



"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Summer Internship and Fellowship Program

Pennsylvania
Legal Aid Network, Inc.

THE DRUM MAJOR

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Martin Luther King, Jr. Summer Interns

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.
Louise Brookins Building
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Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101

August 3, 2011

To the 2011 Martin Luther King, Jr. Interns:

We are pleased to present you with the 2011 edition of **THE DRUM MAJOR**, which is a small token of appreciation for your efforts this summer.

Through your work during the past ten weeks, you have touched the lives of many clients who have nowhere else to turn. You learned how to use your skills to make equal justice a reality.

For this, we thank you. Wherever your paths may lead you, we hope that your experience here will be an inspiration and a reminder of how you can make a difference.

Very Truly Yours,



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TURNING AWAY FROM THE BUSINESS OF NO

Is there truly another world like that in Harry Potter which most people are not aware of?

After spending ten weeks interning for Laurel Legal Services, I have come to realize that the answer to this question is, yes indeed. Granted that there are no magical creatures or human beings with special powers, but it appears to me that an ordinary individual is not aware of this population. The population which I am referring to consists of 13.2% of all Americans. These individuals earn less than \$17/day and in a forty hour work week, they only earn \$2.12 an hour. In addition, over 58% of all Americans between the ages of 25 and 75 will fall below the poverty line at some point in their life.

Now you may ask: how is this possible? The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour; everyone has to make that much by law. And my response would be that is exactly what I thought. However, the solid foundations of life and liberty which our forefathers had fought hard to build have cracked. The utmost faith they had embedded in our justice system has shattered. And the one place where every individual could go for justice has crumbled.

Fortunately for us, unlike the Harry Potter movies, we do not need to travel to a secret world on a secret train. All we need to do is open our eyes, face the reality, and look within ourselves for the courage to address the situation.

On the second day of my internship, I found myself sitting across the table from a father who was separated from his five year old child because the mother had violated a custody agreement. He described the horrid conditions which his son was living in and

how he felt helpless for his son. He told me how the mother was addicted to illegal substances and frequented houses where such substances were available. The son was usually locked away so that the mother could go about her day. There were strange men who were always present at night while the son slept alone in the room next door. Heavily intoxicated and drugged, the mother could not provide decent food or living conditions for the child.

After speaking with him about the situation, all I could do was offer a box of tissues and inform him that due to the budget cuts, our office no longer handled any custody matters. He did not have enough money to pay for a lawyer, he had no access to a computer to even print out the forms let alone learn the custody laws by himself. The courts referred him to a legal center, the legal center to the guidance center, and the guidance center to us. And now, I had to tell him that after a month of wandering around, we could do nothing for him.

A working system strives to continuously achieve two goals. These goals are efficiency and the ability to deliver results. I recall going home and feeling helpless that evening. I questioned the purpose of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights which guarantee all individuals protections and liberties, but no determined way of achieving them. Rather than striving for efficiency and results, the system was littered with underfunded agencies. Clients were led on a chase to seek the help they need and in the end, they were turned away due to the lack of funding. I realized that the legal aid is not available to all, but only to those who can afford it.

If your identity is stolen and you have incurred debt, you will need to pay for an attorney. If your landlord is turning off electrical services and shutting off the water, you will need to pay for an attorney. If your child has been taken away against a custody

order, you will need to wait until you gather money to pay for an attorney and then go through a lengthy process to obtain what was rightfully granted to you from the beginning. Due to superseding forces, legal service agencies have had to cut back in many areas of law which they previously assisted clients with. The few services which are provided are only offered after certain requirements are met or only during a certain stage of the legal process. How is it that the world admires our legal system when those who have no money and have lost their identity, their homes, or their children cannot find a legal means of getting what they earned or fought for in the first place?

A system is fuelled by those who manage the system itself. The attorneys and the staff whom I interacted with were very courageous and optimistic in their natures. Their work was impeccable and their desire to assist the marginalized was fueled by their awareness of the situation. The office atmosphere was one of cordiality and unparalleled optimism. I was very fortunate to work alongside individuals who truly believed in their work and their sense of optimism in the most dire of circumstances reflected this belief.

Unfortunately, these individuals neither have manpower nor the resources to carry out their work in its fullest capacity. As Congress plans ruthless budget cuts, the sizes of offices like the one where I interned continue to shrink. The sheer lack of personnel and funds in turn forces agencies to scale back on the services they can provide in western Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, the need for such services is ever growing.

It has always seemed strange to me that society as a whole provides little funding and few benefits for those who serve the citizens of this nation. These groups include war veterans, teachers, legal aid workers, emergency personnel, and public

interest groups. We must ask ourselves as a nation, how is it that those who help build the foundations of our society and help maintain them are so underappreciated and underfunded. Ironically, these groups are also the first ones to lose the few resources they had in the first place when it comes to adjusting the budget.

