

August 29, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I write to express my gratitude for Equal Justice America's support this summer and to summarize my experience. I spent ten weeks this summer at the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice (NOWCRJ), a law and organizing practice founded as a workers' rights and racial justice response to the man-made disaster called Hurricane Katrina. Over a decade later, the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice continues to be a vehicle for black and immigrant workers to come build grassroots campaigns with a local and national impact. It is currently comprised of three organizing groups: Stand with Dignity, which is dedicated to uplifting the experiences of structurally unemployed and homeless black New Orleanians; the Congress of Day Laborers, a group of undocumented workers and their families who rebuilt New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; and the Seafood Workers' Alliance, a group dedicated to uplifting the experiences of guest workers in the seafood industry across the state of Louisiana and the Gulf South.

As an intern, I had the opportunity to work directly with several individual clients pursuing humanitarian relief in the labor immigration context with both the Congress of Day Laborers and the Seafood Workers Alliance. Due to the precarious positioning of both undocumented workers and workers whose entire livelihood, including housing, is tied to a single employer, both groups are very vulnerable to workplace abuses. I was able to work with Mr. J, an undocumented worker who had experienced labor trafficking, in his pursuit of a T visa for victims of trafficking, as well as with Mr. C, an undocumented worker who had experienced threats from his employer following a workplace accident; and Ms. P, a former guest worker who had been deported and was searching for legal options. In each case, I was able to form relationships with both the

individuals and with the organizers supporting them, disrupting the typical lawyer-client model in which the lawyer has all the answers and power and the client has none. This process was truly client-driven and informed, creating a more equitable division of power and information, and revolutionized the way that I see client work both in this context and going forward.

Thanks to Equal Justice America's funding, I was able to spend ten weeks learning with and from the legal team, organizers, and members at NOWCRJ. I developed valuable legal skills and perspectives that will continue to serve me and shape my approach as I move forward in my career, and was able to support NOWCRJ members as they empowered themselves individually, as well as in the broader fight for immigrant justice. I deeply appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Whitney Braunstein

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