

October 19, 2011

Mr. Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Building II, Suite 204  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for awarding me the Equal Justice America 2011 Summer Fellowship. The fellowship allowed me to spend my summer at Bet Tzedek Legal Services, working in the Holocaust Reparations Unit. Bet Tzedek Legal Services is a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income residents of Los Angeles County. The Holocaust Reparations Unit helps Holocaust survivors apply for reparations from Germany, Hungary, and other European countries. The reparations programs have stringent eligibility instructions, even though the compensation amounts are miniscule compared to the suffering of the Holocaust survivors. Monthly pensions average \$300 per month and lump sum payments are usually between \$2,500 and \$3,500. Bet Tzedek estimates that about one-third of Holocaust survivors in the United States live in severe poverty. A reparations payment can mean not having to choose between buying medicine and buying food.

At Bet Tzedek, I researched and drafted appeals of previously rejected reparation applications. Nearly all of my clients were Russian-speaking immigrants and I was able to bond with them very quickly because I speak fluent Russian. As soon as the clients heard me speak Russian on the phone or when we met in person, they were forthcoming and cooperative. My Russian language skills also came in handy when we needed to request birth certificates and housing records from government agencies and the Ukraine. Many clients did not bring their birth certificates with them when they immigrated and cannot afford to obtain the documents using private agencies. I researched the current addresses of these agencies on the Russian Internet and drafted cover letters in Russian. Bet Tzedek has only a few volunteers who speak Russian, but hundreds of cases where the clients are from the former Soviet Union.

I am very grateful to Equal Justice America for the once in a lifetime opportunity to work with Holocaust survivors. They are a rapidly diminishing population and they have suffered immensely. The stories my clients told me about their persecutions were the stories I read in history books. If only one of my appeals succeeds, I will have made a difference in someone's life.

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely yours,

Ely Grinvald  
Class of 2012  
Southwestern Law School

# Bet Tzedek Legal Services

THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE

145 South Fairfax Avenue • Suite 200 • Los Angeles • California 90036-2172  
Telephone (323) 939-0506 • Litigation Facsimile (323) 549-5880 • Administration Facsimile (323) 939-1040 • www.bettzedek.org



Sandor E. Samuels  
*President/CEO*

Michelle Williams Court  
*Vice President and  
General Counsel*

Gus T. May  
*Directing Attorney,  
Wilshire Office*

Grant R. Specht  
*Directing Attorney,  
Valley Office*

Michelle Kezirian  
*Directing Attorney*

Lauren Teukolsky  
*Pro Bono Director*

Jose D. Alarcon  
*Staff Attorney*

Erikson R. Albrecht  
*Kinship Care Attorney*

Deborah J. Baldwin  
*Public Benefits Director*

Marc L. Bender  
*Litigation & Training Supervisor*

Philip J. Bertenthal  
*Self-Help Attorney Coordinator*

Anna V. Burns  
*Consumer Protection Attorney*

Alla Chasnik  
*West Hollywood Staff Attorney*

Matthew E. DeCarolis  
*Staff Attorney*

Edward J. Elsner  
*Litigation & Training Supervisor*

Yolande P. Erickson  
*Conservatorship Attorney*

Lisa D. Hoffman  
*Holocaust Services Attorney*

Pegah Kamrava  
*Consumer Protection Attorney*

Kevin R. Kish  
*Employment Rights Project  
Director*

Janet R. Morris  
*Long Term Care Project  
Director*

Josh Passman  
*Self-Help Clinic Coordinator*

Gretchen Peterson  
*St. Francis Medical Center  
Attorney Advocate*

Dominique Sanz-David  
*Family Caregiver Project  
Attorney*

Volker J. Schmidt  
*Holocaust Services Attorney*

Jody L. Spiegel  
*Nursing Home Advocacy  
Project Director*

Julius Thompson  
*Sydney M. Irmas Housing  
Conditions Project Director*

Debra Zimmerman  
*Consumer Protection Attorney*

Writer's Direct Line: (323) 549-5850  
Writer's E-mail: lhoffman@bettzedek.org

August 30, 2011

Mr. Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
Building II - Suite 204  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Re: Ely Grinvald

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I write at the request of Ely Grinvald, who received an Equal Justice America fellowship during the summer of 2011. Mr. Grinvald worked under my supervision with the Holocaust Services Program at Bet Tzedek Legal Services.

Mr. Grinvald worked on a variety of matters, focusing primarily on assisting Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors with their applications for reparations from the German government. He interviewed clients and prepared detailed summaries of their persecution histories, performed legal and historical research, and formulated strategies to obtain documentary evidence supporting the claims. In an effort to identify such evidence, he corresponded with archives and administrative agencies in Ukraine and Russia and analyzed the resulting responses. He also drafted administrative appeals on behalf of several Holocaust survivors whose reparations claims had been denied.

Mr. Grinvald is adept at client communication, identifying relevant issues, and analyzing information gleaned from client interviews and available documents. He is thoughtful, reliable, a quick study, and cared about doing each task well. His Russian language capability has also been a great asset to our program.

We would be pleased to work with Mr. Grinvald again if the opportunity arose.

Very truly yours,

BET TZEDEK LEGAL SERVICES

By:   
Lisa D. Hoffman  
Holocaust Services Attorney