

## SARAH MASERANG

August 31, 2018

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

Dear Equal Justice America:

This summer, I had the incredible opportunity to work for Council for Children's Rights, in Charlotte, North Carolina. I interned for their Individual Advocacy Team, focusing on education law research and assisting with their SpEAK program, through which they take on special education cases referred to CFCR by the courts. The guidance of my supervisor, as well as my research and projects immensely expanded my knowledge of education law. I enjoyed my summer very much, and I am very thankful for Equal Justice America supporting me and providing me with the ability to pursue this work.

This summer, I was incredibly excited to be working for an organization that assists children in so many ways; being able to personally work with a client and gain the confidence that comes with handling my first case, especially on an education case, was my hope for the summer. The attorneys on IAT were excited for me to take on my own SpEAK case, with the hope that I could be the lead attorney and potentially file a state complaint, or whatever action was necessary. My supervisors were extremely supportive and helpful with walking me through the necessary steps for contacting the client, opening the case, contacting the referring party on the case to gather information, and getting the necessary waivers. Unfortunately, after working on my case for several weeks, we discovered a potential conflict of interest with another member of the family and were unable to proceed. Despite this potential set back to the summer, I appreciate the chance to lead a case and the process provided me it great learning opportunities.

Without an active case to pursue, I spent much of my summer dedicated to research questions and several projects. I completed a packet of materials on Individual Education Programs and Section 504 Plans for pediatric residents, a research memo on compensatory education for students without IEPs, and created a presentation on the protections and policies for children with disabilities who are targets of bullying. Each of these projects allowed me to dive into special education law; I now feel like I have a solid foundation of education law, filling in gaps and confusion, and becoming an expert on certain subjects. Additionally, I know my pediatric packet and the bullying presentation will be useful materials going forward, helping many children and their parents, doctors and advocates. Knowing that I was able to create materials that will have a real positive impact on numerous people makes me incredibly proud and feel like I had a fulfilling and beneficial summer internship.

As I begin my classes for 3L year, I have reflected on how beneficial and enriching my summer experience was. The legal knowledge I gained and the reassurance in my ability to

interact with clients has given me the confidence and foundation necessary for my Youth Justice Clinic, as well as providing me with new ideas for research topics in my Education Law class. Further, I am confident in the pursuit of my career, and thankful that I have supervisors and mentors to support me along my journey.

Thank you Equal Justice America for supporting me this summer and providing me with the opportunity to pursue my dream work!

Sincerely,

*Sarah Maserang*

Sarah Maserang  
University of North Carolina School of Law



**Council for  
Children's  
Rights**

August 31, 2018

Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Rd., Bldg II, Ste. 204  
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Dear Equal Justice America,

My name is Caitlin Whalan and I am the Director of Individual Advocacy at Council Children's Rights (CFCR). I served as Sarah Maserang's direct supervisor during her summer internship with us.

CFCR's Individual Advocacy Team (IAT) provides legal representation and child advocacy services for individual children in crisis who reside in Mecklenburg County. The team focuses primarily in the areas of child welfare, special education, and mental health. Many children come to us with more than one issue and our holistic approach and broad expertise help us effectively and efficiently identify the needs of each child client in order to determine and assist in getting the appropriate services necessary to produce successful outcomes. Our unique expertise targets youth that otherwise would not have access to services. Services provided by IAT include, but are not limited to, serving as the Guardian ad Litem for youth who enter Youth & Family Services (YFS) custody through delinquency, representing parents in special education matters, and drafting and filing special education state complaints and disability discrimination complaints for cases that have a larger impact on the Charlotte community.

Because the need for our services always exceeds our capacity, we rely greatly on the support of law student interns. As an intern, Sarah provided essential functions for the team, including but not limited to client intake and interviews, legal research, support for case referrals, drafting legal memoranda, participating court hearings, attending IEP and other school meetings, and attending Child and Family Team meetings. Further, Sarah created a new training for our free First Wednesdays training series on Protections from Bullying for Children with Disabilities.

It was a pleasure working with Sarah this summer. If you have any further questions, feel free to reach out to me at 704-943-9470.

Sincerely,  
/S/ Caitlin Whalan, Esq.  
Caitlin Whalan, Esq.