

August 19, 2015

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to tell you about the incredible experience I had working at Levitt & Quinn Family Law Center this summer as a legal intern. Levitt & Quinn provides family legal assistance to low-income families in Los Angeles including issues of adoption, child support, spousal support, custody, visitation, marital dissolution, paternity, and domestic violence. During the course of the summer, I worked as a legal assistant on many of these types of family law cases and had the opportunity to work with the supervision and guidance of many of the attorneys at Levitt & Quinn.

I had the opportunity to work on many adoption cases this summer. In one of these cases, I was able to provide legal research and complete the paperwork that helped a child's guardians adopt him. In this case, the child's guardians were his maternal grandparents who had raised him since birth. Shortly after the child was born, his mother left him with her parents and went down a path of drug and alcohol abuse. This child considered his grandparents to be his parents as they were the only home and family he had ever known. The grandparents obtained a legal guardianship and were able to provide him the safe, secure, and loving home giving him the support and resources he needed as a special needs child. However, while the guardianship gave the couple many of the rights and responsibilities of being his legal parents, they turned to Levitt & Quinn to give their family the legal security and permanency that a full adoption would achieve. As a summer intern, I was able to help this family work towards a legal adoption of their grandchild to give them the full legal rights and bring their family the legal recognition they so desired. In working on adoption cases such as these, I realized what a significant role family law can play in giving families peace of mind in having defined, legal relationships with one another.

Another powerful case I was able to assist on was a highly contested paternity case. In this case, a disabled father's ex-wife was seeking to terminate his parental rights and rights to custody and visitation of his child by alleging that his disability prevented him from being the child's biological father. I was able to research and provide support for this father argue that legal paternity is based on many family presumptions which he easily satisfied and not just defined by biology alone. My research was able to help a father fight for the right to see and have a relationship with his daughter whom he hadn't seen in nearly two years. This experience helped me understand that California Family Law defines parentage as more than purely biology and that the law supports the best interests of children in preserving and maintaining existing relationships these children have with their parents.

Additionally, Levitt & Quinn gave me the great opportunity to attend court regularly this summer. I attended many hearings for my supervising attorneys' cases and the cases I assisted on for various issues of family law. I was able to attend child support hearings, custody and child support hearings,

and adoption finalization hearings. Seeing court first hand really demonstrated to me how the legal issues I had been learning about played out in practice rather than just in theory and was incredibly valuable.

My summer at Levitt & Quinn Family Law Center has been one of the most pivotal working experiences of my adult life. It was an incredible privilege to get the opportunity to learn about the issues facing low income families navigating the family law system with such compassionate attorneys as supervisors who are both committed to helping their clients and committed to helping their summer interns learn the law in practice. I could not have asked for a better experience to affirm my commitment to a career in public interest law and I would definitely recommend working at Levitt & Quinn to anyone from the amazing work they do and I sincerely hope this is not my last contact with their work.

Sincerely,

Morgan Hecht

UCLA Law J.D. Candidate Class of 2017

Legal Volunteer

Levitt & Quinn Family Law Center