



# AMERICAN GATEWAYS

*Legal Services for New Americans*

September 3, 2013

SENT VIA EMAIL TO: [KATIE@EQUALJUSTICEAMERICA.ORG](mailto:KATIE@EQUALJUSTICEAMERICA.ORG)

Dear Ms. Toman:

I am writing with regard to Rita Lenane who was a summer fellow at our organization this year. American Gateways is a non-profit in Austin, Texas that is dedicated to providing free and low-cost immigration legal services to Central Texas families. During her time at American Gateways, Rita completed projects in a variety of immigration cases including: U visas, asylum and withholding of removal before the Immigration Court, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (for abused or abandoned children), and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. She assisted in interviewing clients both in the office and at the T. Don Hutto Residential Center.

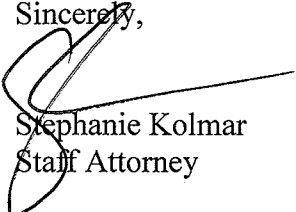
During Rita's fellowship, there was a change in bond procedures at the Hutto detention center. Rita played an integral part in our office's response to the change. She conducted weekly bond workshops at the detention center in Spanish and provided detainees with information regarding the bond procedure. Rita did a phenomenal job with the workshops and helped dozens of women lower their bonds so that they could pursue their asylum claim outside of detention.

In addition to her work at the detention center, Rita worked on an asylum case for a young man from Honduras. She was able to obtain an expert, update country conditions, and draft a brief. Rita has expressed interest in returning to Austin to participate in the client's final asylum hearing in September 2014.

Rita has a high degree of maturity and self-confidence which sets her apart from the majority of law students. She was absolutely one of the most dedicated interns I have ever worked with. Her legal analysis is more akin to a seasoned attorney than a law student. Her writing skills were excellent. Rita was professional and courteous and was quickly able to foster a trusting relationship with each of the clients with whom she worked. She has a deep concern for the struggles of immigrants in the United States, and was unflinchingly diligent in investigating and pursuing every possible form of relief for our clients. We were lucky to have Rita this summer.

If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call at (512) 478-0546 x205.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Kolmar  
Staff Attorney