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September 9, 2009

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

RE: Summer Fellowship with Legal Services of South Central MI

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I had an outstanding experience working at LSSCM over the summer thanks to the EJA Summer Fellowship. I worked with two other students to run the *pro se* divorce clinic. I got to meet with dozens of clients going through the various stages of divorce. I helped them fill out all their paperwork and navigate the court system to achieve their goal of getting divorced. I got to counsel clients going through emotionally stressful times. Being able to help them was great for all involved. The legal system can be daunting to the unacquainted, especially when the non-legal side of divorce is hard for most people to go through. Most of the clients were extremely appreciative of our help and said that they wouldn't have known what to do without us, considering they couldn't afford an attorney.

The attorneys in the office took us along on hearings for divorces that they were handling as full representation. This allowed us in the clinic to describe to the clients where to go in the courtrooms and what to expect at the hearings. Going on these trips also taught me to tell clients that they should dress up for court, as this was not something they necessarily knew on their own. We got to meet several judges from different counties and learn the different nuances from each.

Of course not all clients appreciate the services that you are providing them for free. They want you to do everything for them, even pay for filing fees. It is hard to tell them no sometimes and sometimes it is hard to want to help them at all. But you cannot help those that don't want help.

Overall it was a great learning experience about divorce, public service law, and society as a whole. I greatly valued the opportunity.

Thank you,

Zacharie Stephen  
Michigan State University College of Law  
Graduating May 2010

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*"...there can be no equal justice where the kind of trial...(one) enjoys depends on the amount of money (one) has."*

--Hon. Hugo Black, *Griffin v Illinois*, 351 US 12 (1956)

