

August 30, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to receive an Equal Justice America grant. This past summer I worked at the University of Michigan Law School's Human Trafficking Clinic. This experience affirmed my passion for working with indigent clients, specifically in the field of immigration.

While working at the Clinic I was given the opportunity to manage my own caseload under the supervision of the Clinic attorneys. As a result, I was able to really build relationships with my various clients over the course of the summer. It was incredibly rewarding to look back at the end of my internship and see the progress that had been made in each client's case. While the Clinic focuses on providing legal services to victims of human trafficking, each case is unique and each client has different needs. While many of our clients are immigrants, we also work with U.S. citizens. The breadth of the Clinic's work really highlights the intersectionality of certain areas of the law like immigration, family, and criminal law.

I think my favorite part of my work this summer was having the opportunity to advocate for one of my clients in court. I was able to represent my client at a master calendar hearing in Detroit Immigration Court where I updated the judge on the progress of the case and was able to get a one year continuance so that our young client would not have to return to court again until 2019. Several of my clients this summer were unaccompanied refugee minors who entered the United States without a guardian when they were under the age of eighteen and are now living in some type of foster care setting in Michigan while their cases are adjudicated in immigration court.

Two of my unaccompanied refugee minor clients this summer were actually cousins who arrived in the United States together after being kidnapped and held for ransom during their journey to the U.S./Mexico border. While they planned to reunite with a family member in the U.S. after being detained at the border, their reunification was cancelled after caseworkers suspected this family member was actually attempting to traffic them by making them work for his boss instead of attending school. This summer I finalized and submitted a T-Visa application for one of the cousins, which we hope will permit him to remain and work in the United States so that he can help support his family back home. The other cousin already had a T-Visa application submitted, but the Clinic received a request for further evidence from USCIS so I drafted and submitted a response on behalf of our client to further clarify why he is a victim of a severe form of trafficking and how he meets the legal requirements to qualify for a T-Visa.

This summer I also worked with several clients in the process of applying for their green cards. For our immigrant clients we are often able to help them adjust status to permanent residence, and eventually, citizenship, after they hold some form of legal status, such as a T-Visa, for several years. This is an exciting time for our clients and their families and it is so rewarding to help them along in the process.

Unfortunately, many of our clients are still dealing with the trauma of their trafficking experiences and may struggle to take care of themselves and their families. As such, it becomes an important part of our work at the Clinic to not only advocate for our clients within the legal system, but also within the social services system. This summer I worked with several clients to help them get the services they are entitled to as victims of trafficking. These experiences further highlighted the multifaceted nature of representing indigent clients within the immigration system.

Thank you again for providing me with this opportunity, I really enjoyed my experience working at the Clinic and I hope to be able to work there again during my remaining time at the University. I am certain that I want to continue working in public interest immigration law in the future, and I hope to continue advocating on behalf of clients like those I worked with this summer.

Sincerely,

Samantha Kulhanek
University of Michigan Law School, 2020



Bridgette A. Carr
Suelyn Scarnecchia
Elizabeth A. Campbell

August 13, 2018

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RE: Samantha Kulhanek, EJA Fellow

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Samantha Kulhanek spent the summer with the University of Michigan Human Trafficking Clinic. I served as her supervisor. She handled five or six cases at any given time during the summer. Several of them required a good deal of work, including client interviews, research, writing, case updates, and a court appearance. She also did advocacy with various agencies on behalf of her clients.

Samantha's performance was excellent. She was always prompt and worked diligently. Her research skills are excellent and she used them to her clients' advantage on a daily basis. She worked directly with clients on a daily basis, exhibiting excellent communication skills. She was able to use a variety of means to stay in touch with clients – phone, email, text, and in-person meetings. She was readily responsive to client requests. Her preparation and performance in court were extremely well done.

Overall, Samantha is responsible, intelligent, and organized. She accomplished quite a bit for her clients and I noted that, in addition, she often helped her student colleagues with their problem solving on behalf of clients. She handled supervision well, keeping me informed and responding well to feedback. At the same time, she was able to work independently. I had no concerns with Samantha's performance at all. She learned a lot and she helped her clients very much during her time with us.

Many thanks for your support of this terrific student attorney.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Campbell
Assistant Clinical Professor of Law