

Another week down and another year older! Throughout the week I was yet again busy with my tasks of attending staff meetings, reviewing, and preparing for our Annual Directors Meeting. I lit up every time I got to open my email and sort through all the wonderful pictures that HEP and CAMP staff sent in to showcase their wonderful students and staff. Being able to create this presentation to humbly brag about my HEP/CAMP family fulfills me and makes me eagerly countdown the days in which I get to interact with these folks. Meeting the U.S. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, was very interesting as well. Although we only had time to ask two questions as a group, due to the fact that every intern in the room gave a two-minute elevator speech, the questions that were asked were fairly similar to the once I proposed to ask. Mine were, "Could you explain how you are supporting the goal of high achievement for every student, specifically those who are undocumented, with the priorities you have set in place for the department?" and "What commitment to funding public schools and supporting students and teachers can we expect to rely on?" I planned on prefacing these questions with a bit of personal experience as well. By asking these questions, my intention was to voice a perspective that is not often heard in DC. Within the weeks of being here, I have had little to no interactions with folks from Oregon, much less a rural migrant female from Oregon. I recognize that my perspective is unique but not only limited to myself. Being able to expose others to it not only gives them a new lens to recognize Oregon from, but also invites them to ask more questions that will hopefully benefit both parties.

More sightseeing took place throughout the week into the weekend. I discovered how close in proximity DC is to Virginia and Maryland. On Wednesday I wandered through Georgetown, DC into Virginia and went back to DC on my way home. Friday I was able to take the metro all the way to the Suburbs of Maryland to join one of my kind Office of Migrant Education staff members Ed in a welcome home BBQ dinner for his daughter and son-in-law. They had come to visit from California where they are both physical therapists and gave me great advise since I too want to be a physical therapist! Taking advantage of my young legs I again walked aimlessly through the streets of DC, more specifically Chinatown and some outer buildings surrounding the national mall.

Thankfully I was blessed with another year of life and celebrated it Sunday with a 8:30 service at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle. Headed to marvel at the beauty of the Basilica of the National Shrine of Immaculate Conception and ended my birthday with two Baked and Wired cupcakes from Georgetown. Spending my birthday without my family this year was very strange to say the least, but through these experiences, I am definitely learning to become more independent and continuously optimistic to keep pushing myself out of my comfort zone. God willing, I hope to continue improving myself holistically for the many more year to come.

