

*Reflections by Janae Hunte, New York Women's Bar Association Fellow at Legal Services NYC*

I was honored to be named the New York Women's Bar Association Foundation Fellow for the summer of 2016.

I worked in the Manhattan Legal Services-Family Law and Domestic Violence Unit, a division of Legal Services NYC, which provides representation on matters such as uncontested and contested divorces, obtaining and enforcing orders of protection, safe visitation with children, and allegations of child abuse based on a client's status as a domestic violence survivor. I helped several clients obtain orders of protection, file for divorce, and apply for rehabilitative services. In addition, I helped plan the annual "Shine the Light in Harlem", a walk and speak-out against domestic violence as well as a conference on the intersection of domestic violence, immigration status, and disability.

I will never forget one young and courageous mother. She had recently left her husband and was trying to build a new life for her son. I spent several weeks preparing divorce documents for her, helping her request child support, developing a safety plan to facilitate visitation between her son and husband, and finding resources so that she could receive job training and professional attire. Beneath her initial quiet and reserved demeanor was a strong woman full of resolve and determination to build a better life for herself and her child despite her fears of the court system and her own experiences. She was also able to obtain housing, enter the workforce, and begin applying for citizenship before the summer was over.

Prior to my time at Manhattan Legal Services, I was sure that I wanted to pursue a career in family law, but unable to pinpoint a specialty such as child abuse or matrimonial law. This fellowship helped me to expand my horizons and gain experience with various

aspects of family law. Moreover, it enabled me to see the interplay between various facets of family law and other practice areas such as housing law, immigration, and access to government benefits.

I will be forever grateful to New York Women's Bar Association Foundation for this fellowship. My work strengthened my passion to help women and families achieve stability, and enabled me to connect with attorneys and peers who are committed to this line of work. Moreover, it has given me the opportunity to learn skills and gain experience outside the classroom that I hope to apply during my career.

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