

Report from Ali Kunen, New York Women's Bar Association Foundation Fellow

This summer I interned for Sanctuary for Families, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides representation for domestic violence victims in cases involving divorce, immigration, child custody/visitation, and prosecution of batterers in criminal matters. I was interested in interning at Sanctuary for Families based on my interest in pursuing a career in family law.

During my first few months at Cardozo I became involved with the Uncontested Divorce Program of the Cardozo Advocates for Battered Women, which was run by the attorneys at Sanctuary for Families. In aiding my client in obtaining a divorce, I conducted several interviews with her and educated her about her legal rights and remedies. Through my participation with the Program, I was able to gain practical experience in the area of family law, learning the entire procedure required for attaining an uncontested divorce. Having completed the final paperwork, my efforts not only liberated a woman in need but also provided me with one of the most rewarding experiences I have had to date. My involvement with the Uncontested Divorce Program at Cardozo both opened my eyes to, and focused my interest in, the many areas of family law.

Having had such a positive experience working with Sanctuary for Families through the Uncontested Divorce Program, I decided to continue working with this amazing organization over the summer. Unlike my experience with Sanctuary for Families in the fall, during the summer I was able to focus on contested divorces. My daily responsibilities included drafting subpoenas, conducting legal research, and writing responses to appellate briefs. On several occasions I was given motions to file in court. I also accompanied my supervising attorney to court and sat in on client interviews. Lastly, I was responsible for re-vamping the manual used in the Uncontested Divorce Program trainings.

I would highly recommend that any student interested in family law consider interning at Sanctuary for Families. All of the attorneys at Sanctuary for Families are deeply interested in aiding each intern's growth as both a student and an aspiring lawyer. Interning at Sanctuary for Families has allowed me to build upon the skills I have already acquired as well as provided me with the necessary experience and exposure to further my career in family law. I would like to thank the New York Women's Bar Association Foundation for the opportunity to participate in this Fellowship.