

In Their Words: 2007 GGU Law Public Interest Law Foundation Grant Recipients

Sarah N. Clark:

I wanted to just let you know that I am loving my summer internship at the Homeless Advocacy Project. I've learned so much already and truly had an inspiring experience. PIPS, PILF and LCS made this possible. I know that PILF continues to solicit donations, so if you ever want to refer any potential donor to a student, please feel free to pass on my information.

John Patrick Kilty:

I was awarded a PILF grant for my summer work at the East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC). At EBCLC, I am working in the Clean Slate practice, which serves clients who have past convictions and arrests. Through the process many clients are able to have past convictions expunged from their records. This allows clients better housing, educational, and employment opportunities. EBCLC's Clean Slate practice helps people make their lives better.

I think it is important to work in the public interest and help those in need. Every profession should make a stronger commitment to helping people in need. My motivation for working in public interest this summer is the Golden Rule: Do to others as you would have them do to you. I find it satisfying that I am helping people better their lives for themselves and their families.

Receiving a PILF grant is very important to my internship at EBCLC. Without it, I would not have been able to make a commitment to serving clients that need help. I am grateful that PILF grants are available because they help Golden Gate Law students assist the poor and help break the cycle of poverty.

Sara Maunder:

Bay Area Legal Aid helps low-income people that are truly in need of civil legal services. During my clerkship, I will work directly with clients to provide crucial help for families during times of need. I will help clients secure access to safe, clean, affordable housing and protect seniors from unscrupulous predatory lenders.

A clerkship at Bay Area Legal Aid promotes public interest careers by giving special attention to the training and mentoring of law students. To ensure a mutually beneficial relationship between staff and students, each staff attorney is paired with just one law student. By clerking at Bay Area Legal Aid, I will be taking my first steps toward meeting the legal needs of the Bay Area's low-income community.

Mary LeClair:

I believe that Public Defenders *define* legal access for underprivileged communities, but in San Francisco, the Public Defender's Office is chronically and woefully under-funded and overworked. As an intern I will provide free labor and badly needed extra assistance to the Office. A PILF grant will allow me to work directly for indigent defendants without pay, and will significantly reduce the amount of debt I must take on. Keeping down law school debt is crucial to my future career as a relatively low-paid public defense lawyer. I fear that an all-too-common phenomenon with law school graduates is to succumb to the pressure to pay off their loans and earn the incomes lawyers are "supposed" to, regardless of their dearest wishes. Perhaps one of the greatest promotional tools for public interest lawyering (and for PILF) is the example set by those

of us who are happy, satisfied, and fulfilled by our relatively low-paying but exciting and gratifying work, whether it is in the civil or the criminal arena. And PILF grants certainly help students like me relieve a few of the financial burdens that so many students perceive as standing between them and areas of the law that would otherwise be attractive as career choices.

Mike Flynn:

My summer of full-time work for Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) in Oakland will be an amazing opportunity to work for environmental justice with Bay Area and California communities confronting environmental hazards.

CBE is a wonderful organization that confronts public health dangers with an effective participatory strategy that involves and empowers community members affected by these dangers. CBE currently has several campaigns, including: (1) working to reduce toxic chemicals and substances in urban air, water, and human bodies; (2) working with communities to confront the adverse health effects of neighboring power plants; (3) confronting oil refineries' toxic emissions; and (4) community monitoring of toxics projects. I will be researching and writing on the law, communicating with community clients, and hopefully have opportunities to appear in court.

Christina Ray:

I will be working at Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC). This summer, under the supervision of staff attorney Marisa González, I will be working on the Habeas Project. As a legal assistant, I have the opportunity to go inside the prisons to interview and screen women for eligibility. My internship will allow me to participate more fully in the decision to accept women into the project. Additionally, I will be researching and writing a memo for the Habeas Project regarding a relevant area of law (i.e. failure to protect, self-defense, or accidental homicide.) Since many legal teams also provide representation for their client's Parole Board Hearings, my goal is to create "How To" guide for challenging unsubstantiated parole denials. My career goal is to provide post-conviction legal assistance to women who are incarcerated. This internship will provide me with the possibility of working with prisoners on the inside and with legal teams on the outside. Importantly, this internship will also give me a realistic view of the workings and sustainability of a career in public interest. Since I will be working in an organization that prioritizes the voices of former prisoners and people of color, I hope to bring that experience into the GGU classrooms and student groups.

Yvonne Yee Woon Li:

I will be working at Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach for the summer of 2007. I will be a participant in their clerkship program, whereby I will conduct client interviews, take on legal writing and research, participate in litigation or motion practice, and advocate for policy in all levels of government. API Legal Outreach impacts the Asian Pacific Islander community in the areas of domestic violence, elder protection, immigration, human trafficking, and more.

Work at API Legal Outreach will greatly augment my prior work at the San Francisco District Attorney's Office's Domestic Violence and Juvenile Justice units as well as current work with the elderly at Chaparral House, a Berkeley nursing facility. This work will also lend greater insight to my own better contribution to campus groups such as Asian Pacific American Law Students Association, Queer Law Student Association, National Lawyers Guild, and Latin American Law Students Association. The funds granted via PILF will be an immense help toward general living expenses over the summer and reduce the necessity of looking for summer work. Thanks to PILF, I can really concentrate on my work at API Legal Outreach.