



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Katharine Czinke

Law School: Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Fellowship: JusticeMatters, Durham, NC

Entry 1:

The transition from the end of 2L year into the summer has been a wild one these last few weeks. I'm finally settling into life in North Carolina and I'm so happy to share that I'm interning with an organization called JusticeMatters for the next few weeks.

JusticeMatters specializes in trauma-informed advocacy for vulnerable child populations. In particular, I'm working with the immigration team on cases that impact minors and survivors of human trafficking or severe crime. I could write for days on how valuable trauma-informed advocacy is or how greatly it's needed in the legal field, but I realize you're already reading this book I'm writing. So instead, I'll say this: even in the two weeks I've been here, this internship has already solidified so many of my interests and passions in working in this area and I'm so grateful to be here.

But! Moving to another state for the summer was a big leap and so much needed to come together for this to happen. Not the least of which was funding since public interest internships are generally unfunded. Thankfully, I was selected as an Equal Justice America Summer Fellow. EJA is an organization that believes funding shouldn't be a barrier to justice and helps law students committed to serving underserved communities finance their summer internships.

As a part of our fellowship, we have the opportunity to share our updates on our work with our community through social media. In addition, I am inviting you to consider partnering with me, Equal Justice America, and so many others in bringing access to legal services to those who need them most. If you would like to donate to Equal Justice America, 25% of your donation is added to my summer funding and the remaining 75% helps students all across the country in similar internships. Click the link below for more information or please don't hesitate to reach out to me for more information. I love getting to connect one-on-one!



Entry 2:

“I don’t feel safe here.”

I’ve heard these words more than once in the last few weeks. It pains me to say, they weren’t spoken with regard to escaping traffickers or criminals or abusive parents. The feeling of danger stems from our own systems. Hearing people describe the treatment within detention centers has been the most surprising and challenging aspect of this internship. Survivors of trafficking detained for illegal entry and even asylum seekers fleeing horrific violence who were still detained despite their legal entry, are more scared of our government than the criminal systems that threaten them in their homeland.

The reality of this work is heavy and I don’t want to sugarcoat what’s happening. The last few weeks have motivated me more than ever to be an ally for people whose voices are not heard. I work with a team of powerhouse problem solvers who support our clients with empathy and determination. I’ve met clients who face debilitating circumstances with fortitude and resilience. I am incredibly grateful to be learning from the staff and our clients on a daily basis. I still have a lifetime of learning ahead, but this opportunity is one that will surely stick with me.

Thank you to each of you who reached out or donated after my last post. I am incredibly touched and grateful to know I have friends and family who are as passionate about this work as I am and who believe in me enough to support my summer fellowship. If you would like to donate to Equal Justice America and support my work and the work of my peers, click the link below. 25% of any donation is added to my summer funding.

Entry 3:

One of the most important things I looked for in an internship this summer was finding an organization dedicated to trauma-informed advocacy. “Trauma-informed” is a term I first learned about during my time in Tulsa, volunteering with the Tulsa Hills Youth Ranch. Since coming to law school, being trauma-informed has become such an important framework for how I approach my work and even the world around me.

Trauma is defined as a physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening event, series of events, or set of circumstances which cause an individual to experience lasting adverse effects on their mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. More than half of the US population has experienced at least 1 trauma. Research shows that the more trauma someone experiences, the more likely they are to have long term physical or mental health challenges. In fact, repeated trauma in children and adolescents actually causes physiological changes in the brain and can cause lasting changes in brain chemistry and function.



The term “trauma-informed” broadly refers to principles and practices that take into account the impact of trauma while creating a safe, healthy, and empowering culture. To me, it is the ever developing practice of learning how to meet people right where they are instead of where you might expect them to be. This isn’t standard practice in the legal field. Yet, by the time a person is in need of legal assistance they almost certainly have experienced trauma.

With this understanding in mind, I started my internship at JusticeMatters. The team at JM works hard to serve each client as an individual. They focus on developing trust and felt safety with clients before asking the necessary questions about the traumatic experience that now requires legal assistance. And, when those questions are necessary, they do their best to allow the client to have both voice and choice in how and to whom they share their story. This requires a lot of flexibility, communication, and compassion. Even more than just caring for clients, I’ve watched the JusticeMatters team approach one another with that same grace and respect even in the midst of the most frustrating situations.

Approaching the end of this internship, I continue to be exceedingly passionate about developing trauma-informed advocacy and I am so grateful for the opportunity to dive deeper into understanding how to practically apply trauma-informed practices. Thank you all for your support and kindness throughout this summer! (And thank you for your patience with my long update posts.)

There is one more post to come. But, in the meantime, if you would like to donate to Equal Justice America so that my work, and the work of my peers may continue, visit the link below. 25% of any donation is added to my total summer fellowship award. If you would like more information on trauma and/or trauma-informed services, please don’t hesitate to message me!

Entry 4:

Well friends, it’s time for my final EJA update. After finishing my internship a couple of weeks ago, I’ve been reflecting on my experience. Seeing people live through some of the most vulnerable days of their lives is humbling and sobering. Hearing each story this summer, whether from a client or a co-worker, reminded me to be deeply grateful. I am grateful for the opportunity to do work that deepens my passion. I am grateful to be entrusted with even a fragment of people’s heartache and their triumph. And, I am grateful for community. Thank you to everyone who followed my summer journey and thank you to EJA for making this tremendously valuable summer possible.