



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



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Law School: Loyola Law School

Fellowship: Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice

Entry 1: June 4th, 2019

As some of you may know, I was selected to be one of Equal Justice America's Fellows this summer and will be working at the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (LACLJ). It's been a little over 2 weeks since I became a law clerk at LACLJ and I've been loving it! I came into this position not entirely sure of what to expect or what exactly it was that I was looking to get out of working here. So far, I've attended trainings on not only immigration and family law, but also on working with clients who have experienced trauma. These trainings have dealt with learning to be better legal providers as well as learning to take care of ourselves. It's not easy working with clients who have been through atrocious life experiences, so we've been slowly learning to recognize our own signs of stress and our own triggers. In my short time here, I've helped in various domestic violence and sexual assault restraining order cases as well as worked to get certification for a U Visa. This summer, I'm looking forward to helping raise awareness on the unmet legal needs of low-income minority communities and hope you can all put a little of your part to help those that need it.

Entry 2: June 18th, 2019

It's been almost a month since I became a summer clerk at the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (LACLJ). These past two weeks, I got the opportunity to accompany my supervising attorney to court two times where he represented two domestic violence victims seeking restraining order protections and paternity orders. Although I only got the opportunity to observe and (of course) not actually represent the clients, I learned so much. From supporting the client to even filing documents, my two days at court were very educational. I got the experience to watch my supervising attorney litigate for one of our clients. Although I wasn't the one doing the litigating, I felt a sense of pride watching an attorney I work with argue for our client and his child's best interest in a case I had been working on since I started at LACLJ last month. It's amazing to see the work that nonprofits such as LACLJ do to help those that wouldn't have the representation they deserve.



otherwise. It's also amazing to be a part of Equal Justice America, who has supported me on this journey in public interest and makes it possible for many of us EJA Fellows to help people who would not get the legal representation they deserve otherwise.

Entry 3: July 2nd, 2019

I am officially a little over halfway through my summer clerkship. Over these past two weeks, I have worked with one client in particular. I was assigned to write her responsive declaration and because the upcoming hearing is so close, I was only given 2 days to write it (which for a brand new law clerk is very short time -- well, at least for me it is). This has definitely been a very stressful and rewarding experience. In such a short time I was able to make a difference in someone's life. This client does not speak English and Spanish is not her first language either. She grew up speaking a central American dialect she uses daily. When she came in for her intake, I could tell how nervous and shy she was. She mainly nodded or shook her head and would give very short answers in a super hushed tone. Her eyes would get watery and her voice would shake as she tried to retell the abuse she had been through. Working with this client over the last 2 weeks has made me see what it is that I am here for. I always knew I was going to help clients, but to see the abuse she has been through and to actually be able to write her story for her has been so rewarding. It might sound so simple to write a declaration for her. But, for me, it was a lot more. I was able to give a voice to someone that could not speak (literally and figuratively) on her own. Her hearing date is approaching and I am hopeful for her and her future. Over these past 2 weeks I have seen her get more comfortable with me and even with legal jargon. She's come a long way in such a short time and I'm excited for what's to come. A lot of the times we get lost in the day-to-day tasks we are assigned so we forget about the "why" of what we are doing. It's great to be reminded of that "why."

Entry 4: July 16th, 2019

I am now approaching the end of my clerkship at LACLJ. In the short time I've been here I have learned more than I ever thought I would. It's a little insane to look back and think that just 10 weeks ago I was completely clueless as to the matters I deal with on a daily basis now. Not only have I learned legal skills necessary for my continuing career, but I have formed amazing relationships with attorneys, law clerks, paralegals, support staff and clients. I have learned so much from each and every one of these people that I will forever remember. Coming into this clerkship, I never thought my work in the 2 months I would be here would change any lives. I am so happy to have been proven wrong. Although my clients were not always given the legal outcome they desired, every single one of them came out of this experience a little more educated on the legal system and a little more ready to take it on themselves. I am so happy to have been a part of LACLJ and I am so happy there are many other legal aid organizations like it providing low-income minorities the services and *education* that is so desperately needed in these communities. I will forever be grateful to Equal Justice America for providing me with a Fellowship making my work and many others' work possible.