

**Lindsey Kaley**

August 31, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

The Equal Justice America fellowship supported me during a summer legal internship with The Door. I was very impressed by The Door's mission to provide multi-faceted and much needed free services to at-risk and homeless youth. The Door offers services ranging from after school programming, to counseling, to health services, to internship and career guidance. The services are free and all offered under one roof, clients only need to become members. Some of the Legal Services Department's clients, where I spent my summer, start out as members of The Door, while others are referred directly by Kids In Need Of Defense (KIND), or others are referred through the juvenile docket in Immigration Court. The Door participates with other organizations that offer immigration legal services to young people by splitting up the cases on the juvenile docket (a New York state practice), to ensure that all young people in immigration proceedings have representation.

Three of the staff attorneys handle immigration cases, but one of them only handles cases of clients who are not in removal proceedings (they have no case in Immigration Court), who are eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), and speak English. The other two staff attorneys, who I worked with, handle cases for primarily Spanish speaking clients, in removal proceedings. Applications for SIJS were a popular form of relief, but we also handled asylum cases, U-Visa cases, and other forms of relief, depending on the client's situation.

My typical responsibilities began with intaking clients to screen them for appropriate forms of relief. Then, I would begin drafting the appropriate legal documents for their form of relief. If it was asylum or U-Visa, there were many forms to fill out with basic information about the client. If it was SIJS, I would instruct the client to begin a guardianship or custody case in Family Court, and begin to draft the petition for guardianship or custody with them. Many of these forms require a lot of information from the client and his or her family, so it was a lot of communication and time spent on details of the forms. A majority of my time was spent either in one-on-one client meetings, or drafting these forms from information I had gathered.

Occasionally, I would do a brief research project for one of the attorneys—an informal memo based on issues that had come up or could come up in their cases. Sometimes I also assisted with legal writing. My first week, I was thrown right in, helping one of the staff attorneys finalize an asylum application. I had to do legal research on the standard for past prosecution, and a few other topics, then write up a paragraph to include in the brief. It was a powerful feeling to be doing research and writing that would have a direct effect on a client.

Additionally, as everyone was so crunched for time, my supervisor was really relying on me, as she did not have a lot of time to revise my work.

A similar situation arose later in the summer. I was assisting an attorney with a hearing in Family Court, where we need an Order with five findings from the judge, which we then use in a SIJS application. The judge found our client not credible, although we thought that was based on a misperception of his behavior. I spent much of my time over the next few weeks researching and facilitating our Motion to challenge her finding. I continued meeting with the client to draft an additional affidavit, with his sister to draft a corroborating affidavit, and helped enroll him in counseling at The Door to get another corroborating affidavit from a counselor. Meanwhile, I did lots of research into the type of motion we were writing, and the legal standard for credibility, both in Family Court, and in asylum proceedings, which involve comparable applicants with similarly traumatic testimony. The Motion ended up being almost thirty pages long, with a lot of my original writing and analysis left intact. Again, the sense of urgency and import to my work, as it would have a direct impact on my client, was very humbling. I will find out the result in September.

I truly enjoyed my internship in the Legal Services Department of The Door this summer, and I greatly appreciate the support of the Equal Justice America fellowship. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. Thank you for facilitating the great work of so many public interest organizations.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Kaley  
Harvard