



Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



Name: Rachel Nguyen

Law School: Duke University School of Law

Organization: East Bay Community Law Center

Week of June 15th

Those of you who know me know that I am not very active on social media. I have never been comfortable using the internet as means of expressing myself or my advocacy. However, this summer I've joined a cause that I truly want to share with all my friends and family. These past few weeks with East Bay Community Law Center at their Consumer Justice Clinic have been nothing short of amazing.

EBCLC has taught me how to approach a vast array of legal issues within a few short weeks. At the Consumer Justice Clinic, we focus on providing low-income consumers with the resources to tackle debt collections, student loans, predatory lending, and much more. But EBCLC has also provided me insight into the legal issues surrounding housing, health and welfare, education, youth defense, and many other areas of law that I hadn't even realized I was completely ignorant about.

Perhaps more importantly, every one of these trainings had students and attorneys from diverse backgrounds, sharing their experiences and expanding on how circumstances such as race, gender identity, and socioeconomic status affect our clients. EBCLC and its representatives take the time to tackle these issues, and bring them to the forefront of conversation, allowing us to learn and adapt to each client's specific needs. The mindfulness in this community goes above and beyond, and I am so honored to be a part of it this summer.

Many of EBCLC's interns are the awardees of Equal Justice America's 2020 Fellowship. Please consider donating to us as Equal Justice America continues to support the students working in legal aid programs across the nation.

Week of July 6th

Going on Week 8 of my internship at East Bay Community Law Center, there is just so much I've learned that I don't think I can fit it all into one Facebook post! The large assortment of cases I've been involved with has challenged me in ways I never expected. My skills in writing, research, and negotiation have all



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been put to the test. Along the way I've made plenty of mistakes, but have also seen my work make a tangible difference in my clients' lives. It is an incredible feeling.

Additionally, the vast array of attorneys, students, and clients that I've worked alongside, has made for a truly unique and unforgettable experience. New perspectives are frequently introduced to me, and I find myself being challenged as both an advocate and a law student. My horizons are constantly being broadened to the realities of our legal system and its shortcomings. I hope to always use my skills to address these shortcomings, no matter where my career takes me.

My thanks goes out to EBCLC for the amazing internship thus far. And of course I want to thank Equal Justice America for providing law students the resources to work for legal aid programs across the country. Their aid helps us address the disparities in legal access that exist throughout America. You can contribute to their cause below, and a huge thank you to everyone who has donated so far!

Week of July 27th

I am both amazed and saddened by how quickly the past ten weeks went by. My time at the East Bay Community Law Center has been nothing short of incredible, and it's hard to believe it's soon coming to an end. My skills as a law student, and more importantly—as an advocate, have never been tested so rigorously or rewardingly. Each week was a new challenge, a new frustration, and a new success in the realm of consumer justice. Being able to see firsthand how legal aid impacts communities in need was an inspiration, and a reminder that there is always work to be done in the pursuit of justice and equality. There are so many ways to be an advocate, no matter what field of law you find yourself practicing in.

As usual, I want to thank Equal Justice America for providing law students with the resources necessary to contribute to legal aid programs across America. Thank you to all the kind souls who have supported and continue to support their cause. Your support means the world to me, and also helps to change it, one step at the time.

Week of August 10th

I can't believe we've already reached this point! This will be my final #EJAFellowUpdate for this summer, and it's astonishing how quickly it all went by. Over the past few months, I've spent my time researching consumer law and honing my legal writing skills. More importantly, I've found myself with countless opportunities to meet the needs of my clients, and watch as my efforts have a tangible effect on their lives. There is really no other feeling like it.

As I begin my second year at Duke Law, I know I will carry these skills with me. I have no words that can express my gratitude to East Bay Community Law Center for the incredible work environment they allowed me to be a part of. Of course, my gratitude also goes out to all those who support Equal Justice America and their efforts to create a more fair and equitable legal system. This has been a life changing summer for me, and one I will not forget soon. Though our world is changing every day, I know that with a little hope and a lot of effort, it can change for the better.