

Omar A Rana

August 28, 2017

Equal Justice America

Dear Dan Rueben,

This summer I had the fortune of working at Legal Services of New York City at the Queens Legal Services office. Within Queens Legal Services, I worked as an intern in the Disability Advocacy Project and Education Law Unit. The beginning of my summer work primarily focused on education law cases due to the fact that school was still in session. The second half of my summer primarily focused on disability cases.

My work in education law primarily focused on school suspension cases. I did not know that school suspension or expulsion was a legal matter. I assisted in representing two students in school suspension appeal hearings at the department of education. These students were being suspended from school and their families could not afford legal representation. I got to do case research, client intake and prep, write questions for the hearing, and I attended the hearing to assist the attorney I worked with. The first hearing was very easy due to the presence of substantial evidence that our client did not commit the act the principal said they committed and the principal had blatantly fabricated the situation. That hearing proved victorious as the outcome was in our clients favor. The second case was a little bit more difficult. Despite a valiant and hard worked effort, we were not victorious in that case. Although we did not win that case, the attorney I worked with promptly filed an appeal for a new hearing. Winning the first school suspension case gave me a thirst for aggressive advocacy lawyering and losing the second case taught me to persevere and never give up for clients in need. Statistics show that school suspension and

expulsions are frequently used as a tool against low-income students to support the school to prison pipeline. I feel like this summer I was able to make a dent in that oppressive system.

The disability cases I worked on were primarily appeals of decisions to deny social security disabilities benefits from people who had applied for them. The reason why a lot of people lose disability claims is because they do not file the necessary documents needed to indicate to the social security administration that they have disabilities. For many of our clients I worked on requesting the proper medical, educational, or psychological documents needed to file to receive disability benefits.

For some of the clients I got to do more hands on work. For one of our clients, I worked on a brief that the attorney I worked under was submitting in a Federal appeal against the social security administration's decision not to award disability benefits. This helped me gain valuable writing experience.

The pinnacle of my summers work, however, was being asked to present at an administrative hearing on behalf of one of our clients. Our client was appealing a decision not to receive disability benefits from the social security administration. I worked on the case from start to finish and we have not received the official decision yet.

Overall, I had a wonderful experience doing public interest this summer. I learned valuable lawyering skills and I strengthened myself as an advocate. I would not have been able to do this work if it was not for Equal Justice America assistance. Because of Equal Justice America I was able to effect peoples lives for the better.

Sincerely,

Omar A Rana

Queens  
Legal  
Services

Legal  
Services NYC

August 30, 2017

Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
VIA EMAIL: [katie@equaljusticeamerica.org](mailto:katie@equaljusticeamerica.org)

RE: Omar Rana

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Please take this letter as an evaluation of Omar Rana's efforts as a summer intern with Queens Legal Services. I am an attorney working in the Disability Advocacy Project, and the Education Rights Project and Mr. Rana was placed under my direct supervision during his ten week program.

Mr. Rana proved to be an exceptional intern in my unit. He was tasked with working on a variety of projects including a federal appeal for a denial of SSI benefits, and an administrative complaint alleging a denial of a free and appropriate public education for a New York City special education student. He assisted in the preparation of two suspension representation cases which involved meeting with the client, developing a theory of the case, preparing the cross examination of witnesses, and drafting a closing. In addition to these larger projects, he was responsible for day to day follow up on several of my education and disability cases, looking for records, drafting subpoenas and letters, and following up with clients on myriad of issues related to their representation.

Omar demonstrated himself to be a hard worker, bright and eager to learn and take on new challenges. He is a team player, follows directions well and shows an attentiveness to detail. He has also demonstrated initiative and willingness to go that extra mile on a project. I believe he was an asset to our organization and am happy to speak in greater detail as to his qualifications and character. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [aleipziger@lsnyc.org](mailto:aleipziger@lsnyc.org) or (347) 592-2198.

Sincerely,

/s/ AL

Amy Leipziger, Esq.  
Senior Staff Attorney