



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

October 25, 2018

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Harold Hinds and I am a staff attorney with Advocates for Children of New York (AFC), a nonprofit civil rights organization in New York City, advocating for the right to a quality education for all students in New York City public schools. I supervised Ashli in the summer of 2018, during her time interning with AFC, as a part of AFC's Summer Legal Internship Program. Ashli was a conscientious, committed, and highly effective intern, whose work product was second to none. Through this summer internship program Ashli developed an extensive understanding of federal laws relating to public schools and the U.S. education system, on topics as varied as special education law, school discipline, charter schools, and the rights of immigrants students in public schools.

As part of this program Ashli worked directly with the families of students with special education needs in New York City Public Schools. All of Ashli's clients were low income families of color from poor, marginalized communities. Ashli advised these families in procuring appropriate special education services and supports for their children. Ashli did extensive work in connecting parents with viable school options for their children and advocated on behalf of these parents in instances where the New York City Department of Education (DOE) failed or refused to provide appropriate services and supports for these students.

Ashli performed extensive legal research about the rights of students with disabilities and drafted impartial hearing requests on behalf of students she served. Ashli's work was regularly thoughtfully crafted, legally sound, and thoroughly researched. Throughout this internship Ashli demonstrated an extensive knowledge and understanding of state and federal special education law and grew extensively in her understanding of this field and these topics in a very short amount of time. Ashli displayed a competency and aptitude for understanding the legal issues at play in the cases she worked on, far beyond what might typically be expected of a student who had just finished her first year of law school.

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Ashli also routinely went above and beyond in advocating for the families she work for. On multiple occasions Ashli attended school visits with families throughout New York State, went well beyond the requisite number of hours interns were required to work so that she could best assist the families she worked with, and happily took on extra cases as the organization's case load increased.

Ashli also worked with AFC's Helpline Initiative, assisted multiple families with specific questions about the rights of students with disabilities, providing these parents with information and resources that they then used to effectively advocate for their children in their own right. Ashli's ability to genuinely connect with and appropriately support parents dealing with particularly challenging circumstances, along with her ability to understand nuanced legal problems and apply appropriate legal reasoning and analysis to these problems cannot be overstated.

Ashley did an incredible job here at AFC, and far exceeded the very high standards we have for interns. She was a joy to work with and a great addition to our work and the education law community.

If you have any additional questions concerning Ashli, please feel free to contact me via email at hhinds@advocatesforchildren.org, or by phone at 212-822-9531.

Respectfully,
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