

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

September 17, 2005

Re: Equal Justice America Summer Fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben,

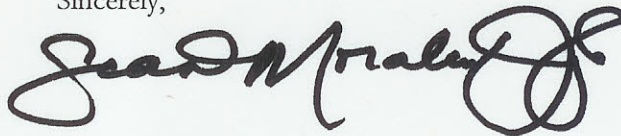
I began law school with the goal of pursuing a career in public interest law. Throughout my first year, I remained committed, but found few connections between the work I was doing at school, the students I interacted with, and this commitment to the public interest. While I enjoyed my first year of law school, it was easy to lose sight of why I was there as I became caught up in all of the work.

My internship with the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago (LAFMC) helped me regain my perspective. The experience I gained with real clients and real legal issues reminded me of why I originally decided to attend law school. As an undergraduate student I had done some research on One Strike public housing eviction policies and their effects in Chicago during the Plan for Transformation. This research made me hope that I might one day be able to help change the development of public housing policy and its implementation. Now, as an intern at the Housing Law Project at LAFMC, I was helping lawyers advocate on behalf of public housing and Section 8 tenants who were being evicted pursuant to the same policies I had researched a couple years earlier. I was able to see how the Plan for Transformation really worked, and what options these residents had.

These experiences with individual clients were powerful, but they were only part of the work I did at LAFMC. The lawyers working with the Housing Law Project also represent Local Advisory Councils (LACs) for the public housing developments in the city. LACs are resident representatives elected by the residents to present their interests in interactions with the Chicago Housing Authority and others. This aspect of my work resembled community organizing. While it occasionally required formal legal action, it often involved advocating for our clients in a broader sense. We negotiated on their behalf to help shape the path of the Plan for Transformation. And just as with my work with individual residents, I was able to see real results through this organizing work.

As the internship came to a close, I realized that I had developed a new sense of optimism. Despite many disappointments and frustrating setbacks in the uphill battles we fought with our clients, my internship helped me focus on the issues that I cared about, and helped me see that I could play a part in making change with regard to these issues. I now return to my second year of school once again motivated with this knowledge, and confident that I can look forward to a career in the public interest that will be truly rewarding. I would like to once again thank Equal Justice America for making this a possibility.

Sincerely,



Sean Morales-Doyle
Juris Doctor Candidate, Class of 2007
Northwestern University School of Law