

## Week 8: Walk Along With Me, Step-by-Step

Two whole months in Washington, D.C.! I am amazed at the large amount of wonderful experiences and places I have visited so far. In hindsight, everything has happened so fast. I have two weeks remaining of my internship, which makes me excited to see my family back in my sweet home in Manzanola as I only got to see them for a week before I came to Washington, D.C. However, I know I will feel sad to leave my office co-workers and CAMP interns behind. I will place these sad/happy emotions on the table to be handled the last week of my internship.



This week went by in a blink of the eye! In the office, one of the things I was assigned is to reach out to the offices of Members of Congress that my Representative has sponsored. I thought it was quite fun to look up each office, ask for the email of the staff member in charge of the bill's particular topic, and send them information on the bill. I also re-organized an excel spreadsheet to make it easier to read the labels and colors used to match the information that we have received regarding the bill. I have correspondence assignments for the month of July; and, I think that they are going to be fun as many crazy events have happened and we still have not closed the month yet.

On Tuesday, I was able to attend the Women's 7th Annual Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) fair and reception. I was able to talk to different groups such as FaceBook, Girl Scouts, Veteran Affairs, etc. about how they are reaching out to rural communities. It is important to me that these opportunities reach rural America because there are many students, especially girls, in rural communities that are not receiving those opportunities and do not have that life-changing experience that students get in bigger cities. I was also able to have a meal for free, which is a Washington, D.C. life hack.

As a CHCI intern, I had the opportunity to guide a group of students from Detroit around Capitol Hill with the R2L NextGen program. Along with Wendy, we were able to have lunch with the three students, who told us about their future aspirations and experiences in Washington, D.C. We then went to meet one of the Michigan senators, Debbie Stabenow. The high school girls engaged with the Senator and they were able to take a picture with her. Wendy and I were asked as well for a picture, and that would be a tough one to turn down. Afterwards, we ushered



the students to the Capitol Reflecting Pool under the scorching hot sun to take headshot pictures. After melting under the sun, we walked over to the students' representative, Rashida Tlaib. Unfortunately, Representative Tlaib was busy at that time, but they were able to meet with her scheduler, who basically manages the life of representatives. The scheduler made a sweet deal with the students so they have the chance to meet with their representative in the future, and I thought that it was such a sweet and considerate gesture. The girls were sharp with their questions and were very

respectful, and I enjoyed being a part of their experience in D.C. We then took them on a tour to the Capitol towards the end of their visit. After the girls had taken off with their group to their next activity, Wendy, Julia, and I sat on a bench trying to decide if we wanted to go do volunteer work at the Franciscan Monastery Garden in Brookland, but a storm came in during our time deciding, so we decided to just go home. (I still haven't stopped thinking of how good that particular garden's soil was).

My office had invited me to a fellow/intern farewell get-together after work on Thursday evening. As interns, we were naturally set on a mission to reserve a table on the rooftop of a place called Tortuga. After melting under the hot sun, the staff arrived, but they thought it was too hot so we moved downstairs. We talked and I thought it was interesting to see non-work related topics discussed. I am thankful and fortunate for the office's staff members who are all amazing and the best at what they do. I also had some of the best seasoned chicken wings with ranch, which is always a highlight of my days. I went with an intern, Carlos, to go see the Apollo 11 Saturn V Rocket displayed on the Washington Memorial. It was said that the rocket display is true to the actual size of the original rocket. I thought it was amazing and beautiful to see a projection be so real-looking and I was glad to have experienced that wonderful sight.



Friday's CHCI session talked about gentrification and how it can positively and negatively affect communities. Although this issue is not prevalent back home, it definitely stands out in Washington, D.C. It is sad to see that economic and workforce development can harm those that do not meet the quota for who gets to succeed. It is an issue that needs to be addressed with a middle ground perspective.

Later that evening, all of the CAMP interns were invited to 'A Celebration of Farmworker DREAMers and the Dreams of Farmworkers!' at the Mexican embassy. I recognized Jasmine Palacios, a CAMP student from my cohort in Adams State University, checking-in guests for the event. She is an intern for the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association. After greeting her, the HEP-CAMP interns headed upstairs for the event. Although there was an hour or so that allowed people to network, we hopped around the food table where we devoured fancy-looking tamales and a cup of diced pineapples, jamaica, watermelon, cheese, and chili. Washington, D.C. lacks Mexican restaurants, so these small appetizers were heaven to us. I do not think that this journal can describe the taste, savor, and homesickness we all got from those fancy tamales. The event started shortly and there were several presenters, including John Menditto, the General Counsel and Director of Risk Management of the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project, a group of DREAMers who shared their stories, and a young mariachi group that conquered the hearts of everyone.

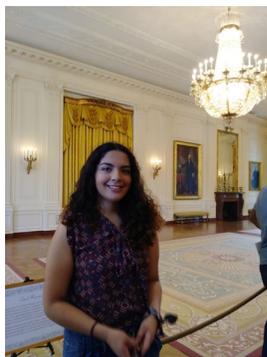


After the event, I was able to personally talk to John as I was the only 2019 HEP-CAMP intern who was in a Migrant Head Start Program. It is nice to meet the people behind these great programs who prepare young children of migrant families for primary education. I remember discussing in my sociology class at Adams State University the great impact of Head Start programs across the nation to low-income families. Young students that start out in kindergarten without previous daycare education have a statistical tendency to fall behind their peers in class. I am thankful that I was prepared for kindergarten through this amazing program.

On Sunday, I had the opportunity to tour the White House through my Congressional office. I met up with Selena, an intern from my office, to be screened by secret service. It was barely 8:00 a.m. and I was dripping with sweat. It was hot outside, and I had previously ran from the metro to the entrance area because I thought I was going to be late. There are several prohibited items, including bags/purses/clutches, so I had to carry about five cards between my phone and the cover. It was a long process to be screened, but we were able to get through. I thought that it was a pretty cool experience to walk through the White House where Presidents who have served this country and influential people have walked through. I thought that the decoration and design of the rooms were beautiful. It was a very short tour but it is definitely a must see in Washington, D.C.



Afterwards, I headed off to the Columbian Festival where Wendy, Julia, and Eduardo had already arrived. I took the metro and did a 12-minute walk to get to the location because it was much cheaper than taking an Uber to the place. When I got there, I was tasked to set up the VIP table area, hand out 'vendor' labels, and check people in to the event. It was a whopping five hours of volunteer service, and I treated myself with a Chick-fil-a dinner that evening. I was also introduced to 7/11's Big Gulp when we headed back, thanks to Eduardo.



On Sunday, I went out to Macy's to buy an outfit for a video interview that Monday. The blazer that I owned was starting to lose a button and fit a little big as I had owned it since freshman year of high school. I then met up with Jasmine Camponeschi, my CAMP director at Adams State University, to give her a quick tour around the National Mall and catch up with each other. We walked to the National Museum of Natural History,

the Washington Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial Statue, and Vietnam Memorial. We then headed out to dinner at a Cafe. I dropped her off at the Foggy Bottom metro station and headed to my room. I am excited to have Jasmine here and tell her all about my crazy experiences in Washington, D.C. and how excited I am to start a new school year as a sophomore.

