

NATALIE A. PETRUCCI

October 28, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to express my appreciation to you and Equal Justice America for the grant I received to pursue summer public interest legal work this past summer. Without your financial support, I would have not been able to pursue my passion for providing immigration legal services to low-income clients in Colorado.

During my summer as an Equal Justice America Fellow, I had the honor to intern at the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN), in Westminster, Colorado. My ten-week internship exposed me to incredibly challenging casework and excellent examples of public interest lawyering, as demonstrated by my RMIAN supervisors and fellow staff members. In my capacity as a legal intern, I assisted attorneys providing “know-your-rights” presentations to detained immigrants in the GEO Aurora facility. Many of the clients I met with during follow-up consultations had fled terrible violence in their home countries. The vast majority were monolingual Spanish speakers and could not afford a private attorney. Without our assistance, these individuals would have had to navigate the immigration legal system alone and without the basic orientation we provided. Luckily, our office was able to go above and beyond for some clients by finding them pro bono legal representation to seek relief in their cases.

In addition to my work in the detention center, I wrote numerous referral memos for detained adult and child clients to assist pro bono attorneys. With mentorship and supervision, I assisted with case research, preparing client declarations, translating legal documents, writing cover letters and filling out applications and for immigrant clients from both RMIAN’s Detained Adult and Children’s Programs. I am happy to report that many of the clients we served have won their cases.

My summer experience cemented my desire to pursue additional experiential and substantive training in human rights and immigration law. In pursuit of this aim, I accepted a semester internship with a labor and human rights organization in Nicaragua, and will be enrolled in a *Immigrant Rights Policy Clinic* this spring. It is my ultimate goal to provide holistic and effective legal services to individuals and families seeking immigration relief who cannot afford a private attorney.

Thank you again for your generosity and support.

Sincerely,

Natalie Petrucci
UCLA School of Law