

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I would like to thank you for the awarding me the grant and giving me the opportunity to spend the summer with Legal Services of South Central Michigan. It truly has been an exciting and rewarding experience. Most of the time I spent at LSSCM was in their Pro Se Divorce Clinic. There I was part of a group of 3 students that worked directly with clients, helping them draft divorce papers and walking them through the process. The majority of the help was done over the phone, but we also had several clients come in to the office for personal meetings. Though I cannot count the number of clients I was able to help this summer, there are a few that stand out.

Perhaps the most memorable client of ours this summer was AC. This client had wanted a divorce for several years and had not been able to afford it. The spouse had moved to another state and AC had no idea where they were. Unfortunately for AC, there is no way around the service of process requirement when you cannot find your spouse. We helped her get an extended summons and an order for service by publication, but AC could not afford to publish notice in the paper for 3 straight weeks. We did some research in to process servers in the area where the spouse was believed to be and ended up finding one for about half the cost of publishing. AC was able to get some financial help from a family member and got the spouse served. I don't think I've ever seen someone more excited.

Many of our clients had the same problem as AC; no address for spouse, no money for publication. It became quite disturbing after a while. Poverty had practically forced these people to stay married despite the fact they had not seen their spouse in several years. Service of process was always the biggest burden, but really, a necessary one in our justice system. Several of our clients did not have the same problem with finding their spouse. These clients just had problems with understanding the complexities of the legal system. Being able to sit down with them, talk them through the process, and help them fill out all the paperwork was rewarding.

But the real reward came on the day they would call us and let us know that their divorce had been finalized. The joy in their voice along with the “I couldn’t have done it without you,” was worth all of the time we put into helping them.

Though the summer is over and school has started up again, I have continued my work with LSSCM. I plan on working there for the rest of the school year. The feeling one gets from helping those of us that are struggling to make ends meet is priceless and worth every minute. Thank you again for awarding me the grant and giving me the opportunity to spend the summer giving back to the community.

Sincerely,

Timothy Feehan  
MSU College of Law  
Class of May, 2010