

August 18, 2011

Mr. Dan Ruben, Founder & Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II - Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you to you, your staff, and the donors to Equal Justice America (EJA), who made it possible for me to follow my passion for public interest law. This summer I worked as a legal intern at Community Action Program Legal Services (CAPLAW). CAPLAW provides legal education and assistance to Community Action Agencies in order to help them operate legally sound organizations. Community Action Agencies receive federal Community Services Block Grant Funding to run agencies that aim to decrease poverty and empower low-income individuals and families to become self-sufficient.

While at CAPLAW, one of my favorite projects was helping to research and write about questions CAPLAW received from Community Action Agencies. I enjoyed this because we had contact via email or phone with leaders of Community Action Agencies and were able to hear about their agency and their concerns. I also liked the great variety of topics CAPLAW receives questions about, from civil rights to employment law. The research and writing I performed was to provide initial assistance, and to help guide agencies as they work with an attorney in their state to resolve their concerns.

One of the highlights of the summer was helping at and attending CAPLAW's 2011 National Training Conference. The conference brought together executive directors and employees of Community Action Agencies from across the U.S. CAPLAW attorneys presented or organized other presenters for workshops on legal and financial topics relevant to Community Action Agencies. It was a great experience to meet people who were all working to fight poverty in their communities, and to hear them say how valuable the conference was to their organization. Many people also commented on how helpful CAPLAW was to their organization throughout the year and how they read the e-bulletins and legal newsletters CAPLAW produces.

Writing articles for CAPLAW's legal newsletter, researching for the e-bulletin, and researching for powerpoint legal education presentations were also projects I performed while at CAPLAW. These projects gave me a greater understanding of how some of the federal government funding aimed at anti-poverty programs is distributed and used. I have always been interested in ideas and efforts to end poverty in the U.S., and my summer at CAPLAW furthered this interest. I also learned about how much legal work is involved in running non-profits, and gained experience helping organizations with their legal needs so the organization can focus on their anti-poverty mission.

Thank you for your support this summer!

Sincerely,

Sheena James
Suffolk University Law School
Candidate for J.D., anticipated May 2012



September 15, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to let you know how much Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc. (CAPLAW) enjoyed and benefited from our summer with Equal Justice America fellow Sheena James Knox.

CAPLAW is a nonprofit organization that offers legal assistance and training to the nationwide network of Community Action Agencies (CAAs), nonprofit organizations and local government entities that work to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and empower low-income individuals and families to become fully self-sufficient through advocacy and services.

Sheena's time with CAPLAW was extremely productive. While she was here, Sheena researched, analyzed and prepared materials about issues of great importance and consequence to our organization, the CAAs we work with and the low-income clients they serve. In particular, Sheena assisted in researching and creating a PowerPoint presentation for CAPLAW on the new Americans with Disabilities Act regulations. The presentation not only concisely explained the key aspects of the regulations but also used hypotheticals and examples to convey the impact of the regulations on CAAs. Additionally, Sheena assisted in researching and drafting an article for CAPLAW's bi-annual newsletter which addressed the legal and practical implications of different cost-saving staffing options for CAAs during tough financial times. For the newsletter, Sheena also analyzed the application of federal and state immigration laws requiring certain employers to verify an employee's eligibility to work in the United States. Sheena adeptly synthesized the recent developments in the law relating to the issue and succinctly conveyed in writing the relevance of the developments to CAAs.

CAPLAW greatly benefited from Sheena's ability to quickly spot issues, comprehend legal concepts and convey complex legal matters in a precise and clear way. Sheena quickly familiarized herself with a wide variety of legal topics ranging from lobbying to governance to employee benefits to open records and meetings laws. Sheena's thorough research and keen analysis of the legal issues she addressed enabled CAPLAW to promptly and confidently advise CAAs on their options, rights and responsibilities.

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CAPLAW is deeply grateful for the support we received from Equal Justice America. This support enabled CAPLAW to address critical legal issues facing CAAs and their clients and to provide Sheena with an opportunity to hone her legal research, writing and consultation skills while learning about public interest law.

The on-going fundraising by Equal Justice America is an incredible benefit to CAPLAW and greatly increases our organization's ability to recruit high quality legal fellows such as Sheena.

Sincerely,

Allison Ma'luf,
Associate Counsel