

You get out of life what you put into it
-Philip Banks; The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air

Well $\frac{3}{4}$ of the internship is already down and there only stands $\frac{1}{4}$ of it left. I'm beginning to have mixed emotions for the reason that time always seems to catch us off guard. On Monday, nothing happened exciting occurred within work or out of it; therefore, I will skip Monday altogether. Tuesday was a different story however in that the camp interns and I began the preliminary steps in preparing for our trip to New York City. We began our planning at around 8 pm by searching for attractions to visit and looking at the price ranges for bus tickets to and from New York. After about a couple of hours of searching, we had a solid list of things we planned to do in New York, but we then began an important step which was to search for lodging within New York. This was the most difficult process for us for the reason that there were very little hotels fitted towards our price range. After about an hour of searching, the intern class decided to search for hostels, but even then, the beds were still quite pricy to rent out. It was not until Ariana brought up the idea of renting an apartment altogether for our trip. At first, I was iffy about the idea, but after Ariana showed us a trustworthy site so we decided to give it a shot. After searching for a good hour, we came to realize that this would be a great cost-effective choice for the reason that we could get a great amount of space for a great price. In the end, Ariana and I decided to add two apartments located in Jersey City, NJ to our wish list. The apartments themselves seemed to be in great shape; for example, the apartment that caught our eye had two bathrooms, two bedrooms, a spacious living room, and a great room. After doing the math, the room would ultimately cost a group of eight people about \$70 each for a total of 2 nights and 3 days. This deal was truly the best one out of the rest of our choices and we ended up renting this beautiful apartment. Our Tuesday night ended around 2 in the morning, but the lack of sleep was a worthy investment towards an unforgettable trip that was to come in New York City.

On Wednesday after work, Alberto, Elizabeth, and I decided to visit an ATM machine in order to take out cash to pay to Ariana, who was gracious enough to put the apartment rental onto her card. When our group took out our cash, Alberto and I said we were hungry and asked Elizabeth if she would like to join us on a burger to Johnny Rockets. She said she would buy a milkshake with us and we decided to indulge in some tasty hamburgers in Johnny Rockets. After an hour of eating, we went back to our dorms and logged onto our computers to purchase our bus tickets for New York. Once we purchased our tickets, Elizabeth told us that she wanted to watch the movie called Labyrinth on Alberto's computer; the funny thing was that we only made it halfway through the movie before we ended up falling asleep. When we finally woke up after about a half hour nap, Elizabeth went back to her room and Alberto and I went to sleep in order to be rested up for our trip to New York. On Thursday after returning to my dorm, I began to pack my clothes and toiletries that I would need for the trip. I was fortunate enough to only take a backpack with me to the trip because I felt like it would have been a hassle to carry a handful of bags with me. Elizabeth, Alberto, and I decided to leave our dorms at around 10 pm in order to reach the bus station with ample time. Before leaving, however, I told Elizabeth and Alberto that I would like for us to do a prayer before our trip because I always feel less anxious when I know that God is watching over me. 10 pm came around and we took the metro system in order to reach the Union-Station bus station at around 1130 pm. The bus finally arrived for us at 12 pm and we embarked on our trip to New York City; during the bus ride I tried to get some sleep but it was quite difficult for the reason that the bus was cold and noisy. After rustling around my seat for about a half hour, I drifted into sleep for about two hours.



When I woke up, the time was 2:30 am, but I noticed Diana and Ariana making sounds of excitement, I was confused because the bus itinerary said that we wouldn't reach New York until 4:30, but we were somehow in a lit up city. When the bus stopped, the driver said "Philadelphia" which meant that we stopped in order to drop off a few passengers who planned to go to Philadelphia. I chuckled at Ariana and Diana's reaction for the reason that they were getting excited over a city that weren't even planning to visit; I began to tease for the next 15 minutes, but after the excitement wore off, I quickly fell asleep. When I woke up, I noticed that we were driving within a city, but in order to be sure that we were indeed in New York, I looked at my watch which read 4:25 am; we had finally reached New York City. When I walked off the bus, I could not believe that I was truly in New York City; in fact, I felt like I was only in the streets of Portland, OR. After walking the empty streets of New York, we stumbled across what seemed like Times Square, but we were not too sure for the reason that the streets were completely empty. The group was ultimately hungry in early hours, so we ended up going into a McDonalds where some of us ate an early breakfast. After the

