

Dan Ruben
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Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer working in immigration law in Silver Spring, MD, was an incredible learning experience. I worked directly with the local immigrant community and assisted clients from Ethiopia, Venezuela, Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

Some of the clients I worked with had deportation orders. One client with whom I was able to work had a newborn daughter, and we spent hours over several days together drafting an affidavit to show how her difficult pregnancy and lack of notice categorized her claim as extraordinary circumstances to petition the court for a Motion to Rescind and Reopen *In Absentia* Orders. I learned so much about the legal process, the process by which one is apprehended and released from custody, and how USCIS works with ICE and the immigration court to adjudicate a case.

I also worked with a 16-year-old affirmative asylum seeker from Ethiopia. He had been tortured by his government for organizing the youth in his hometown to participate in the political process and demanding the authoritarian government begin respecting human rights. He had been separated from his parents and siblings for almost a year and was struggling to learn English and get enrolled in high school. I was able to help him enroll in a high school where he could continue playing soccer, and I helped him begin the asylum process.

I worked with several families fleeing gang violence and gender-based violence in Central America. These were some of the most difficult cases to work on, specifically because of the severe trauma that the clients had suffered in their home countries. But seeing their children learning English, attending school, and playing in our lobby at the agency was the silver-lining of an otherwise tragic story. The strength of the human spirit and the ability of those clients to overcome tremendous obstacles searching for safety and a better future for their children reminded me why I came to law school in the first place – to help immigrants stay in the US.

I also worked with one woman to obtain a U-visa after she had been severely abused by a boyfriend over several years. She found a safe place to live and raise her 1-year-old daughter.

While this client will likely not receive a work permit for several years, the fact that she is in counseling and recovering from an abusive relationship is encouraging.

With all these cases, the claims will not be adjudicated for years, and there will undoubtedly be many more attorneys and interns working on these cases. But I feel very lucky to be able to work with these clients for this short time.

Thank you so much for the funding that helped me afford living expenses while I worked in a challenging but rewarding field.

Kindest regards,

Shannon McGuire

Temple University Beasley School of Law – May '19