



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Erin Bartenstein

Law School: Wisconsin Law School

Fellowship: Legal Aid Society (Chicago, IL)

Entry 1:

Just wrapped up my second week working as a summer fellow in the Safety and Family practice group at the Legal Aid Society. This amazing group of attorneys and advocates assists domestic violence survivors in obtaining orders of protection and addressing other unmet civil legal needs.

The highlight so far? A client we helped obtain a protective order against her abuser saying she felt “fuerte como un león” (strong as a lion) after knowing she and her kids were now safe.

Legal representation triples the chance of a domestic violence survivor obtaining these protective orders. Increasing access to legal aid means more freedom and fresh starts for survivors like this.

Entry 2:

This week marks the halfway point of my Equal Justice America fellowship, and I’m amazed by how much I’ve learned. For example, last week I drafted child support petitions (interesting); prepped clients for upcoming court dates (rewarding); and spent 30 minutes trying to wrap text in Excel (embarrassing).

Entry 3:

As my supervising attorney reminded me this week: “Courts deal with facts and processes, not hypotheticals.”

For domestic violence victims, they are navigating complex legal processes with an added layer of trauma as they often face abusers in court. Having an attorney in their corner is a game changing – and often life saving – experience.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

LEGAL SERVICES FELLOWSHIPS

Too many victims experience barriers to receiving this vital legal assistance, but Equal Justice America is working hard to change that.

Entry 4:

Meet my supervising attorney, Ms. Imogene Metcalfe. At 52, she retired from the post office in Gary, Indiana. Shortly after, she decided to fulfill her life-long dream of going to law school. And ever since, she's advocating in courtrooms for those who need it most.

Imogene encapsulates the lesson I've learned from all of my work and clients this summer: the meaning of resiliency. The power to believe in yourself; the purpose to advocate for others.

Thanks for the summer Equal Justice America and LAS! 