group had their breakfast, we decided to travel to New Jersey in order to drop off our stuff and to see if our apartment was ultimately what it was advertised to be like. The subway system in New York was quite confusing in that it was extremely different compared to the one in Washington DC. We ended up using my smartphone in order to get directions of what line to take and where to transfer at. After about two hours of searching, we ended up in at the apartment in New Jersey. We were quite nervous when we reached the door because we did not know what to expect on the other side. Once Ariana opened the door, we all had a huge smile on our faces because the apartment exceeded our initial expectations. After getting settled in the apartment, we decided to take a two hour nap in order re-energize for the day that was prepared for us. We left the apartment around 10:30 am and went towards our first destination which was the 911 memorial. The subway going there took about 30 minutes, but once we reached our destination, we instantly saw the newly constructed Freedom Tower engulfing the sky; the tower was of an awesome and it was quite intimidating to look straight up at it. We walked around the area for about 15 minutes until we noticed a huge crowd surrounding two areas. We went towards the crowd and ultimately saw ourselves at ground zero where September 11, 2001 occurred. The retired twin tower's bases were replaced with two identical fountains that appeared black in color and dropped down about 45 feet with dropping water that appeared to resemble debris. Our next destination was the trinity church which is located next to Wall Street; once we arrived at the church, we went inside and explored the many mysteries which it contained. The architecture

within the church was marvelous for the reason that the walls were filled with intricate paintings and ordained sculptures.

After visiting the trinity church, we walked across the street and found ourselves on Wall Street where we were able to see the New York Stock Exchange, Trump Tower, and even the famous Tiffany & Co. Once the group finished with Wall Street, we decided to split two large pizzas at a local New York pizzeria; the pizzas we ordered were pepperoni and marguerite. After we filled our bellies, we decided to visit the Brooklyn Bridge; at first, we only looked at the bridge from a distance, but we then decided to actually walk across it. At this point, the time was about 4:30 pm and the group was getting quite exhausted, but we decided to tough it out and ended up walking onto the bridge. Before walking across it, I noticed a vendor selling Mango with Limon and salt, it was too tempting to pass up so I decided to purchase myself a baggy of Mango while on the Brooklyn Bridge. Once the group reached the middle of the bridge, we decided to split up into two groups where one continued to Brooklyn and the other returned to New York City. After splitting up, I was with the group who returned to New York; therefore, we decided to take a break in one of the local parks of New York. After a good twenty minute break, we decided to visit the famous Little Italy; the funny thing about little Italy was the fact that it was located right next to Chinatown. As a result, we walked across Chinatown for a few blocks, but once we took a right and walked down a block away from Chinatown, we instantly entered a different atmosphere. When in little Italy, we began to realize how the culture of the Italian city life differs from ours and it was beautiful to see the number of people eating their food outside of the many restaurants within Little Italy.

After visiting Little Italy, our mini-group returned to Times Square for the reason that the National Head Start Intern group invited us to eat at the Hard Rock Café in Times Square. We waited at Times Square for a couple of hours so we decided to take a few pictures with a silver dude, dumb Minions, and some other people. The atmosphere of Times Square differed greatly in the afternoon than in the morning for the reason that it was so packed and busy in the afternoon. After our wait, the Head Start group arrived at the Hard Rock and notified us to go join them. The atmosphere of the restaurant was groovy for the reason that there was so much music history laid within the restaurant. I decided to order a 16 oz. steak with a side of green beans and mashed potatoes and a drink similar to a piña colada. We had a great time chatting with the Head Start intern group because although they have reached high calibers of success, they were really humble and never bragged about their successes. After I finished my steak, the Head Start advisors decided to order us some dessert including an Oreo cheesecake, vanilla apple crisp, and a huge sundae. After finishing our meals, we gave our thanks to the Head Start interns and advisors for giving us such a great meal and moment. Once we said our goodbyes, we decided to return to our room in order to sleep and prepare for the next day.

