

August 20, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My name is Ryan Oechsler. I am a rising 3L at the University of Michigan Law School.

In the summer of 2016, I had the opportunity to serve the people of Detroit as a student attorney with the Community and Economic Development Clinic at the University of Michigan Law School. The Clinic is dedicated to promoting vibrant, diverse, and sustainable communities by providing transactional legal services to nonprofit and community-based organizations, neighborhood-based entrepreneurs and small businesses, social enterprises, and arts and cultural organizations. My work with the Clinic challenged me to grow personally and professionally and would not have been possible without the support of Equal Justice America's Summer 2016 Fellowship.

During my time with the Clinic, I was able to serve many clients engaged in improving the lives of their fellow Detroiters. I worked often with an individual who was in the beginning stages of forming an organization dedicated to inspiring others to make positive changes in their communities. I counseled the client regarding choice of entity, incorporated the organization as a nonprofit, and drafted both governing documents and an application for tax-exempt status. In doing so, I learned of the immediate, significant, and tangible benefits legal work can provide.

I also represented an organization whose membership included artists, musicians, and other like-minded individuals dedicated to providing access to the arts for underrepresented groups. I attended the organization's membership meetings and counseled the organization's leadership on specific legal questions related to tax, corporate, and contract law. Through these experiences, I improved my capacity to respect the client's vision and values during my representation.

Another of my clients was a well-established organization that supports initiatives that seek to better include underrepresented groups in the creative and tech fields. It is a well-established nonprofit corporation, and as such it must continually deal with the complexities of corporate existence. I engaged in legal research for and counseled the board, drafted documents to effect corporate decisions, and assisted in settlement negotiations in a trademark dispute. In serving this client, I saw how addressing legal issues may be of relatively minor concern to the client yet be nonetheless essential if the client is to move forward.

Thank you and Equal Justice America for the chance to serve these and other clients in need during Summer 2016. I wish you, future sponsees, and their clients great success in the future.

Sincerely,

Ryan Oechsler
University of Michigan Law School
J.D. expected May 2017