



Coram's Fields Employability Scheme: Christianah Babajide's journey with mentors, Emily Foy and Tom Quinn

09 January 2018

Christianah Babajide, an undergraduate law student studying in London, is a contributor to and member of the Coram's Fields Employability Scheme. An aspiring lawyer, she spends her spare time performing spoken word poetry and blogging about contemporary topics. As she celebrates her two-year anniversary with her two mentors (Tom Quinn and Emily Foy), she reflects on her journey as a mentee at Payne Hicks Beach.

My name is Christianah Babajide, I am studying for my LLB degree at City, University of London. Born and bred in London, I live in Essex with my family, consisting of my Nigerian-born parents and two elder siblings. English is my first language but I also speak my mother tongue which is Yoruba. I am an active committee member of my University's law society as the Editor-in-Chief of the Law Journal and founder of the legal blog. Outside law, I enjoy watching crime documentaries, reading non-fiction novels and playing instruments such as the piano.

Coram's Fields is a charity situated on Guidford Street, in the heart of London between King's Cross and Holborn. Coram's Fields is a unique playground and park which serves children and young people living in and visiting London. I got involved in Coram's Fields Youth Centre at the age of 17 when I was initially an active member of the music and IT club and produced some work in the Creative Art Space. I found the centre very welcoming and full of useful resources. Even then, I was fascinated with different laws in the English legal system. Once she became aware of my desire to study Law at university, Dershe Shah (the Employability Scheme Manager) enrolled me in the Coram's Fields Employability Scheme.

Luckily for me, Coram's Fields has a partnership with Payne Hicks Beach which allows individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a passion for Law, to be mentored by solicitors of the firm. Mentoring is a relationship where a mentee is paired up with a mentor (usually someone with more experience in the mentee's desired profession) to help them develop and achieve their goals, be it personal or professional. A mentorship is what you make of it, but the aim of the scheme is to receive assistance and guidance from someone who has been through the process already.

The charity ensured I was paired up with not one but two solicitors, who have offered me a tremendous support. I have been on the employability scheme for nearly two years now; not only has it offered me an invaluable insight into different practices of the law, but my mentors have been of practical help to me including proof-reading my CV, reading over my applications and cover letters, helping me with the application process and talking to me in more general terms about my career, what I want to achieve and the best path to achieve my goals.

A trusted mentor can offer valuable insight into what it takes to get ahead by helping you decide on the best course of action in difficult situations. For example, having a mentor increased my productivity and I never felt like I had nowhere to turn for help. They helped me to identify the skills and expertise I needed to succeed by advising me on where to get the information I required and by helping me look critically at my own talents and how best to sell them in the field of law. A mentor also helps you stay focused and on track in your career and education through sound advice, skills development, networking opportunities and constructive feedback. As an individual coming from a disadvantaged background, having mentors helped me expand my knowledge of the legal profession, I was also able to interact with other professionals and learn new ways of thinking that helped to advance my career.

My mentors have taught me numerous things but the most important thing they have instilled in me is confidence. Before this scheme, although I wanted to study Law, I was apprehensive about pursuing a career in the legal profession because I didn't know anyone in the profession thus I wasn't well connected. This had an impact on my confidence. However, this mentorship has not only allowed me to make connections with people in the legal sphere but having mentors opens a gateway to the profession that I wouldn't have otherwise had.