

August 29, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for the opportunity to work at Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM) with the funding of an Equal Justice America fellowship. The EJA Fellowship played a crucial role in helping me find my purpose through helping LSSCM's indigent clients.

When I started law school I knew I wanted to help people and pursued a volunteer experience with Michigan Legal Help in my first semester. As an EJA Fellow at LSSCM, I was able to affirm my commitment to public service. After this summer, I am sure that I have found where I fit in and the field in which I am destined to work.

I spent much of my summer working on various assignments for the attorneys in the office. I had the opportunity to work with every attorney in the office and helped with a variety of cases, but primarily with family and housing law cases. Part of LSSCM's mission focuses on helping survivors of domestic violence. This summer I assisted on a divorce case for a survivor of domestic violence. We filed the pleadings on behalf of the client and Friend of the Court had issued a temporary custody, parenting time, and support order. We then got a call from the client saying that she no longer wanted to proceed with the divorce because she and her husband were trying to reconcile. The attorney tried to make clear that if we go forward with the dismissal she may not be able to reinstate her divorce and may have to start the process over again. Sadly, the husband assaulted our client again and she decided that she needed to move forward with the divorce. In the end, the husband defaulted and we were able to submit a default judgment of divorce and our client was able to continue rebuilding her life outside of an abusive relationship. This case was a reminder that the client is ultimately responsible for deciding whether or not they want to proceed with their case. As lawyers we need to counsel our clients and do our best to help them see what is in their best interest. Even if we believe that a client should get divorced in order to escape an abusive situation, we cannot force divorce on them. This case was also a difficult reminder that getting out of a relationship with domestic violence can be daunting and can have set backs when a person wants to save their family, in spite of domestic violence. It was unfortunate that another incident of violence was the impetus the client needed to realize that she needed to get out of the relationship, but I am hopeful that she can now live a happier and healthier life, free from her abuser. Through my time as an EJA Fellow I have had the opportunity to see the strength and resilience of domestic violence survivors; as

well as the complexities behind escaping an abusive relationship, especially when children are involved.

Another focus of LSSCM's mission is helping to prevent homelessness through an Eviction Diversion Program in coordination with the 55th District Court in Mason, Michigan. LSSCM collaborates with the court to provide free legal services to tenants facing eviction. Representatives from Volunteers of America (VOA) and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) set up at the courthouse each week to provide resources to tenants regarding rent assistance. Through this program I have helped anywhere between one to four clients each week. One week I worked with a couple who owned their mobile home, but were behind on lot rent. The wife had been a stay-at-home mom while the husband worked. However, the husband had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer that rendered him unable to work. The couple had gotten behind because they were dealing with the husband's medical bills and trying to apply for assistance. I was able to get them connected with MDHHS and VOA to apply for State Emergency Relief and other assistance. The wife had recently gotten a job, but they would not have been able to pay off the full balance in time. I was able to work with the landlord's attorney to get the couple more time to start receiving public assistance and income from the wife's new job. We were able to negotiate a settlement agreement that provided that if my clients paid by the deadline the eviction case against them would be dismissed. Throughout my summer as an EJA Fellow I have helped countless clients negotiate agreements to allow them more time to pay and stay in their rental homes in order to avoid eviction.

I have a strong desire to pursue a career that allows me to help those most in need and allows me to give back to the community. I am grateful to Equal Justice America for the opportunities to further develop my skills and to help prepare me to be successful in the public interest field after law school.

Best,

Megan Robson
Michigan State University College of Law



Nicole Shannon, Supervising Attorney

Direct Dial: 517-827-8021
Email: nshannon@lsscm.org
SMS Text Only: 517-798-6553

August 16, 2018

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

RE: Megan Robson, EJA Fellowship Recipient

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My name is Nicole Shannon. I am the Supervising Attorney in Legal Services of South Central Michigan's (LSSCM) Lansing office. I manage the office's student law clerk program, which included Megan Robson's participation this summer.

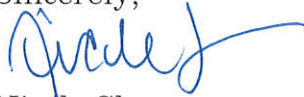
LSSCM is a Legal Services Corporation-funded organization that provides free civil legal aid to low-income families and individuals as well as to senior citizens. LSSCM attorneys provide full representation in family, housing, consumer, benefits, and elder cases. Our law clerks are given hands-on litigation experience under the supervision of the attorneys in our office. Megan's duties included conducting client intakes, legal research, drafting court filings and correspondence, and representing clients in court.

Megan's devotion to the mission is unquestionable. She takes seriously the challenges facing our clients and was always searching for the best way to serve them. She is quick on her feet, representing clients in our Eviction Diversion Program (EDP). At EDP, law clerks meet with tenants facing eviction to negotiate resolutions or to represent clients on the record. While even experienced attorneys sometimes struggle with this, Megan did the work confidently and achieved excellent results for our clients. She was proactive in seeking out work and could be counted on to go the extra mile.

Thank you to providing funding for law clerks like Megan to provide legal services to underserved populations. It is crucial in building the next generation of poverty lawyers. It is my hope that Megan will continue to work in the poverty law world,

continuing to achieve great results for our clients. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nicole Shannon", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nicole Shannon
Supervising Attorney

cc: Megan Robson