The main lesson that I have learned after interning for Laurel Legal Services is that despite the budget cuts and despite the countless hours which will be required for clients, legal aid providers will continue to strive on. These individuals are not fuelled by monetary compensation or recognitions. They fight in order to bring justice to those who otherwise had no means to fight. They advocate for those whom the masses have turned a blind eye towards. Rather than feeling helpless after ten weeks, I feel invigorated. Steadfast in my belief that this is where I am needed and this is where differences can be made and lives saved. I cannot wait until the day I can represent a client who has little to offer me for my services, because I have come to learn that it is only by giving that one gains.

Awaken,
For each dark night is greeted by the rising sun

Rejoice,
For each unsuccessful attempt at obtaining justice is a realization into where success lies

Persevere,
For those who stand steadfast in their righteousness during calamity are those who will triumph.

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THINGS WE KNOW BY HEART

Her face is wrinkled, filled with indentations caused by stress rather than age. Her smile pierces through the layered folds, crisp as a winter breeze. She thanks the attorney, then me, saying that we saved her family. I smile in gratitude. I am glad we were able to help her keep her Section 8 voucher. But, even though this case was a success, it still seems like we were too late . . .

When I was younger, I wanted to be a firefighter. I would picture myself barging through the fiery chaos, pulling women and children to safety. Sure I was only 5'4" and 115 pounds, but that never stopped me. I hadn't learned limitations yet. As I grew older, I realized that although the firefighters got all the glory, the building codes inspectors that prevented fires from occurring were the true heroes. They often worked in the shadows and without public acclaim, but truly saved more people than the firefighters. I decided it was nobler to prevent the fires in the first place rather than simply save people and property from the destruction.

Unfortunately, the mathematical equation of the world isn't as balanced as I would like. Having twice as many inspectors doesn't mean we need half the firefighters. Houses aren't built that perfectly. Neither are people's lives. I would like for my goal to be to work myself out of a job (like my mentor Mr. Steven Krone said he was directed to do 42 years ago when he began working for legal services). However, I know that isn't very likely. Public interest lawyers, like firefighters, deal with emergencies that are almost impossible to eliminate. There are simply too many odds stacked against the people we serve - too many hazards that could spark at anytime to create chaos in their

lives. Instead my goal has become to make as much of a difference as I can. My summer with MidPenn Legal Services has shown me that working hard to solve the legal problems of the poor is worthwhile even if the root causes of these problems are never eradicated. My heart's desire is to create more smiles and happiness in the faces of our clients, even if their eyes are still filled with the sadness of a lifetime's struggle.

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”

Theodore Roosevelt

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SEEING THE FOREST *AND* THE TREES

Before I began working in legal services this summer, I thought I understood the significance of legal aid. At a broad level, I could enthusiastically support legal services as an entity, but I could not describe the specifics. In other words, I could see the forest – that legal aid is necessary and good – but I was missing the experience of seeing the trees, or the individual stories, and the direct impact that legal services can provide to those in need, such as access to food, heating, and even a home. Through my internship experience, I realized that appreciating the importance of legal aid involves a grasp of the bigger picture as well as the individual cases, or, both the forest *and* the trees.

Appreciating the significance of legal aid requires a balance of seeing the bigger picture as well as the individual components. What I mean is that when we proudly defend the importance of legal services, we cannot lose sight of the individual stories, and when we are working on cases on a day-to-day level, we cannot forget the greater good. At either extreme, whether considering the trees or the forest, we run the risk of seeing only part of the picture if we do not consider all angles.

For instance, when looking at a pie graph describing the distribution of legal services in a given year in a particular geographic area, it may be difficult at first to see that underlying the statistic that a certain percentage of cases involved education, there is an individual case where a student required legal help in contesting an expulsion, or else he risked losing the opportunity to gain an education. Or that behind the statistic

that a certain number of cases involved family law, there is the story of a custody conciliation where a father and mother needed to resolve the issue of relocation and determine what was best for the children. Thus, individual cases and faces can be lost behind statistical figures.

On the other hand, working in direct client services may involve tireless, and at times, thankless efforts. Legal services staff and attorneys may encounter heartbreaking, and sometimes frustrating experiences on a daily level. Staff and attorneys at individual legal aid offices are at the front lines of aiding the community. They are working on the individual cases to help build the bigger picture that is quality legal aid and social justice. They provide divorce and custody clinics, they field phone call after phone call of inquiries regarding legal advice and services, and they may attend multiple hearings in a single day. I witnessed from firsthand experience that the dedicated individuals at Northwestern Legal Services never forgot that every individual counts. I learned that one must be committed, and one cannot quit, and cannot get complacent in the face of injustice. Those in legal services might not always get the recognition that they deserve, but they do not and cannot lose hope or stop trying to increase access to justice.

