

August 31, 2018

To whom it may concern:



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I am a staff attorney at The Door's Legal Services Center. Rebecca Wyss and I worked very closely together this summer; I was her direct supervisor during her internship. During her time at The Door, Rebecca worked primarily on Special Immigrant Juvenile cases, which require conducting a family court proceeding as well as the submission of immigration applications, which must be received by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (U.S.C.I.S.) prior to their 21st birthday, and sometimes, their eighteenth birthday. The clients with whom Rebecca worked were victims of abuse, neglect, or abandonment by their parents. Rebecca worked with many clients, but I wanted to highlight a few stories to illustrate the life-changing impact she had in some of my clients' lives this summer.

Rebecca's assistance enabled my capacity to take on time-sensitive cases to expand significantly. Because of Rebecca's assistance, we were able to complete an entire family court guardianship and special findings proceeding for a client in less than two weeks. It was the fastest case I had ever done. Rebecca drafted almost all of the documents that needed to be submitted to court. She and my other intern worked together very well to accomplish everything in time. This included her accompanying our client to the court to ensure that his aunt would be fingerprinted there, something we rarely do. I know that I would not have been able to assist this young man in the short time he had before his eighteenth birthday if not for Rebecca's hard work.

We were also able to assist another particularly vulnerable family because of Rebecca's availability and willingness to help however she could. Both siblings arrived to New York around the beginning of Rebecca's internship, and by July 27th, Rebecca had not only drafted all of their guardianship and special findings court submissions, but she had also prepared the younger sibling's immigration applications, which needed to be sent out before his birthday at the beginning of August. I was also able to witness her understanding of the need to provide holistic assistance to vulnerable clients; Rebecca accompanied these clients to receive assistance from our Runaway and Homeless Youth program, as they had nowhere to sleep the following day. She helped draft a letter of support from our organization, to advocate for their placement in a family shelter. The following day, they were in fact placed in a family shelter. She also looked up churches that met their particular preferences and needs in their area to help them find community and assistance. She was willing to meet them at our office early on the day of court to accompany them to the courthouse, as they were not sure how to get there.

Rebecca was also willing to take on very different types of assignments and handled the challenges well. I observed quickly that she could be trusted to do thorough and useful research. As a result, I gave her multiple short research assignments, and was very pleased with her work product. She also helped me draft a Motion to Reopen in Immigration Court for a young person with a final order of removal. In a different vein, she eagerly volunteered to join me at a community outreach event during a weekend. She spent her whole Saturday in a church parking lot, on a particularly warm day, telling people about The Door and our legal department. The flexibility that she demonstrated will serve her well in her career.

I am grateful that EJA provided her with the monetary assistance to enable her to intern with our organization this summer. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 212-941-9090 ext. 3441 or at gapollon@door.org. Thank you very much,

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Apollon