

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

September 7, 2007

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to thank you and your organization for sponsoring my summer at Legal Aid of North West Texas. Without your help, I would not have been able to do public interest work this summer. My time at Legal Aid has easily been my most rewarding work experience.

I learned a lot this past summer – not only about the legal world, but about the world in general. I witnessed the difficulties of living in a system that can be unforgiving to those with little to no idea as to how to navigate it. I also saw the great change a handful of dedicated attorneys and support staff can make to correct the injustices of this system.

I realized that the role of a lawyer is not only to zealously represent a client. Sometimes a lawyer must also put on the hat of counselor or friend. I recognized the value of my legal education at these times. Many of our clients' fears are based on an inaccurate knowledge of the legal system. The ability to comfort these clients, simply by explaining the law to them, was very rewarding.

I was fortunate to work on a tax project from start to finish. Our client was a recently widowed single mother with several tax issues stemming from her abusive husband's fraudulent tax filings. The client was a college graduate, but after witnessing her husband's traumatic death her ability to function sharply declined. The particular issue I worked on was re-creating the client's "cost of goods sold" expense for her interior decorating business. After putting together an exhibit displaying the cost of goods sold expense, I sat in on the administrative law judge's phone hearing with the supervising attorney and the client. We hoped that the judge would mitigate the amount due to the IRS to a manageable payment for our client. Based on the numbers from the exhibit, the ALJ decided instead to award our client a \$250.00 refund. This is just one example of the many amazing experiences I had during my summer at Legal Aid.

My time at Legal Aid was not only rewarding, it was inspiring. I intend to make a difference with my legal education, and I thank you again for the opportunity to do so this summer.

Sincerely,

Sybil Devasia  
Cornell Law School  
J.D. Candidate '09