



"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.

Summer 2019 Newsletter

Martin Luther King, Jr. Internship Program Update

This year marks the 27th anniversary of our successful summer internship program. The program, which is designed to promote and support minority attorneys' work in the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network (PLAN) programs across the Commonwealth, has hosted a total of 372 law students to date. The goal of the program is to initiate future attorneys to the lifelong commitment of providing access to justice for all individuals regardless of their ability to pay and to promote diversity in PLAN programs. Ten paid internships are awarded each summer to law students, who participate in legal services work over a 10 week period. This year, PLAN hosted 10 interns. A one and a half day poverty law training is provided at the beginning of the internship. At the end of the program, interns are also asked to complete an essay sharing their summer experiences, which are compiled into a booklet called the MLK Intern Drum Major Essay Collection. The booklets are distributed at our annual recognition reception and shared on our website. To read this year's essays, click here: <http://bit.ly/2019DrumMajor>.

Class of 2019 Martin Luther King, Jr. Summer Interns



Back row left to right: Jason Sullivan-Halpern, Shalisa J. Brunson; Marcus Gaines-Cherry, Abraham N. Doe, and Santana K. Velez. **Middle row left to right:** Alexandra J. Robinson, Juliana Muhaj, and Gabriella Reber. **Front row left to right:** Amy Chin-Arroyo, Sierra Lyles

Meet Our Newest Martin Luther King, Jr. Fellows

Congratulations to our 2019 Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Fellowship Recipients Kyle J. Watson, Queenette Echefu, and DeJonna Bates. In August, Kyle, Queenette, and DeJonna will join the staffs of Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services (SPLS), North Penn Legal Services (NPLS), and the Community Justice Project (CJP).

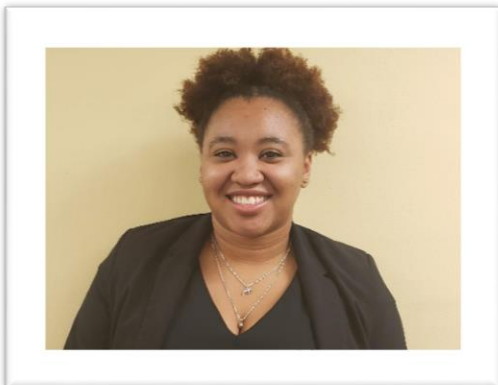
About Kyle

Kyle, a former paralegal at the Legal Aid Society in Louisville, Kentucky, received his JD in May 2017 from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and graduated with a BA in History, Political Science, and International and Cross-Cultural Studies from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Kyle's upbringing and genuine interest in serving vulnerable populations make him a natural fit for the client population we serve. His work at SPLS will be providing direct service representation to clients in the areas of family law, consumer law, housing, and public benefits-related matters.



About Queenette

Queenette, MLK Intern Class of 2018, received her JD in May 2019 from the Widener University Commonwealth School of Law and graduated with a BA in Criminal Justice from John Jay College. A daughter of Nigerian immigrants, Queenette understands and appreciates the needs of PLAN's client population and has structured her academic and professional experiences to become a strong public interest advocate. Queenette is committed to giving a legal voice to individuals who may not otherwise have an opportunity to be heard. Her work at NPLS will include casework and community outreach with a focus on housing and public benefits-related matters. As our first Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Board Martin Luther King, Jr. Fellow, Queenette will also participate in the CLE Board's diversity-related CLE events to help advance the importance of diversity within the legal profession.

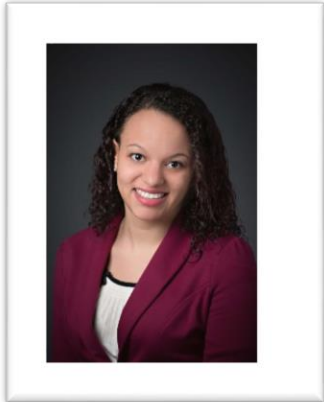


About DeJonna

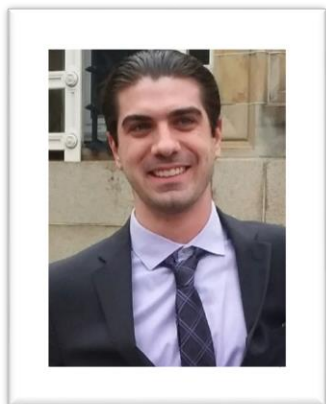
DeJonna, a former legal clerk for Delaware Volunteer Legal Services and the Veteran Law Clinic in Wilmington, Delaware, received her JD in May 2019 from Widener University Delaware Law School and graduated with a BA in Political Science and minor in Spanish from Lincoln University of Pennsylvania. DeJonna's work ethic and personal commitment to helping those most vulnerable are the makings of a great, future legal aid

advocate. Her work at CJP will involve litigating major impact cases and conducting other systemic advocacy to improve opportunities for low-income people in northeastern Pennsylvania. A significant amount of her time will be devoted to immigrant's rights and rural poverty cases.

