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Juvenile Rights Project, Inc.  
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I used my PILP stipend to work as a law clerk at the Juvenile Rights Project, Inc., a juvenile law firm which represents abused and neglected children. My role as a clerk was a perfect combination of high-level advocacy work and day-to-day client support.

My most significant advocacy project was to research and write a paper on the bias against teenagers within Oregon's child protective services. I was surprised to learn that the result of this unintentional system-wide bias was that teens were less likely to be believed when they reported child abuse and neglect. However, the next part of my project was to develop a training program which would educate child protective services on how to address and combat this bias. The training program is now being rolled out across the state, and I am looking forward to results which show this bias has been reduced or eliminated.

Additionally, I provided coverage for attorneys at a variety of meetings and home visits. In these meetings I was able to interact with our client(s) and promote their interests. I truly enjoyed talking with and advocating for the wishes of our clients, and was able to develop my lawyering skills by assessing client needs and implementing creative solutions. My favorite part about working with clients was developing relationships with children who are often lacking the support of a caring adult. For example, I've become an informal mentor to a quadriplegic client who is interested in becoming an attorney.

The most rewarding part of my summer experience was interacting with the other attorneys at JRP. These lawyers were so committed to ensuring our clients lived in safe and stable homes with people who loved and cared for them. I was constantly amazed because these attorneys would do whatever it took to protect their clients, including proposing innovative solutions, appealing cases, and influencing legislation. They worked tirelessly to advance the rights of juveniles across the state, but somehow still found time to assist a law clerk with a research memo. The invaluable skill I learned from these talented and capable attorneys is that no matter what the problem, there is always a solution if you look hard enough. I hope to one day practice either juvenile or family law and am grateful for the PILP stipend which enabled me to spend my summer as a law clerk at JRP.