

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

August 14, 2012

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to summarize my experience as an Equal Justice America Fellow during the summer of 2012, and hope that this letter finds you and your offices in good spirits. I would like to start by thanking you and your organization for your extremely generous sponsorship. Equal Justice America continues to ensure that the public interest legal services sector remains vibrant and healthy, and was central to my decision to work with the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment. Your work and funding were both sincerely appreciated.

My summer at the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment (CRPE) provided me with ample opportunity to hone my legal research, writing, and direct services skills. Academically, a highlight of the summer was the time I spent writing about the duties of receivers of quasi-public entities such as community services districts. Experientially, the highlight was the week I spent in Delano, California, meeting with CRPE's client communities. I will never forget the endless horizon of oil derricks we saw in Oil City, California, the "Bucket Brigade" meeting I attended outside the Community Recycling center in Arvin, California, or the mothers crying when the Department of Public Health made its press release dismissing the causal connection between the nearby toxic waste disposal facility and the recent birth defect cluster in Kettleman City, California. I have traveled extensively throughout North and South America and could not believe that many of the places and problems I saw existed in the United States, let alone less than 300 miles from where I live. The week was filled with highs and lows, all of which have led me to believe that the work CRPE is doing in California's Central Valley is absolutely necessary, and imperative to the flourishing of justice in an area long rift with racial and environmental subjugation. I will also never forget the hour I spent learning how to make flour tortillas from a Mexican woman whose family we represented, nor the feeling of accomplishment that came with winning one of our motions in support of one of the aforementioned communities.

In short, my summer experience was phenomenal, inspiring and an important step in my development as a person and as a lawyer. I would like to express my gratitude for both Equal Justice America and the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, and hope that I may have the pleasure of working with either again soon.

Sincerely,

Samuel R. Welch
University of California, Berkeley, Boalt Hall