

August 28, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I spent this summer in the Clean Slate Practice group of the East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC). I had a wonderful experience, so much so that I will continue to work there part-time this semester as part of my clinical education at University of California, Berkeley, School of Law.

In ten short weeks, I was able to learn a great deal about criminal records remedies in California, as well as more broadly collateral consequences of being involved in the criminal justice system. I was quickly trained and then was able to put into practice client interviewing and interaction skills, as well as broader legal skills including research and writing.

My absolute favorite part of the summer was the weekly drop-in clinic. I would go to Hayward every Monday, to staff a drop-in legal clinic for individuals with criminal records. Within a few weeks, I was able to meet with clients on my own, assess the best legal advice to give them, check-in with a supervisor, and then deliver that advice to my client. More often than not, I was able to take a client on, or help them to fill out their *pro per* paperwork to file for California Penal Code § 1203.4 dismissals on their own. I was also able to help to empower individuals in applying for jobs and knowing their rights when it comes to background checks. Many clients had more complicated problems, and I would enjoy coming back to the office, researching an appropriate answer and working with the client to help them to secure housing or pursue employment.

One of my favorite clients is a young man, who early on in their adulthood, was convicted of two misdemeanors soon after he legally became an adult. He is in his late twenties now, and is looking to become a public school teacher. I believe he will be a fantastic teacher as well as a mentor for students in his community. I was able to help him to get his convictions dismissed. However, he is having difficulty getting the proper certification to begin the teaching credential process due to his criminal history. I look forward to continuing to work with him to navigate the certification process to guarantee that he is indeed able to fulfill his dream of becoming a teacher.

My summer at EBCLC meant the world to me. It solidified my desire to continue to work in

direct legal services throughout law school and to start my legal career. I enjoyed the fast-paced and collegial nature of working in a legal services organization, and I believe that I was truly able to make a difference in the lives of my clients.

I am thrilled to be continuing to work with the Clean Slate Practice this semester, as I will soon be certified by the State Bar of California to appear in court. I will be able to represent some of the clients that I took on this summer, and continue with them through the court hearing process.

Thank you so much for naming me as an Equal Justice America Fellow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shana Heller", written in a cursive style.

Shana Heller



Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
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Midlothian, VA 23112

August 31, 2012

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I had the pleasure of supervising Shana Heller this past summer at the East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC). Shana is an exceptional legal advocate with a strong commitment to public interest work. Thanks to your generous funding, Shana developed her considerable skills this summer working in our Clean Slate Practice.

I am the director of the Clean Slate Practice at the East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC), a legal clinic of Berkeley Law School (Boalt Hall). The Clean Slate Practice provides legal services to low-income people with criminal records who are attempting to reenter society as full and productive members. Additionally, the Clean Slate Practice advances policy initiatives that aim to expand the civic participation and advance the rights of people who have had contact with the criminal justice system.

This past summer, Shana's work included client interviewing and counseling, legal research and writing, and document drafting. Shana carried a caseload of approximately twenty clients and she worked with walk-in clients each week at our court-based clinics. Shana researched special issues and developed training materials on various issues, and worked on a Three-Strikes case.

Shana developed strong client interviewing and counseling skills. After she attended some trainings and observed attorneys conduct intake and interviewing, Shana conducted client intake interviews on her own. Shana was able to strike the perfect balance of knowing the limits of her legal expertise but conveying appropriate confidence and competence to her clients. Over the course of the summer, Shana only improved in her ability to work efficiently and effectively with clients.

Shana excelled at all of the different types of tasks she was assigned at EBCLC. She is very smart, incredibly hard working, and always conscientious. She took his obligations to her clients very seriously, and served them with dedication. Her clients came from all kinds of backgrounds, and her manner with them was always professional and warm. Her clients expressed gratitude to us, her supervisors, about Shana's wonderful work on their cases. It is clear that Shana's excellent legal work is motivated by her deep dedication to her clients.

Shana was also very helpful in identifying ways to improve our internal processes. Not only did she identify problem areas, she also took the time to propose solutions. She, without prompting, helped revise and refine many of our training materials and intake documents. For this reason, and many others, she was a gift to her supervisors. Shana also helped create a warm, collegial culture among her co-clinicians. The other students and our staff all enjoyed working with her, and we are very excited to welcome her back this fall semester as a clinical student.

More than most other students I have supervised, Shana seeks feedback and integrates it immediately. It was a pleasure to watch Shana grow as an advocate and I look forward to watch her career. It is clear that she will be a tremendous asset to the public interest legal community.

I am deeply grateful to Equal Justice America for its support that allows excellent interns like Shana to work at the East Bay Community Law Center. It was an important learning experience for Shana, and equally important to me, a huge benefit to our clients, both current and future, whose lives are improved by Shana's work.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Eliza Hersch
Director & Supervising Attorney
Clean Slate Practice