

August 5, 2016

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My internship at Catholic Charities Community Services has been incredibly rewarding. On my first day I was extremely nervous because I was handed 20 cases and told that they were my clients for the summer. Their cases were my responsibility. Of course I had my supervisor watching over me but at the end of the day if I did not do what needed to be done on their cases, they would be sent back to their home countries. This was daunting. However, I soon learned that as terrified as I was, they were more nervous than I could ever be. It was this that gave me the inspiration I needed to complete the tasks for their cases.

Throughout the summer I helped a variety of clients. I helped children and adults, victims of violence in the US and victims of violence abroad, English speakers, Spanish speakers, Creole speakers, and even a Hungarian speaker. They qualified for all types of relief ranging from Special Immigrant Juvenile Status to Asylum to a U Visa to family based petitions and even prosecutorial discretion. I helped these foreign nationals obtain work permits, health benefits, lawful permanent residency, and citizenship.

Although I was able to help many clients, one in particular stands out. A man came into the office because he had been placed in immigration proceedings, meaning the government was trying to deport him. However, he had spent most of his life believing he was a United States citizen. He came to the U.S. in 1984 on a visa when he was twelve years old with his sister to live with his mother, who already had status as a Lawful Permanent Resident. He believed his mother naturalized and became a United States citizen while he was in high school, thereby making him a citizen derivatively. However, we later learned that she had not naturalized until 2004, putting him past the age to acquire citizenship through his mother-he was not a citizen.

During this time, my client became a member of FDNY, was a 9/11 first responder, got married and started a family. He now has many health issues resulting from 9/11. A few years ago, he went to the DMV to renew his driver's license and he decided to register to vote. On his voter registration form he checked off that he was a citizen, something he genuinely thought that he was. Fast forwarding to 2016, he was placed in immigration proceedings and charged with falsely claiming United States citizenship, a charge that is extremely difficult to overcome. His hearing is not for a few months, however, I believe that I was able to find an exception in the law that would help him. If all goes well, he will be able to forget about this charge, naturalize, and become a U.S. citizen.

There are many people in need of immigration legal services. Every Thursday we have upwards of 50 people crowding our waiting room and trying to obtain a consultation with one of our attorneys. However, each Thursday we are only able to see 5 or 6 of these people. This is a huge problem in the immigration law field, especially in public interest

immigration where the clients cannot afford to pay for the services of a private attorney. Therefore this leaves public interest organizations overcrowded and unable to assist everyone that is in need of representation. This is especially true with the surge of unaccompanied minors coming from the northern triangle. These kids are alone and unable to pay an attorney to represent them. This causes immigration organizations like Catholic Charities to be filled to capacity and turn people away.

Even though I had immigration experience prior to this internship, I firmly believe that I have grown as a future attorney and that my knowledge of immigration law has expanded tenfold. Throughout the school year I will be working at Catholic Charities while I participate in the Immigration and Refugee Litigation Clinic. I am eager to continue the cases I have been able to work on this summer and to see how their cases unfold throughout the school year. Without this fellowship, I would not have been able to travel back and forth from work, immigration court, and family court. Thanks to this opportunity at Catholic Charities, I am sure now more than ever that both my passion and my future are in immigration law.

Sincerely,

Samantha Chasworth  
St. Johns University School of Law  
Class of 2017



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August 10, 2016

Equal Justice America  
13540 E. Boundary Road  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My name is Franco Torres. I am currently an attorney for the Immigration Law Services division of The Archdiocese of New York's Catholic Charities Community Service Program. I represent people *pro bono* in their immigration matters in the New York City area. In the course of that work, I supervise and mentor volunteer undergraduate, graduate and law students. I am writing to thank Equal Justice America for providing much needed funding for Samantha Chasworth, one of our interns this past summer.

Samantha quickly made herself an invaluable member of my team. She demonstrated a high degree of initiative, insight, and attention to detail. She possessed good time management skills, and organization. She proved herself to be extremely trustworthy and able to work independently with minimal supervision. She displayed a strong passion and commitment for social justice. She treated the people we served with great compassion. Throughout the entirety of her internship, Samantha proved to be a highly talented, intelligent, conscientious, and effective legal intern.

Under my supervision, Samantha worked on twenty-three different cases this summer. She assisted and participated in all aspects of case work. She interviewed clients and drafted affidavits. She researched and drafted various legal memoranda on complex legal issues. Her work allowed us to better assess the eligibility for immigration benefits and forms of relief from removal that people qualified for. She worked with families and supporters to obtain useful evidence, including but not limited to: letters of support, police reports and medical records. She also represented individuals under my supervision with officials from Citizenship and Immigration Services, Immigration and Customs enforcements and the New York Immigration court.

As a result of her excellent work, Samantha has earned a spot in the year-long immigration clinic we host here at Catholic Charities during the academic year. We are also interested in serving as a host for Samantha's proposal for an Equal Justice Works fellowship. We are really grateful to have had the opportunity to work with during the school year and hopefully after she graduates.



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In addition to learning about Samantha as a worker, I also had the pleasure of getting to know her as a person. She is very driven and determined young woman. She has kind heart, friendly disposition, which was very good in helping her establish a rapport with clients. Samantha shared with me her passion for social justice and her dreams of pursuing a career in public service law. I told her then that I would happily support her when she was ready to pursue a fellowship opportunity in order to make that dream a reality.

I would be most happy to discuss Samantha in greater detail if you wish. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [\(212\) 419-3742](tel:2124193742) or [franco.torres@archny.org](mailto:franco.torres@archny.org).

Sincerely,

Franco Torres, Esq.