

August 24, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thanks to Equal Justice America, I received the opportunity to serve the legal needs of struggling immigrants with the organization Public Counsel of Los Angeles, California. My work within the immigration realm was so varied. In some shape or form, I was able to assist on cases involving the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act, Violence Against Women Act petitions, U-visas for victims of enumerated crimes, Asylum based on transgender identity, as well as the Special Immigrants Juvenile Status (SIJS) petitions.

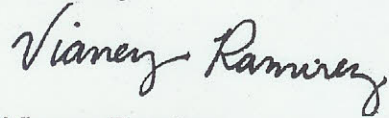
The highlights involved my work on SIJS cases. There was one youth in particular whose compelling case will stay with me forever. JM was abandoned by his father before his birth and his mother abandoned him at the age of eleven. Ever since then, as a homeless youth, he traveled throughout Mexico in search of work in order to survive. His life journey brought him to the United States at the age of seventeen. Here, he could not obtain a stable job due to language barriers and his homeless status. Due to his circumstances, he ended up in juvenile court because he would loiter the streets by not having shelter. Due to his abused, abandoned, and neglected status, he was eligible for SIJS relief. I conducted a lengthy interview with JM and was able to create a declaration that accompanied his SIJS findings case before the juvenile court judge. The SIJS findings were granted and JM was given the opportunity to begin the tedious process of obtaining immigration relief.

I was also able to assist in the process of obtaining the immigration relief on behalf of JM. In one day we were able to schedule various appointments in order to process his application. We were able to get him his work permit,

Passport photographs, administer FBI clearance and interview with the Department of Homeland Security officer. It was truly rewarding to be able to turn to JM after each procedure and say "Congratulations." He told me "You are like my family," and those words coming from an abandoned youth meant so much to me.

Equal Justice America, I commend you for being proactive about ensuring that students like me will have the opportunity to serve the legal needs of some of the most disenfranchised people like JM. I am deeply grateful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vianey Ramirez". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Vianey Ramirez
UC Hastings College of the Law
Class of 2006