. Her main duties included conducting client intake interviews, preparing asylum applications, corresponding with clients and conducting legal research related to children's asylum claims. In all of her duties, Laura excelled. Her quality of work is strong and she was able to complete tasks quickly and on time. She was extremely helpful and affirmatively sought out opportunities to contribute to the office. She is intellectually curious and passionate about social justice issues. Moreover, she is a pleasure to be around. All in all, Laura was an excellent intern.

Thank you very much for supporting her internship with KIND this summer. We greatly appreciate the support your organization provided to make her volunteering possible.

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If you require any additional information, you can reach me at (862) 926-2080 or splastino@supportkind.org.

Sincerely,

Sarah Plastino