Legal service providers help to increase opportunity and empowerment to individuals, often in the face of unpredictable outcomes. The sad reality is that heartbreaking stories are unavoidable. I remember sitting in on a telephone hearing for HEMAP, or Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program. The couple who were facing foreclosure had been in their home since 1977 and had fallen a few months behind on their mortgage. Since their delinquency, they had been regularly paying their very low mortgage, and needed a small loan to cover what they had missed.

Unfortunately, HEMAP recently shut down since the program's funding was cut. So the couple will not be able to get much-needed emergency assistance through the state. In these moments, I remember the words that one of my beloved law professors told me, "I hope you are able to keep your focus on how much lawyers can do to help low income clients, and not let the conditions of their lives, which are often heartbreaking and always sad, bring you down." The only thing I would alter about these words of wisdom is that it is not only those with a law degree who are passionately serving the low-income community. I have seen for myself how important every member of the organization is to the proper functioning of legal services.

In conclusion, I cannot (nor can anyone else) single-handedly resolve the issues and frustrations that may arise in the context of legal aid. However I am thankful for the opportunity to learn firsthand the importance of this service. And I will not forget that to appreciate the significance of such aid, I must consider the individual cases, as well as the greater impact. That is, I will see both the forest and the trees.

I would like to thank the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network for this incredible internship opportunity. And of course, I would like to thank every individual at Northwestern Legal Services for extending me a warm welcome this summer and for contributing to my legal – and life – education. Thank you.

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THE FIGHT FOR POWER (ELECTRICITY) AND OTHER ESSENTIAL SERVICES

I think it is safe to say that the average American (myself included), probably takes the basic utilities such as electricity, water, and gas for granted. We enjoy uninterrupted service. We are annoyed by minor disruptions such as our water being shut off so the water company can fix a broken water pipe in the street or when a severe storm temporarily shuts off our electricity even for a few minutes. However, many of the low-income residents in Philadelphia cannot boast of the luxury of uninterrupted utility service. They come to the Energy Unit frustrated because they have received utility shut off notices or in severe instances, their services have already been terminated. In many cases, we are their last resort. As an intern, I was given the responsibility of working with the attorneys or paralegals assigned to particular clients to prevent shut-offs or restore service. Initially, it seemed simple. However, I quickly learned that this was not always the case. Most cases seemed to have something that complicated them or issues that were difficult to resolve quickly.

At CLS, I was assigned to more than the typical law student intern duties of research and writing. My days consisted of conducting research and writing memos for ongoing cases, analyzing utility bills and going through the client's intake file, speaking with customer service representatives at the various utility companies to determine the possible solutions for a client. I met with the clients to interview them and gather more information regarding their case in addition to assisting them to fill out forms for payment agreements or utility assistance programs. I found the client interaction to be

an invaluable experience. Not only was I able to improve my interviewing and communication skills, but meeting with the clients allowed me to witness firsthand the impact of the work we do and the difference we make in the lives of individuals we serve. It is rewarding to hear the relief in a client's voice when I informed them that their service would be restored or when they learned that they have been approved for a utility assistance program.

Despite the rewarding nature of my work, it was also very frustrating at times. I would like to say that once I had resolved my clients' utility issues that they no longer had any problems and could resume living normal lives. Yet, this is not always the case as they often had other problems such as denial of public benefits, housing issues, and wrongful termination to name a few. Working with clients who had a multitude of problems was an eye-opening experience and gave me great insight into the dire situations faced by low-income individuals in today's society. Many are not aware of the resources available to them, others are discouraged when they attempt to solve their problems on their own by talking to various government or city agencies and are turned away, and others have been in their situations for so long that they have given up hoping that their conditions will improve.

Martin Luther King said, "Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals." Reforming the system so it is fair for all including the poor will not be an easy feat and will be a continuous effort but is our responsibility as individuals who have been educated and given the tools to bring about change in the system.

I consider myself very fortunate and blessed to have been given the opportunity to participate in the Martin Luther King Summer Internship Program. It has truly been a phenomenal summer and I have been able to learn so much about the field of public interest law and what it means to the lives of the clients we serve. I am grateful to have had the privilege of working with wonderful attorneys and paralegals at CLS. I am fueled and inspired by their passion for what they do and the relentless effort and determination with which they fight for the rights of their clients. My experience as a CLS intern has strengthened my resolve to continue in the field of public interest and become an advocate for the disadvantaged members of society.