Current Martin Luther King, Jr. Fellows Continue to Shine



In our previous newsletter, we introduced you to **Marissa LaWall**. Marissa, MLK Intern-Class of 2017, began her fellowship at the Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP) in August 2018. Marissa's responsibilities include delivering legal assistance to medically fragile children whose requests for in-home care are denied, reduced or eliminated. She also assists Medicaid-eligible Pennsylvanians to maximize in-home services through written and oral advocacy efforts. One of Marissa's most challenging cases to date, which she won, was featured in PHLP's April 2019 eNews¹. Marissa represented a 14 year-old girl with a number of lifelong intellectual disabilities and developmental delays, including Down syndrome and autism, who was denied in-home health care and supports by her Medicaid managed care insurer. Marissa represented the client and her family at the client's fair hearing. Prior to the final hearing, the Medicaid insurer reversed its denial. The client's family reported the child's self-confidence has increased and her quality of life has improved dramatically as a result of Marissa's help. Marissa, too, is proud of this case outcome and looks forward to assisting more PHLP clients to navigate the challenges of Pennsylvania's health care system as her fellowship continues.



We also introduced you to **Joel DeMary**. Joel also began his fellowship at Northwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services (NWLS) in August 2018. Joel's work involves providing direct representation to clients in the area of family law, housing, public benefits, and barriers to employment. One of Joel's most memorable cases to date involved assisting a domestic violence victim to maintain her Section 8 voucher under the threat of eviction. The client received an eviction notice stating that she was in violation of her lease for permitting non-resident occupant to reside with her for more than 14 days. The client, who had severe physical and mental disabilities, admitted that she allowed her brother to reside with her but did so out of fear as he was her abuser. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations prohibit evictions as a result of domestic violence. During his appearance in Magisterial District Court, Joel used the client's status and the HUD regulation to defend and successfully negotiate a settlement on the behalf of his client to maintain her Section 8 voucher. Joel believes that had he not been involved in the case, the client would have been overwhelmed by the legal process and likely would have lost her housing and voucher. Joel looks forward to continuing his work as an advocate for social justice.

Former Martin Luther King, Jr. Fellows Updates

In 2017, we introduced you to **Hermionne Cadet** and **Kadeem Morris**. Both Fellows completed their respective fellowships this year. **Hermionne**, a former Fellow at MidPenn Legal Services, is now employed by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office as an Assistant District Attorney. **Kadeem**, a former Fellow at the Pennsylvania Utility Law Project, is continuing his legal aid career as staff attorney at Community Legal Services in Philadelphia. We wish them both the best of luck in their future endeavors.



Fellowship Program Success

We are extremely pleased with the success of the MLK Fellowship Program. Since its inception in 2004, 25 lawyers have been placed as fellows with PLAN legal aid programs and scores of other former interns have entered other public interest careers. The Fellowship Program is an integral part of PLAN, Inc.'s goal to initiate new lawyers into public interest law careers. PLAN, Inc. partners with a sponsoring regional or specialty legal services program and pays 50% of the Fellow's salary, benefits, and student loan assistance up to \$5500 each per year of the two-year fellowship. Salary is commensurate with that of the sponsoring program.

In the past fiscal year, PLAN programs handled over 73,000 client cases, saving their homes from foreclosure, protecting them from domestic violence, securing health insurance, establishing custody stability for children, and helping clients in many other ways.

The Fellowship Program has a proven track record of launching minority law students into careers as public interest lawyers and legal aid attorneys and has generated a reliable recruitment pool for legal aid organizations. PLAN, Inc. appreciates the financial support and sponsorships it receives from Pennsylvania law firms, businesses, and individuals to help support this program. PLAN, Inc. does not realize any of these sponsorship funds, but funnels them directly to the salary and benefits of our fellows. PLAN, Inc. also appreciates the financial support of this program from the Department of Human Services and the Pa.

IOLTA Board. Our goal is to place at least two fellows per fiscal year. You can help by donating to our Fellowship Program. Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by the law. On the behalf of PLAN, Inc., we thank you for your support.

Thank You

PLAN, Inc. wishes to thank and acknowledge the following for their generous support of the MLK Fellowship Program since its inception.

Allentown Branch of the NAACP
Ballard Spahr, LLP
Bazelon Less & Feldman, PC
Blank & Rome, LLP
Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, PC
Campbell & Levine, LLC
Carl Oxholm, III
Christie & Young, PC
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Drinker Biddle & Reath, LLP
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Eagles Social Justice Fund, Philadelphia Foundation
Eckert, Seamans, Cherin & Mellott, LLC
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Esther Spear
Farrell & Reisinger, LLC
Feldman, Shepherd, Wohlgelernter, Tanner, Weinstock & Dodig, LLP
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Francine Thornton Boone
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Frommer D'Amico Anderson, LLC
Gay, Chacker & Mittin, PC
Hangley Aronchick Segal Pudlin & Schiller
Hershey Entertainment and Resorts
Honorable Gerald A. McHugh, Jr. and Maureen E. Tate
In Memoriam of Dorothy Ridley-Leftwich
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To learn more about PLAN, Inc.'s MLK Summer Internship and Fellowship Programs or to donate, please visit the PLAN, Inc. website at <https://palegalaid.net/internships-fellowships> or contact:

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Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by the law. The official registration and financial information of Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc. may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling, toll free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. EIN #23-1892464. Registration does not imply endorsement.

i <https://mailchi.mp/phlp/phlp-eneews-and-health-law-news-april-2019>