

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Building II, Suite 204
Midlothian, VA 2311

August 20, 2018

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer, I had the privilege of spending ten weeks working as a law clerk at the Family Law Project (FLP) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. FLP provides free legal assistance to low-income survivors of domestic violence in Washtenaw County, Michigan. Primarily, this assistance focuses on divorce and custody proceedings.

Student law clerks at the Family Law Project take considerable responsibility over their cases. From the beginning, I was involved in all facets of the litigation process. I conducted intake interviews with new clients, drafted initial pleadings in new cases, prepared service packets, managed client communications, assisted with discovery, and drafted proposed final orders and judgments. Over the course of the summer, I worked on 15-20 cases that all presented unique legal issues, which allowed me to develop a full understanding of how family law works.

Further, because the FLP office is relatively small, I was able to work one-on-one with each of the staff attorneys at FLP. The attorneys provided detailed feedback on my written work, and were very open to discussing the issues in each case. Unlike other legal work I have been involved in, the work at FLP involves a considerable amount of interaction with clients. The skills required to manage these interactions successfully cannot be learned in a classroom, and I am grateful that I was able to develop these skills with assistance and guidance from experienced advocates.

During my fellowship, I also had the opportunity to appear in court on behalf of three different clients. Each of these clients faced challenging circumstances: one was a mother who sought to regain custody after her son's father became unable to care for the child, another sought child support for her one-year-old, and a third faced an increasingly erratic former partner who sought custody of their shared children while a criminal domestic violence case was pending against him. It was a great privilege to represent these women in court, and I will not soon forget the look of relief on their faces when our arguments were successful and their children were allowed to stay in safe, stable environments.

For me, this summer would not have been possible without Equal Justice America. Without this fellowship, I would not have been able to pursue work on behalf of a

population often in desperate need of legal assistance, as well as develop legal skills that will allow me to act as an effective advocate in the future.

I will be returning to the Family Law Project in the fall as a Project Coordinator, an opportunity that would not have been available to me without EJA. I am confident the long-term effects of this fellowship will enhance the remaining year of my legal education, and have a lasting impact on my career as a whole.

Sincerely,

Sinéad Redmond
Law Student
University of Michigan Law School