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DRUM MAJORS FOR JUSTICE

At 9:30 am on a Monday, the phone rings at Friends of Farmworkers Inc. (FoF) and “Pene,” a seasoned legal secretary, takes the call. Thirty minutes later she informs the staff that a group of landscapers would be coming into the office. These workers were H2-B, which means they were authorized “guest workers.” However, their authorization is wholly dependent on their employment with a sponsor employer. Once they cease to work for that employer, they must return to their country of origin. These men came to us in desperation. Yet in this desperate state I saw in them, and countless other clients, examples of Dr. King’s “new definition of greatness.”

My childhood consisted of standing on picket lines, marching in rallies, and canvassing door to door with my parents. The icons I was raised to admire were figures like Mother Jones, Eugene Debs and Salvador Allende. Not surprisingly, my aspirations are to use my legal training to assist working people in their struggle to reclaim dignity in their work.

That’s why I consider myself incredibly fortunate for having been given this opportunity to work with FoF after my first year of law school. Not only do I get to work with extremely capable legal advocates, but I also get to work with selfless lawyers committed to service for those in the margins of our society.

But perhaps more important than working with the staff at FoF is the opportunity that I’ve been given to be inspired by their clients. These are people who are culturally and linguistically isolated. They are those who are here on temporary work visas or no

visa at all, who work every day believing they are completely dependent on their boss (and in many ways, they are). They live in fear of deportation or worse. Yet it is in the face of these hardships that I have seen them exemplify Dr. King's vision of the Drum Major; through their bravery, courage, and leadership in the face of adversity.

There was a woman who spoke no English, yet without thinking twice assumed the role of the representative for her co-workers, organizing a strike (they were not unionized!) and a work-stoppage until the employer took her co-worker to the hospital following a workplace injury. In another shop, workers organized and walked out of the workplace in protest of discrimination, and preferential treatment – they then confronted their employer after suffering retaliation for their concerted protected activity.

Every day, at FoF, it was abundantly clear that the need for committed advocates is far greater than the supply. Those of us who are fortunate enough to have an opportunity and access to a legal education must not forget the countless millions who are deprived of that same opportunity. Those of us who have been trained as advocates must recognize that this profession comes with a heavy responsibility.

At Temple University, all first-year students were asked to read Gideon's Trumpet, the account of Gideon v. Wainwright; where the Supreme Court ruled that all criminal defendants have the right to counsel. The spirit of that book, and the Court that came to that decision, reflected the principle that that our legal system can only serve the interest of justice by increasing access to the judicial process to all persons. To accomplish this end, we need selfless advocates – servants, Drum Majors for justice.

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SERVICE MULTIPLIED

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s sermon on the drum major instinct is a call to service. It is a message of humility, recognizing that to serve others is to achieve greatness. Working at a legal aid office is an exercise in the servant leadership championed by Dr. King; you journey daily with clients, often learning about much more than their legal difficulties, working closely with them to help address the whole of their needs. I worked for legal aid last summer and the client meetings kept me grounded, an everyday reminder of the reason for the work.

Before my experience at Community Justice Project, I did not know much about broad impact work and I was not sure I would like it. I worried I would feel disconnected from the provenance of the work – that concentrating on legal strategy would shift the clients out of focus. I presumed that the important-looking case names attached to the Community Justice Project were generated from its ivory tower. I imagined that practitioners doing this kind of law were more like lab-coated professors than the front-liners I had met at Any-Town Legal Aid. While stumbling over a cat at dusk in rural Lancaster County, subpoena in hand, I realized I was wrong.

First of all, Peter Zurflieh and Larry Norton do not wear lab coats. They wear decades of experience of legal service. And, often, blue-jeans. Tower-like in that its offices are at the top of two formidable flights, CJP is in fact constructed out of pragmatists' creativity, dogged commitment and a deep respect for humanity.

I served that subpoena after a full day's outing with Larry, in which we met people where they were. In a kitchen austere with paychecks sent home to family in Mexico, a cardboard box for a waste bin; in a community center amidst the din of GED classes and adults learning English; even during the many days I spent cozied in my office in the company of Westlaw, I found that the brave and hopeful buzz of the larger community was alive in my consciousness.

I have come to realize that impact work may target issues greater than one person, but that individuals remain the faces in front of and the power behind the cases. Client meetings reveal a mosaic of individual stories. The landscape formed from these stories is brought into focus with research, outreach, and conversation together. I have grown to love this multifaceted work which everyday engages my creativity, problem-solving and empathy.

In light of Dr. King's model for greatness-through-service and the gratification I have known from service, in some senses CJP's work is more laborious. The work can be indirect; sometimes the plight of an individual client drives a cause or purpose so that the cause itself becomes the fought-for thing. The advocacy that Peter undertakes, for instance, can consist of hours of phone calls, gathering information from government and communities, without a single client in sight. The human contact, which I think is service's vitality, may be sparse and insulated by the broader advocacy strategy. In my experience, intellectual curiosity and enjoyment of problem-solving can only feed a person's energy reserves for so long. Beyond that, you must be powered by essential belief in the worth of what you are doing. A worth calculated by the net benefit to the people, who may be absent from your office but who are present in your mindfulness and in your heart.

