

August 30, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I write to thank you for the support Equal Justice America (EJA) provided me this summer in my work at the East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC) in Berkeley, CA. It was a tremendous learning opportunity to clerk in the immigration unit of the largest provider of free legal services in Alameda County. EBCLC provided the solid training ground for collaborative public interest based lawyering I was looking for.

I assisted over a dozen poor and low-income clients by conducting intakes, counseling, filling out forms, and preparing defensive asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, and U visa applications. I developed my skills working with victims of trauma and learned a substantial amount about immigration law.

One unforgettable client was a young boy who came to the U.S. as an unaccompanied minor seeking asylum. He had endured abuse, neglect, and abandonment and it was very challenging to get him to speak when asked about his past. In preparing him for his asylum interview, I tried to explain to him the importance of seizing the opportunity to tell his story in front of the asylum officer. I served as the interpreter during the asylum interview and witnessed how much the preparation had helped him. A few weeks later, I went with him to the asylum office to pick up the decision. I had the honor to see his face light up as I told him that his asylum application had been approved.

Another client I worked with was a young woman who had survived a particularly egregious sexual assault in her home country, and then became the victim of human trafficking in the U.S. I helped her complete her asylum application and explained to her the options for immigration relief she had as the victim of a violent crime and human trafficking. I felt that it made a huge impact for her to have someone walk her through the initial process of applying for asylum and explain the actions she could take.

In sum, I thank you for providing these opportunities to fund this important work. It would have been very difficult for me to intern at EBCLC without EJA's support. I will continue to build on the invaluable lessons I learned this summer, particularly the importance of being at service to the most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,

Leslie Ruiz  
J.D. Candidate, 2019  
UC Hastings College of the Law



EAST BAY  
COMMUNITY

LAW CENTER

August 28, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Leslie Ruiz worked under my supervision this summer in the Immigration Unit at the East Bay Community Law Center in Berkeley, California. We provide free immigration legal services to low-income residents of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. All law student interns have their own caseloads and conduct client intakes and general consultations.

During her 10-week internship, Leslie worked on a variety of cases including an asylum application to a Special Immigration Juvenile Status application. She worked with some particularly vulnerable clients, such as a young boy whose siblings had been killed in his home country and a young woman who had been raped and trafficked. She worked very well with both clients and colleagues. In addition to those cases, she conducted general consultations, providing advice to undocumented individuals about their immigration options. Leslie learned about immigration law while also becoming familiar with the practical aspects of preparing a filing and working with clients.

I very much appreciated Leslie's mature attitude and strong work ethic. She was always eager to learn more about immigration law and was willing to take on additional cases. Above all, she truly cares about her clients. She volunteered her time after the summer ended to work on a few additional cases. This is one example of her commitment to the immigrant community and desire to continue learning. I am confident that Leslie has the skills to succeed in any public interest work environment. It was truly a pleasure to work with her. I appreciate Equal Justice America's commitment to supporting law students who are interested in public interest work.

If you have any other questions, feel free to contact me at (510) 548-4040 ext. 368

Sincerely,

Linda Tam  
Supervising Attorney