

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you for the opportunity to be an Equal Justice America Summer Fellow for the Summer 2012. This summer, I had the wonderful opportunity to work at Legal Services for Children (LSC) in San Francisco, California. Legal Services for Children offers direct services to youth in cases such as guardianship, education, immigration, and dependency. Summer Legal Interns at LSC have the opportunity to attend court hearings, write a prepare motions and briefs, and complete legal screenings with potential clients.

Along with completing the legal screenings with youth, I worked with a staff attorney with her caseload of largely immigration cases. Specifically, I worked with detained youth who were in removal proceedings as well as immigrant youth who were seeking relief to remain in the United States through different means such as, U-visas and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

For me, there were two assignments that I completed that this summer that were particularly salient. First, I was able to represent two minors in their Administrative removal proceedings. Both youth were seeking Voluntary Departure – a type of removal that would allow them to return to the United States should they ever have the legal means to do so. In both cases, I was responsible for meeting the youth, interviewing them in Spanish, and preparing them for court. On their court date, I represented them in front of the judge, under the supervision of a staff attorney. In both cases, I had an incredible experience. Getting to know these youth and hearing their stories really impacted my personal life very much. Also, just being able to advocate in court, in front of a judge, really helped my confidence and was a great experience for my professional career.

Additionally, I had the opportunity to draft an appeal brief to the Board of Immigration Appeals after the Department of Homeland Security appealed a youth's voluntary departure order. Being able to research and write such a document was such a great experience. Although the favorable decision came after I had completed the internship, when my supervisor told me the outcome, I was elated. It is an amazing feeling to have a document that you prepared, be read by a board such as the BIA and to have a favorable outcome. Moreover, the feeling of knowing that I advocated for an individual who otherwise would not have had such representation is a feeling I will not soon forget. Knowing that he got the outcome that he wanted and deserved was just a great feeling. Working on his case was an incredible experience.

Legal Services for Children is such an incredible organization. Besides being welcoming and approachable people, the leadership of the organization and the supervisor of the intern program work very hard to ensure that each intern has a memorable and productive summer experience. The organization provides substantial and efficient training that allows summer interns to really

help individuals over the summer in the areas in which they provide youth representation. Moreover, because of their amazing training opportunities, the interns are able to do more substantive work and get so much out of their summer experience. Compared to my peers, I received more experience in court and more writing experience which I consider invaluable. Legal Services for Children is not only a great asset the Northern California community, but also the legal community as well as they are training passionate and effective advocates in just ten weeks.

Again, I thank you very much for this opportunity and thank you very much for helping fund my incredible summer.

Sincerely,

Lyndsey Marcelino
J.D. Candidate, Cornell Law School Class of 2014



22 August 2012

Via email to katie@equaljusticeamerica.org

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to thank you for providing Lyndsey Marcelino, a law student at Cornell Law School, an Equal Justice America fellowship this summer so that she could volunteer with Legal Services for Children.

Legal Services for Children (LSC) was founded in 1975 as one of the first non-profit law firms in the country to provide free legal representation and social work services to children and youth.

LSC's mission is to ensure that all children and youth in San Francisco Bay Area have an opportunity to be raised in a safe environment with equal access to a meaningful education and the services and supports they need to become healthy and productive young adults. LSC pioneered a unique interdisciplinary approach to legal services, employing teams of attorneys and social workers to comprehensively meet the needs of our clients.

LSC's team advocacy approach enables us to provide a wide spectrum of services. We represent children and youth in cases that include legal guardianship, dependency, school discipline, immigration, emancipation, and restraining order proceedings.

Legal interns are a key component of LSC's program and their support allows us to provide quality legal services to youth in need. As part of our summer intern program, all interns first receive training in the substantive areas including guardianship, education, immigration and dependency law as well as trainings in crisis intervention, cultural competency, and boundaries and termination provided by social workers and attorneys.

After receiving these trainings, legal interns put the knowledge into practice by screening new intakes through our telephone intake line and assisting attorneys with individual cases as well as project work.

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Lyndsey was an enthusiastic and capable legal intern who was a very welcome addition to our legal team. She was eager to learn more about the substantive areas. She picked up new skills quickly and always volunteered to assist with new cases as the need arose.

As part of her summer fellowship, Lyndsey drafted a brief to the Board of Immigration Appeals on behalf of one of our clients. The filing deadline for the brief was a very short one and on top of that, LSC has never represented a minor in a BIA appeal before so the advice I could give Lyndsey on the process was limited. Lyndsey still leaped at the chance to help this minor and she read the BIA practice manual and wrote an excellent, well researched brief with correct formatting and citations. Her writing and final product were so good that I needed to make very few changes before filing with the BIA. We recently received a positive decision on that case and I credit Lyndsey with that outcome.

Lyndsey also had an opportunity to represent two youth before the Immigration Court, under the supervision of LSC attorneys. She was well prepared in both instances. She drafted direct examination questions as well as some possible cross examination questions that the minors might be asked and she went to the immigration centers where the youth were detained in order to review the questions and prepare with them so they would feel comfortable. Lyndsey had an excellent manner with our clients – she was professional but also warm and encouraging, which led them to trust her with sometimes difficult information about their life histories. Lyndsey also had excellent courtroom demeanor. Although she said that she felt nervous, Lyndsey came across as well prepared and confident. I believe the stand up advocacy experience in court was a good one.

Lyndsey also helped with one of LSC's projects working with detained immigrant children. LSC has been providing know your rights presentations to these youth for years but we have not had any written resources to provide them. Lyndsey took charge and created handouts for the youth about their legal rights in immigration detention, the immigration court process, and what their legal remedies might be. These handouts will help our young client retain accurate and important information regarding their legal rights and obligations.

All in all, it was a real pleasure working with Lyndsey. I know she will be a great advocate for low income and marginalized populations in the future and I thank you for supporting her with the fellowship this summer.

Please feel free to call me if you have any additional questions about Lyndsey's work with us.

Sincerely,



Hayley Upshaw
Staff Attorney