Proceeding up the steps of that small home in Lancaster County, I was flooded with a feeling of unease. The subpoena folded unobtrusively in my hand was actually for a member of the class on whose behalf we were bringing suit. He and his coworkers had been wronged by an unscrupulous employer and he was owed a significant amount of money. Yet we knew he would not testify unless ordered by the court. He was in the practice of living inconspicuously, since drawing attention to himself could wrest him from his wife and young children here. He was undocumented. The scene that followed was both hospitable and high-tension, as we forced a person for whose ostensible benefit we were working to take a calculated risk. I distracted his young child with action figures while concerned voices discussed with Larry the ramifications of being served a subpoena.

On the way home, I pondered the tension inherent in what we had just done. We had forced the hand of a person we were working to benefit and, in doing so, we made him and his family feel even more vulnerable. Though this person was not our client, he was a beneficiary of our work and a human being whose safety and well-being we would never jeopardize. Larry and I discussed the calculus of the decision to serve the subpoena. The consequences of drawing ICE's attention would be dire but in Larry's experience, the risks of such were minute. Larry dignified my practical and ethical concerns with thoughtful answers, and I felt reassured that while fighting for community justice we were also caring for and protecting individuals.

Thanks to the mentorship of Peter and Larry, I grew as an advocate and as a person this summer. Peter and Larry always honored my questions with respect, each so generous with his time and energy. I recognize with infinite gratitude that while I was helping the Community Justice Project serve its clients, I was being served by the Community Justice Project. PLAN and the Community Justice Project invested in me, challenged and supported me. In the service of clients I have tried to recycle these caring gifts, and hopefully have multiplied them by my own energies. I think this is the zenith of Dr. King's message: by serving others, you empower them to serve, too. The recipient of so many kindnesses, I am inspired and energized to bestow such gifts on others.

Thank you, PLAN and Community Justice Project, for being the spark and the light of so much positive change. May the kindness and conviction that you emanate be reflected and multiplied in all of the people whom you serve, including me.

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SERVICE TO OTHERS IS GREATNESS

These last few weeks I have been waiting for some “Aha!” moment that I could write about in my essay -- for some memorable moment at a Magistrate District Justice hearing where I help a client receive a favorable judgment from the Magistrate District Judge or an unforgettable telephone conference with a client where I provide the client with life changing advice. And then I realized one day while leaving the office, there hasn't been an “Aha!” moment this summer but “Aha!” moments. I will be honest. I was using this summer internship as an experiment. Before this internship, I wasn't completely sure if I really wanted to dedicate my legal career to the public. I didn't know if working for the public would allow me to leave my job everyday saying, “Aha! I get it. This is what life is about: giving to others even when they do not have anything to give back.”

After interning with Neighborhood Legal Services Association (NLSA), I am happy to say that I have had quite a few “Aha!” moments. I would love to share all these moments, but for the sake of time, I will only share a couple of them.

One of my first “Aha!” moments occurred about two weeks after I had been working with NLSA. I had to attend my first Magistrate District Justice Hearing. After reading the client's files and interviewing the client, I knew that it was very unlikely that the Magistrate Judge would grant her possession of the residence and I informed the client of this possibility. At the end of the hearing, the client looked at me and said, “I

know I probably won't get possession but I am sure glad you were here with me today. Boy, we really shocked the landlord and the judge. Thanks for being here."

Another "Aha!" moment occurred after I received a telephone call from a client informing me that a leasing agency had decided to reconsider her application. Initially, the client contacted NLSA when her application was denied by a leasing agency. Unfortunately, there was no legal defense against the denial of the client's application so NLSA had to close her file with advice only. After the client's file was closed, the client still contacted me to complain about the unfairness of her situation. At the end of one of the phone calls, I told the client that she should contact the leasing agency and share her complaints with them. The client took my advice and after several phone calls to the agency complaining about her application, the agency decided to accept her application. The client called to thank me for pushing her to contact the agency and to inform me that her application was accepted.

These "Aha!" moments taught me that my service to the client may not always be legal advice and sometimes the service that has the most impact on the client may be non-legal. I realized service to others is greatness despite the type of service. I thought that greatness could only be achieved through some successful legal accomplishment. However, I recognize that greatness in serving others is found in the little things, such as, "being there for a client" or "giving them a little push."

If I could sum up my summer internship experience with NLSA in five words, I would say "Service to Others is Greatness." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermon, "The Drum Major Instinct" has been interpreted as a discouragement to those who seek to be great. The sermon may be viewed as striving to be great as a selfish goal while seeking to serve others as a selfless goal. However, I don't believe that Dr. King was

encouraging a life of service over a life of greatness. In fact, I think that Dr. King's sermon was an attempt to demonstrate to us that service to others IS a life of greatness.

