

August 17, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you very much for helping me fund my summer legal internship with Bay Area Legal Aid (Bay Legal) in Richmond, California. During my time at Bay Legal I assisted low income clients who are fighting unlawful detainers. Without help, these clients are faced with the risk of losing their public housing and Section 8 Voucher benefits, most of whom would then become homeless. The clients I have worked with face unlawful detainer actions for various reasons such as alleged criminal activity (often based on the actions of a third-party), alleged non-payment, and because they live in properties that have been foreclosed. The majority of my clients this summer were women and I was fortunate enough to assist in at least five cases from the very beginning: first, helping do an intake, second, conducting a file review at the Housing Authority, third, drafting an answer, and/or motions such as a motion to set aside the verdict, a motion for summary judgment, as well as a motion to keep an unlawful detainer masked from public records until the case could be heard.

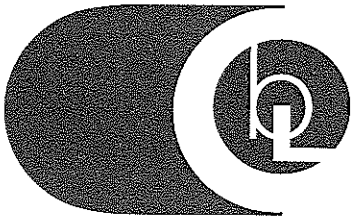
My passion is working with people who have experienced domestic violence, and many of Bay Legal's clients are survivors. One of my clients in particular stands out in my mind. This woman came to the office because the Housing Authority was trying to evict her under the One Strike Rule due to alleged criminal conduct. Our client called the police when her abuser, who she had a restraining order against, came to her house, uninvited and became aggressive. He fled, but once the police found him they arrested him because of his behavior at our client's home. A few months later, she received an eviction notice because of the criminal activity at her home referring to this incident. She came to Bay Legal with this notice and I drafted a letter to the Housing Authority informing them that that the notice was in direct violation of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which protects victims of domestic violence against eviction in this type of situation. I recommended that they dismiss the charges and by the end of the day the eviction had been dropped.

I have been able to help numerous people fight evictions, settle their cases, and represent themselves in pro per. My work this summer was interesting, challenging, and gratifying. Most importantly, my experience with Bay Legal has reaffirmed my desire to continue pursuing a career in legal aid.

Thank you again for your support. Without funding from Equal Justice America I may have not been able to do the work I did this summer (at least not if I wanted to continue to pay rent and avoid eviction!).

Best,

Erin Everett  
J.D. Candidate, 2013  
UC Berkeley, School of Law (Boalt)



# BAY AREA LEGAL AID

WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE

August 31, 2011

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

RE: Fellowship Evaluation for Erin Everett

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I write to report on Erin Everett's performance as an EJA fellow this past summer at Bay Area Legal Aid. Erin worked in the housing unit of our Contra Costa County Regional Office. Erin worked on a variety of housing matters ranging from unlawful detainer defense to subsidized housing terminations to utility shutoffs. Erin was an extremely quick learner. She asked good questions, quickly picked up on our practice, produced excellent work product, and worked well with our clients, many of whom suffer from mental disabilities. Her work this summer was invaluable.

Erin worked extensively on all stages of civil and administrative litigation relating to housing matters. She conducted client interviews, helped draft pleadings and motions (including a successful motion for summary judgment), and performed legal research and writing.

Erin was able to work effectively and efficiently with minimal supervision. When we gave Erin an assignment, she would run with it and, when she did have questions, they were always very thoughtful and well articulated. Because of her strong research and writing skills, we often gave Erin challenging assignments that were normally reserved for law clerks or attorneys with more legal experience than Erin. However, Erin was up to the challenge.

Erin worked extensively on a case where Bay Area Legal Aid is representing eight tenants in a post-foreclosure habitability lawsuit against four defendants, including one of the nation's largest financial institutions and one of the nation's largest property management companies. Working on a case of this magnitude is unusual for a legal aid organization and it therefore presented us with a number of challenging issues with which the attorneys in our organization were not readily familiar. Erin assisted us in

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researching how to apportion damages amongst the various plaintiffs, each of whom suffered different injuries. Erin was quickly able to digest the complexity of the case and create a memorandum that clearly and concisely discussed the various methodologies for apportioning damages and, on her own volition, included a section on ethical concerns relating to the apportionment of damages between plaintiffs. This memo was instrumental in our settlement meetings with our clients.

Erin excelled at legal research and writing, but she was also adept at client interactions. Erin was masterful at conducting client interviews and was able to gain the trust of even the most reluctant clients and witnesses. Erin met with clients at all stages of litigation including initial client interviews and preparations for trial.

Every member of our office who worked with Erin was thoroughly pleased with and impressed by her performance. It is heartening to know that someone who shows such great promise as an attorney has chosen a career path in public interest law.

Should you have any further questions about Erin's fellowship, please do not hesitate to contact me at 510.903.2623.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Wilson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Spencer J. Wilson  
Attorney