

### **Katie Lynn Anderson '15: IHRLC 2015 Summer Fellow with Pangea**

In summer 2014, and due to the generous contributions from many International Human Rights Law Clinic (IHRLC) alumni, I received the IHRLC Alumni Summer Fellowship. The fellowship funded my work at Pangea Legal Services (“Pangea”), a non-profit in San Francisco that advocates for immigrants’ human rights. With the fellowship supporting my work, I gained the tools and confidence to continue pursuing a career in human rights law.

Under Pangea’s careful supervision, I got to know and advocate for many courageous individuals. In total, I worked on thirty-one clients’ deportation defense cases. Illustrative of the diversity of clients, I worked with an elderly Ivorian Coast man who had lived and worked in the United States for decades, several Central American women who came to the United States during the past two years, and two El Salvadoran children who had arrived in the previous few months. I had the privilege of taking a U Visa case and an asylum case from start-to-filed. I also prepared briefs and documents for three successful bond hearings, which allowed detained immigrants to reunite with their families while pursuing their immigration cases. Beyond taking on large parts of cases, I also completed shorter assignments: I drafted several motions to change venue, terminate, or administratively close cases, appeared before the Immigration Judge in three court hearings, and interviewed clients to draft their declarations.

From the client services work, I learned substantive material and grew my skills. Entering this position, I knew little immigration law. Coming out of this position, I have worked on matters related to affirmative asylum, defensive asylum, cancellation, withholding, the Convention Against Torture, U Visas, and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. I also gained insight into the immigration court system; I learned how to present myself before the immigration judge, I witnessed the widely variable attitudes of the judges, and I observed the general tracks along which cases proceed. I also developed my ability to listen to and understand clients’ stories. I learned that lawyers alone could not resolve the multiplicity of issues encountered by many of Pangea’s clients, but that we could work with compassion in our hearts and a sincerity of effort to position them for success in the immigration court system.

In addition to providing client services, I also worked on Pangea’s policy initiatives. As an example of my work with Pangea in the policy realm, I helped prepare our team for a meeting with Senator Pelosi’s office. I wrote the agenda and drafted a policy briefing that we delivered to the Senator and used in meetings with other local and state legislators. I also prepared a client—an indigenous Guatemalan woman, and domestic violence survivor—to speak about why she left Guatemala, her recent journey to the United States, her detention at the border, and her hope for future policy change. The meeting with the Senator, with a client by my side, was an incredible opportunity for me to learn a different avenue for empowering and advocating for clients.

Beyond legal work, I also collaborated with Pangea staff to enhance their management and operations. In the coming year, I will continue working with Pangea as a member of their Advisory Board, focusing particularly on how to streamline and scale their fantastic work.

I experienced this summer as a turning of the page—from ‘student’ to ‘advocate’—and I am thankful for the support from IHRLC alumni in this endeavor. I look forward to leveraging the skills, confidence, and knowledge that I gained this summer in my career as a human rights lawyer.