One does not become great because of what he does for himself but what he does for others, or in the words of Dr. King, "a committed life" to others. Greatness is developed through the validation of others. Dr. King mentioned in his sermon that one of the greatest people to ever walk this earth was Jesus Christ. As Dr. King discussed in his sermon, Jesus wasn't great because he came from a wealthy background, made a lot of money, was a well-known person or traveled all over the world. Jesus was great because of his commitment to serve others.

My summer internship with NLSA has truly inspired me to follow the example of Jesus Christ and commit my life to serving others. For I believe that in my commitment to serve others, greatness will find me. As Benjamin E. Mays stated, "We ought not seek greatness, we ought to seek to serve and when we seek to serve we will bump into greatness along the way."

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EXPECTATIONS

I have been surprised by the situations where the “drum major instinct” has presented itself during my work at NPLS. I expected to meet clients who needed our service because they had lived beyond their means, I have. I expected to meet clients who would wait to the last minute to seek help, and I have. I expected to encounter the destruction that the drum-major instinct can sow on a daily basis, but on this count, I have not.

The drum major instinct I encountered, more often than not, has been very positive. Most clients sought help in a timely manner. Most of the clients I talked to *were not* irresponsible. Most of the clients I served *were not* examples of the drum major instinct gone wild, but rather, doing their very best to make ends meet. Getting ahead, materialistically speaking, was the last thing on their mind.

The most glaring example of the drum major instinct, at its very best, is the NPLS staff. They have been pillars of almost every virtue I can think of. One colleague and her client rank first in perseverance. The client came to NPLS to get a short visit over the Christmas holiday, and from there slowly worked her way to primary physical custody. I was able to observe the most recent attempt to remove primary physical custody, and I saw the perseverance of the client and my colleague pay off. The judge ruled that the children should not be moved again. Our client’s steady improvement was substantial enough for her to retain primary physical custody.

Another colleague I worked with on a housing matter was a drum major for honesty. He told our client, a registered sex-offender, point blank that in the eyes of society, it does not really matter whether he actually committed the crime or just took a bad plea bargain, but that we would try to help regardless. The client was perturbed at first, but by the end of the meeting the client seemed comforted that he had an honest attorney who would represent him well in his efforts to obtain public housing.

The lawyers at North Penn Legal Services embody King's words, they are truly drum-majors for justice, forsaking shallow things to lead lives committed to the service of those most in need. They use potentially very profitable skill sets to assist those least able to afford them. Seeing their sacrifice, their championing of the quietest causes has reinforced my desire to serve others whenever I am in a position to do so.

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SITTING AT THE TABLE

Sitting at the table and participating in court procedures as a legal intern this summer has broadened my career scope and propelled me to want more in helping to resolve the problems faced by the population served by Philadelphia Legal Assistance (PLA), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This assignment has provided me the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge and insight into the myriad of problems faced by its clients. There was a wide range of emotions from clients when they sat at the table with me to discuss their cases which showed that many of them were at one of the most vulnerable times of their lives either because of a birth situation or some unfortunate circumstance.

My placement at PLA was in the Family Law Unit with the Custody and Support Assistance Clinic (CASAC). There I assisted low income pro se clients with child custody, child support, and protection from abuse cases, but I was also provided many instances to build my legal knowledge and experiences in other areas as well. My priorities each day included interviewing clients who were at various stages of their cases in order to get the facts of their cases, analyzing each client's facts, applying the facts to case law and statutes, problem solving with the assistance of my supervising licensed attorney, drafting legal documents for clients, and writing letters on their behalf. Furthermore, every Tuesday afternoon, the Family Law Unit met to discuss cases from the prior week. At the weekly unit meeting, we discussed cases which were within the organization's priority line. One major such priority is domestic violence and we often decided on cases for representation according to the Unit's priority guidelines.

I am ecstatic and very much grateful that I was able to start interviewing clients and conducting case work from the onset when I entered the doors at PLA. I appreciate that the agency believed in me enough to entrust me with its clientele. Once put into that leadership role, I literally stepped into the shoe. There was no way that I could fall short of my doing my best in assisting our clients to find possible solutions to their problems. They had come into our office for assistance which we did our utmost to deliver. Many of the clients not only came into our office for family law issues but while interviewing them, we sometimes discovered that they had other issues in which we would refer them to other organizations where they could receive additional help.

