
TERESA YEH

October 1, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I want to thank you and Equal Justice America for providing me the opportunity to work at the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC) this summer. It was an incredible experience, and I was able to develop invaluable skills and relationships.

As a law clerk at APALRC, I had two primary areas of responsibility. The first was long-term legal research and writing assignments. In particular, I researched the potential tort and contract liability for one of our clients, a non-profit organization that provided medical services. Another example is the research I did on housing initiatives in Montgomery County, Maryland.

My second area of responsibility involved working directly with APALRC clients. I was responsible for staffing the Mandarin-speaking helpline, aiding attorneys on specific cases, and serving as a liaison between Mandarin-speaking clients and office attorneys.

Specifically, my work with the Mandarin-speaking helpline involved performing case intakes and follow-up interviews in Mandarin. This experience allowed me to better understand the challenges that limited-English-proficient (LEP) clients face in accessing the legal system and the importance of continuing to ensure that LEP persons' needs are addressed. I also greatly valued the work I did with the Mandarin-speaking helpline because it allowed me to gain exposure to a variety of legal issues. Since clients would call in regarding a wide range of legal issues, I was able to develop substantive experiences in housing law, employment law, immigration law, and family law.

The direct service work I did with APALRC was important to me because it allowed me to personally experience the power of the law as a vehicle for change. I was no longer simply learning about the law in the pages of a textbook. Instead, I had the opportunity to apply it to the lives of real people. I really appreciated the opportunity to meet with clients and see firsthand the impact my work had on their lives.

Particularly moving for me was my work with VAWA petitioners. The knowledge that the immigration status of these survivors of domestic violence hinged in large part on the legal work that I did was both terrifying and empowering. I felt a great sense of responsibility working with these clients, which is a burden that I believe all good attorneys should bear.

Thank you so much for providing the opportunity me to work with APALRC. It was an invaluable experience that allowed me to grow both as a law student and as a person. I not only continued to develop a set of core legal skills, but I also got to experience firsthand the role that attorneys can play in impacting the lives of others. Again, thank you. I'm immensely grateful to you and Equal Justice America.

Sincerely,

Teresa Yeh
Cornell Law School, Class of 2011