



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Ivelisse Saint-Clair

Law School: Emory University School of Law

Fellowship: Georgia Legal Services Program

Entry 1: May 31, 2019

Today marks two weeks since I have started my internship with Georgia Legal Services Program and I absolutely love it! Just in these two weeks I have been given numerous opportunities and learned so much. This summer I am working with the Spanish speaking attorney here at GLSP Lauren Cartwright. Lauren works on different cases, mostly in the realm of family law. As the only Spanish speaking attorney at GLSP, all Spanish clients are referred to her. One of my goals this summer was to use and develop my Spanish speaking abilities. Knowing this, Lauren as allowed me to both speak with clients in Spanish and translating documents into Spanish to help familiarize myself with legal terms in Spanish. It is Lauren's belief that clients should have access to the documents we are submitting to the court in their native language so they can fully understand the process and what we are asking the court to do. I look forward to working more with Lauren, as she is allowing me to work on conducting intakes and preparing clients for hearings in Spanish.

Currently, I am in the Piedmont office of GLSP, and working with another law intern from Washington & Lee. It has been great getting to know my fellow law intern and swapping stories about our first year. It is comforting to have someone in the office on a similar path as me and build a connection. The office (along with the Central office) hosted a Breakfast in our honor (along with three law student interns from the Central office) where we were able to introduce ourselves and meet everyone in the two offices.

GLSP is a great office, who is doing even greater work for the community. Ira, the General Counsel for GLSP, told us some inspiring words that I will always remember. He stated "No matter whether someone has 3 kids, is a single mom, is in severe poverty, they as individuals should have access to quality legal representation, and that is where we come in."



Entry 2: June 10, 2019

Happy Monday! Today marks my fourth week at GLSP and I have enjoyed every minute of it. The other intern and myself had made it a point to make “morning rounds” and greet everyone in the office. This not only helps us learn everyone’s names but it allows us to talk and build better relationships with everyone in the office. Currently, the Piedmont office of GLSP is expanding and making room for more attorneys. As I meet the new attorneys and hear their stories and background, I am inspired by the motivation and drive they have to help our community.

During the last couple of weeks, I have had the opportunity to have both client interactions and courtroom observations. Traveling to rural counties around Atlanta is eye opening to see just how different they run their courtrooms. I am looking forward to having more courtroom exposure and (fingers crossed) getting to represent a client in court with the Student Practice Certificate.

These past couple of weeks have been inspiring, educational, and full of great experiences. Looking forward to the second half of the internship!

Entry 3: July 29, 2019

Today marks my last Monday with Georgia Legal Services. This past 9 weeks have certainly FLEW by but I have enjoyed every minute of it. Today was exceptionally incredible. Over the past couple of weeks, I have been mostly involved with Family Law cases with the divorces, temporary protective orders, custody etc. Today, one of the other attorneys took me to a ECRA meeting at the ACLU office in downtown Atlanta. This national organization partners with local organizations to help better the education of children. Today’s specific meeting addressed a potential program that would include individual representative training for parents and attorneys with the local organizations. The goal is to increase the ability for one to represent a child at an IEP and disciplinary meeting with the school. One particular issue that was addressed really hit home. Latinx parents are in some places not being given translators during these meetings with the school. The purpose of the training would be to provide language support and help parents (and attorneys) to understand the children’s rights during IEP and disability meetings along with addressing the disparities within a schools gifted program. It was great to see programs like Atlanta Legal Aid, Southern Poverty Law Center, Georgia Advocacy Organization, Georgia StoPP and the ACLU partner together to combat for children’s rights related to education. I was able to meet some great people who are doing tremendous work and grateful to learn the issues our students are having within the school system.



Entry 4: August 2, 2019

Today marks my LAST DAY with Georgia Legal Services Program. It is a bittersweet moment. This last day I spent it in court with my attorney attempting to obtain a temporary protective order for our client who had immigrated from Honduras and suffering from physical and emotional abuse from her American boyfriend. Today revealed to me just how wrong the law can be sometimes and why our society needs to be continuously fighting to get domestic violence victims the resources they need to be able to go against their abusers. Our client fled from her abuser and sought the safety of her family members. The ex parte was originally filed in March, but due to continuances being filed on the part of the court and our client (for various interpreter issues), the final hearing was not heard until August. This was the first case in which we encountered an opposing counsel. Unfortunately, this was a case where the law was not on our side. Within the statutes governing temporary protective orders, it states all continuances must be agreed upon by both parties and a hearing must occur within 30 days of the initial ex parte hearing. As a result, the law was not on our side and because of all the stress and confusion our client was going through we were not able to obtain the temporary protective order. Instead, the parties were able to agree upon a restraining order. Some would look at this as a win. Myself on the other hand, does not. The system for temporary protective orders is supposed to be organized in a way that allows for victims to bring these cases pro se, without the help of an attorney. However, laws such as this one could prevent an individual or hinder their ability in obtaining the TPO, which for some is highly needed and can give them a safe piece of mind. Although our client was content with the restraining order, it does not provide her the same protections as a TPO and could still result in more court visits should the harassment continue. My time with GLSP was marvelous and I am grateful for the opportunity to experience the good, the bad, and the ugly when it comes to our legal system.