This summer at PLA, I have not only learned much about Family Law, but also about how life sometimes takes us all in unexpected turns. If I could assist as many people as I can to be law-abiding and good citizens and get back on the right track when life takes such turns, I am doing my part in regard to the *drum major instinct* as spoken of by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his speech delivered at the Ebenezer Baptist Church just before his death when he tried to inspire others to become conscientious leaders. My internship experience at PLA has further convinced me that public interest law is where I belong. The daily routine of interviewing and assisting clients reminded me that these were actual people and families behind the many cases that were continuously placed on my desk. The experience also reminded me to be thorough as my work could impact another person's life for a lifetime. I am honored and forever grateful that I was provided this opportunity to sit in on the various types of court proceedings with the judges and masters in the First District Court of Philadelphia.

Helping people mold their lives back together when they had fallen apart has brought me much gratification; it is more than any money that private practice dollars

could bring me. Thank you Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network for providing me this invaluable experience which will last throughout my lifetime as I continue to develop my *drum major instinct* in seeking justice for all. When I sit at the table with future clients in my legal career, I vow to continue to make a positive difference in the lives of others, no matter how small.

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BE HUMAN

From the moment I left Harrisburg until now there has been a resounding quote replaying in my mind from an attorney who spoke during training. He quite succinctly told us four things we should keep in our minds and hearts during our internships and our careers as attorneys: Be Kind, Be Professional, Be Patient and most importantly Be Human. Not only did these four qualities echo in my mind during my internship at Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania in Norristown but were more applicable than I could have ever imagined.

There is one thing that has remained static from the first time the thought of becoming a lawyer crossed my mind: I want to and will be committed to public service. Every public interest opportunity that has presented itself to me has widened my perspective of public service and how truly important it is. This internship has solidified my interest and has honed in me a deep respect and admiration for those who serve others in any capacity.

Before beginning my internship I had a very limited impression of Norristown, Pennsylvania and an even narrower idea of what I would be exposed to in what I thought of as a pseudo-suburb of Philadelphia. The individuals that flow into the Norristown office present the staff and attorneys with every issue imaginable. The amount of clients that depend on Legal Aid for multiple issues is quite startling. Many clients have used Legal Aid for numerous issues that have spanned months. I have been exposed to issues relating to custody, protection from abuse, juvenile issues, bankruptcy, section 8 housing, unemployment compensation and landlord tenant

issues. I have been able to learn about areas of the law that I never imagined could affect so many individuals in such a small community. The attorneys in the office are some of the most proficient, experienced and efficient lawyers I have ever come into contact with. But the characteristic that I admire the most and find most beneficial to the clients is their ability to relate: to be kind, patient and human to another individual during a time that they need it the most.

Besides the exposure to various types of law I truly believe the one skill I honed during this summer was the ability to communicate effectively with clients and learn how to adjust my frame of reference to be able to relate to individuals from all walks of life. This is something that I realized is absolutely crucial when practicing law with a sect of individuals that have not received the benefit that many other individuals in society have. After conducting many interviews with clients and representing them in different matters I realized how incredibly easy it is to get frustrated, to blame and to get to the mental point where it just seems useless to continue giving the same advice. But when those thoughts began to run through my head I remember the quote from training and the advice from the lawyers in the office: Be human. The clients have been exposed to situations and have lived lives that I could never imagine. I learned that my job was to ensure that they were represented and in at least their present situation given the best opportunity to succeed and better themselves.

The attorneys at Legal Aid in Norristown were praised during every bar association luncheon by numerous judges and generally by the community. I am so proud to have been able to work at such a remarkable institution with attorneys who have sacrificed themselves to serve the community. I know positively that as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated during his Drum Major Instinct Speech, "I just want to be there in

love and in justice and in truth and in commitment to others, so that we can make of this old world a new world.”

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SERVING TO LEARN: NAVIGATING THE HEALTHCARE LANDSCAPE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his Drum-Major Instinct sermon in February of 1968. Tragically, he would be assassinated in April that same year. He gave this sermon as if he knew his time on the earth was nearing its end. Dr. King instructed those who would soon deliver his eulogy to discuss his contributions as a humanitarian, as a person who served others and as one who gave his everything, ultimately including his life, in the fight for justice and equality. He requested that people remember his love, his commitment for truth and justice, not his numerous awards and accolades. Dr. King wanted people to remember these specific characteristics because they spoke to his passion. He conveyed to his congregation that in service, one could become a leader. By learning to harness the drum-major instinct, that inherent desire to be first, to be out front, in a positive way, one can help create change in the world.

As a law student, I have lived and worked in a competitive environment for the past two years. Every student desires to be ranked first, to get the best grades, the best job, and to have the best life. But as Dr. King implied, it is not the awards or the grades that people will ultimately remember, it will be what we have done for others. This summer I was given the opportunity to begin my public service career at the Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP). Over the course of my summer, I learned how powerful service can be for those in need and also for those who serve.

