

Wendy Cueto

Week 10 Journal

Every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home. - Matsuo Bashō

The word family can best describe my final week in Washington, D.C. During my last week, I reflected on how I am now a part of many different families. One is my work family. The office that I had the pleasure of working since day one welcomed me and made sure that I was always gaining valuable experiences. Also, my fellow interns and I became like family. We became each other's support system and we grew closer in our shared experiences. Lastly, my family in Texas. While I made close relationships in D.C., this was the one family that I missed the most and that I could not wait to see.

Early this week I enjoyed my day off from work and I used it to visit the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. I was pleasantly surprised to find representation of farmworkers and information about their contributions throughout the American History Museum. I was taken aback through some of their exhibits that portray the United Farm Workers labor movement, the U.S-Mexico border, and the Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins. These exhibits are thoughtfully designed and demonstrate the museum's effort to be inclusive.

The following day was my last day of my summer internship. Since Congress was not in session, we had a slow workload at the office. The staff bought pizza for my last day and we shared our highs and lows of the summer. Later that day, the staff assistant led me on a tour of the Republican cloakroom and the House Floor. I was amazed by the history the room presented and to sit where the decision-makers of this country sit was indescribable. (Side note: I even picked where I would want to sit when I arrive in a few years). While sitting in the chair of a member of congress, I thought about my remarks when I addressed the National HEP/CAMP Association at the Annual Directors Meeting. I expressed how proud I was of the HEP/CAMP interns and of myself for transitioning from the fields to the U.S. Capitol. That message still holds true and I know that we experience D.C. through a more appreciative lens because we have always felt honored to be here and have never lost sight of the fact that *we belong here*.

The HEP/CAMP interns are a motivated and hardworking group of students who I had the pleasure to meet. We are all from different parts of the country yet share similarities in our hardships. With this internship opportunity, we were able to exponentially grow our network, develop our professional skills and learn from each other along the way. The HEP/CAMP Association made our journey in D.C. possible and I am extremely grateful for their support. This internship has challenged me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to develop professionally while exploring new career opportunities that I had not previously considered. Throughout this journey, I have become passionate to become an advocate for marginalized communities and I will work to ensure that they have access to a better life and better opportunities.

