

October 13, 2019

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to pursue public interest legal work this summer as an Equal Justice America Fellow. I had a busy summer as an intern in the Housing Unit at AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania, and it solidified my drive to practice civil legal aid.

All summer interns at AIDS Law Project get trained to conduct intake interviews. Every day, I interviewed potential clients seeking legal assistance for issues regarding Social Security benefits, confidentiality of health information, legal name changes, and more. After each interview, I composed a narrative summary of the issue for the legal team to determine what services could be provided.

As an intern in the Housing Unit, I worked with the unit's staff attorney and paralegal to help tenants facing a variety of issues. I drafted advice letters to clients explaining their legal rights as tenants. I drafted demand letters to landlords to explain their legal obligations in providing units that are safe and habitable. I opened complaints with the Pennsylvania Utility Commission on behalf of clients whose utility services were improperly terminated. .

I also helped the housing attorney prepare for hearings where tenants were facing eviction by interviewing clients and gathering evidence to be presented at court. I got a taste of what it's like to practice public interest law when I accompanied the attorney to Philadelphia's Municipal Court, where I observed landlord-tenant mediations and eviction hearings.

In addition to providing services directly to clients, I was responsible for writing a Quality Assurance Report reviewing the prior year's housing cases. I reviewed and summarized more than 50 cases to explain what issues clients faced, what services were provided by AIDS Law Project, and what the outcomes were in each case. This Quality Assurance Report provides a snapshot of how hard the attorneys work to ensure access to justice for all clients, and will soon be publicly available in the near future when it is published on the firm's website.

The summer funding and support I received from Equal Justice America allowed me to focus my efforts on making the most of this summer experience and building a network in Philadelphia. Having a foundation in civil legal aid is invaluable as a soon-to-be public attorney, and I hope other law students are able to benefit from the Fellowship as I have for many years to come.

Warmly,
Sarah Kim Eisenhard