PHLP is a statewide organization that helps low-income Pennsylvania residents obtain access to healthcare coverage. In Pennsylvania and in many other states across

the nation, there is a dire situation facing low-income individuals. As advocates for low-income residents of Pennsylvania, the attorneys at PHLP are currently facing, and will face in the future, constant setbacks due to state and federal budget cuts to public health services. Over the summer I saw the beginning of the legislature's rollback of public services and the resulting pushback from the advocates at PHLP. I am sad to say that I was not entirely surprised to see that the priorities of those politicians, whose duty it is to serve the citizens of the state, are not aligned with the citizens that helped elect them to office. Medicaid recipients already have to navigate a variety of hurdles to begin receiving health insurance benefits and to keep their coverage. These legislative changes will ensure more heartache for current recipients and future applicants alike. Healthcare is a basic human necessity that many people take for granted. However, as I realized by talking to numerous clients, for low-income people, especially those with disabilities, access to healthcare is a burden that is constantly on their minds.

As unfortunate as these budget cuts are going to be for low-income Pennsylvania residents, I was fortunate to witness the tireless efforts of the legal services attorneys who harness their drum-major instinct in order to serve others every day. I have learned that this work is difficult and often thankless, but the immense need for legal services in healthcare, exemplified by the numerous messages on PHLP's helpline, showed me just how much people are suffering. As a statewide organization, PHLP is able to serve all Pennsylvanians. Gratefully, I was able to have a great deal of direct client contact while working at PHLP. From my first day on the job, I contacted clients and handled the intake process. After that initial period, I handled cases on my own, with attorney supervision. Initially, navigating the Medicaid landscape was quite a challenge for me. I hadn't realized that there were so many different categories,

providers, and complicated rules. Through their County Assistance Offices (CAOs), the various counties administer Medicaid in Pennsylvania. I often had to advocate for a client to their caseworkers at the different CAOs across the state. Sometimes I would be referred to several different people in different offices and agencies before I was able to make any headway or secure answers for my clients. As complicated as this task was for me, I could only imagine how frustrating it was for the consumers with whom I was working. By doing this casework, I was able to see firsthand just how great of a barrier poverty can be in accessing healthcare.

I was also able to see the parallel to what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was speaking of when he stated in his Drum Major sermon that anyone has the ability to serve and can harness their drum major instinct in a positive way to help others. Not only were the attorneys at PHLP working to advocate for their clients, but we would also answer numerous calls from people seeking help for someone else. These callers were calling for friends, their children, other family members, and sometimes people they simply met and recognized that they needed help. All of these people were doing the same thing I was doing; they were trying to be of service to others. As Dr. King stated, it does not take a college degree to serve.

Working at PHLP this summer was a wonderful learning experience for me. I now have firsthand knowledge that I can use with my soon-to-be-acquired law degree to serve others who are in need. I can harness my drum major instinct to do good for others individually and as a part of a larger group. Achieving my legal education will not be an opportunity for me to revel in exclusivity, but to share my compassion and skills with the underprivileged. I recognize my drum major instinct, I know I have an inherent desire to

be a leader, a desire I can use to help create the changes that are desperately needed for low-income people in the United States.

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc. **is a client-centered organization that provides leadership, funding, and support to improve the availability and quality of civil legal aid and direct legal services for low income people and victims of domestic violence in Pennsylvania.**

OUR VISION We envision equal access to justice for those who have nowhere else to turn, where every low-income individual and family in Pennsylvania will have access to the full range of civil legal services and legal remedies.

OUR VALUES We take pride in our strategic vision for a coordinated and compassionate, client-centered legal aid delivery system — a Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network that is capable of obtaining fair solutions for critical civil legal problems.

OUR NETWORK The Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network (PLAN) is the state’s coordinated system of organizations providing civil legal aid for those with nowhere else to turn. PLAN offers a continuum of critically needed legal information, legal advice and legal services through direct representation for low-income individuals and families who face urgent civil legal problems. These problems affect basic needs such as food, shelter, employment, consumer issues, health care, and family safety.

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network (PLAN)



Specialized Programs

These programs provide statewide legal expertise for addressing specialized legal problems or serving populations with special needs.

- Community Justice Project (CJP)
- Friends of Farmworkers (FoF)
- Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP)
- Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project (PILP)
- Pennsylvania Utility Law Project (PULP)
- Regional Housing Legal Services (RHLS)

*Non-PLAN Funded Program

Regional Programs

- Community Legal Services
- Laurel Legal Services
- Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania
- MidPenn Legal Services
- North Penn Legal Services
- Northwestern Legal Services
- Philadelphia Legal Assistance*
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services

Specialty Programs

- Community Justice Project
- Friends of Farmworkers, Inc.
- Pennsylvania Health Law Project
- Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project
- Pennsylvania Utility Law Project
- Regional Housing Legal Services



Funding for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Program is provided by Pennsylvania IOLTA
And the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare