

Julia Santiago

Week 4: June 17-23

D.C. has grown on me. I am accustomed to a small town, slight traffic, and to be surrounded by quietness. D.C. has so much to offer. There is so much to see, to explore, and new places to eat. D.C. is filled with different opportunities that I had no clue existed. There are many networking events one can attend and learn more about issues affecting different communities. I have learned about Think Tanks, and have also learned about a variety of agencies. Some days I am still astonished that I am here. I am already thinking ahead about how I can come back, and where I would want to intern in the future. D.C. has also made me want to learn more about U.S. history.

Monday morning I woke up, got my coffee, and set out to start my week. At this point, I feel like the next weeks are going to go by quick, like the last weeks of my first year at UI. Working at the Initiative has been quite fun. The first-year guide for students will hopefully be on the website in the fall. All the interns have been working on projects, attending meetings, and connecting with other interns at the Department. Next week we will go to the Supreme Court!

On Thursday, we had the chance to have breakfast with United Farmworkers Association. I had the opportunity to meet the President Teresa Romero and former President Arturo Rodriguez. All the interns had a chance to tell them our stories and what our farmworking experience was/is like.

CHCI took us to the Mexican Cultural Institute on Friday. I felt at home when I saw the Mexican flag and beautiful painting on the wall that portrays the different eras in history. There is also a painting of Benito Juarez, who was an indigenous President from Oaxaca (where my parents are from). My parents would talk about him and what great contributions he brought to our people.

Eduardo, one of the CAMP interns is great at showing us around D.C. Saturday morning he took us to the Eastern Market. I felt a bit of nostalgia since the market made me feel like I was at the Pasco Flea Market with my family in Washington state. The Eastern Market had great vendors selling intricate styles of earrings made by D.C. residents and a great selection of fresh fruit.

On Saturday evening, we were invited to Lisa Gillette's house for a barbecue. Lisa is the Director of the Office of Migrant Education. They treated us to a nice barbecue and delicious dessert. We also met two other interns that day.

Sunday afternoon we went out to see the Arlington Cemetery. We had the chance to see the John F. Kennedy Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the mansion of Robert E. Lee. It saddening to think that the cemetery was once a plantation. I also saw the USS Maine Memorial. It blows my mind that I have the privilege to see many parts of history thru these memorials, monuments, and museums.

D.C has treated me well. I have been enjoying my experience here and every day I keep telling myself I belong here. I remind myself that my hard work and dedication in my academics and the

passion to help my community has brought me here. Yes, I may come from a small town but I am a small town girl here in D.C.! Si se Puede!

