

April 25, 2016

To: Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112
Dan@EqualJusticeAmerica.org

Mr. Ruben,

Thank you for your support of the Temporary Restraining Order Project, a public interest organization at Yale Law School that assists applicants as they seek temporary restraining orders. The TRO Project offers students at YLS the opportunity to provide meaningful assistance to vulnerable women, men, and children in the local community. Students volunteering with the TRO Project staff an office at the New Haven Judicial District Family Court. With guidance and support from attorneys at the New Haven Legal Assistance Association (NHLA) and the Family Court clerks, students provide resources and information to domestic violence victims applying pro se for TROs. Last year, we attracted over 40% of the 1L class to the program and helped hundreds of applicants apply for and receive TROs. Your support of this project helps keep our office full of enthusiastic volunteers, ensuring that we meet the needs of New Haven residents who may be experiencing a crisis.

I spent this year acting as a Director of the TRO Project. As part of my role, I organized staffing of the office for seven hours each work day, including creating a schedule for each semester, and working with more experienced volunteers to ensure that new ones were able to observe the process at the beginning of their time as volunteers. This semester, we also offered volunteers the chance to observe TRO hearings, and a few volunteers worked closely with our supervising attorneys to provide direct representation to some applicants during those hearings.

It's been an exciting year for the Project, and we continue to boast one of the highest rates of participation of any student group on campus.

Though my role focused on managing logistics for the office, I also had the chance to work directly with several applicants as they sought temporary restraining orders. During one particularly busy shift at the office, I was able to support a new volunteer as she worked with an applicant who presented an extremely complex case, and who seemed to have experienced severe trauma. I helped the new volunteer identify which type of protection the applicant could seek, and communicate with the clerks during the complicated application process. I'm happy to say that the volunteer I supported that day has decided to become a Director for the TRO Project next year.

We provide a critically important service to the New Haven community, and give law students the chance to hone interview skills and learn to navigate courthouse processes. Thank you for your continued support of this amazing work.

Best,

Cassandra Crockett
Yale Law School
Class of 2017