On Saturday, we ended up leaving the apartment at around 11:30 a.m. in order to begin a new adventure in New York. We decided to eat breakfast at a local New York styled diner in southern Manhattan...I do not quite remember the name of the diner, but I remember ordering a lumberjack platter which came with a stack of pancakes, ham, sausage, bacon, and eggs along with an Italian soda styled drink called the New York Cream. After our meal, we decided to take the subway rail going to the South Ferries because we had planned to take a ferry in order to see the Statue of Liberty. After arriving at the station, we came to realize that the ferry would only take us to Staten Island and not to the statue of Liberty. We began to discuss whether we should take the free ferry or just search for another ferry. When we walked out of the station, we found some salespeople who were selling tickets to taxi ferry which would take us to the Statue of



Liberty and to the other side of the New York City Island. We decided to purchase the tickets for \$30 each and the investment actually paid off in the end; once we received our tickets, we walked about a fourth of a mile to pier 11 where the taxi ferry was awaiting us. As said before, the taxi ferry was worth it because we were able to get more than we thought we would; we went to see the Brooklyn up close, and I specifically remember seeing the Statue of Liberty for the reason that the New York Theme from Frank Sinatra played while we went to go see it. Once we had our pictures taken of the statue, we left the statue and were dropped off on the West side of the New York Island near Times Square. Once I got off, I remembered that my sister made a request for me to purchase her makeup from a cosmetics store exclusive only to New York. The name of the cosmetics store was Inglot cosmetics in Times Square... I have to stay, it was pretty awkward purchasing makeup for my sister, but I

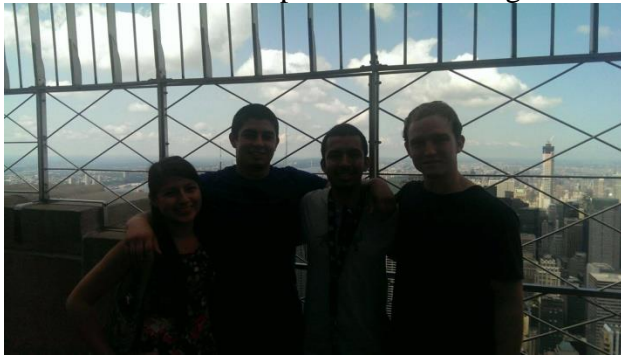


made the sacrifice because my sister deserves it. Once I purchased the makeup palette, the interns and I decided to visit the famous man-made central park. The park was enormous and it truly astonishes me to think that every acre of the park was man-made. We spent a few hours within the park exploring around and once we were done with Central Park, we decided to return to Times Square. The time was about 11:00 pm and the interns and I were very hungry so as a result, we decided to visit Little Italy one last time in order to

indulge in some genuine Italian cuisine. After about 45 minutes, we reached Little Italy and decided to eat at a restaurant called El Paisano; the front of the restaurant seemed a little plain, but once we walked inside, we entered an entirely different rustic Italian atmosphere. The walls appeared to be of Italian style, the support beams of building were of rustic wood, and the lights of the restaurant gave off a romantic essence. I decided to purchase myself a plate of linguini with extra olives and a ginger ale along with a loaf of Italian bread. After having an exceptional Italian meal, the interns and I decided to return to the apartment at around 1:30 am in order to rest up for our final day in New York.

On Sunday morning, the intern group and I decided to wake up at 7:30 am in order to get a big chunk of New York finished. The first thing on our agenda was to visit the world famous Carlo's Bakery that is starred on the TLC show "Cake Boss". The nice thing about our apartment's location was that it was located just about 15 minutes from the original Carlo's Bakery in New Jersey. When we were walking towards the bakery, I became worried because I was expecting a huge crowd to be surrounding it, but when we got there, only a few people were outside taking pictures. My initial thought was, "Is this place closed?" but when we got to the entrance, I noticed a fairly large crowd within the store. When we walked inside, I felt as if I was

walking into a movie set because I remember the countless times when I would watch “Cake Boss” with my sister and mother. After waiting in line for about 15 minutes, I decided to order a Lobster Tail, Cream Puff, and one of their famous Cannoli’s. After the intern group purchased their pastries, we decided to have an early breakfast at a modern diner which went by the name of Stacks. After looking at the food options in the menu, I decided to purchase a roast beef sandwich which went by the name of “The Godfather”. Once we finished eating, we returned to the apartment in order to clean it up and to take our belongings with us. When we returned to New York, we decided to take our luggage to an office that offers services to hold our belongings for a number of hours. Once the intern class dropped off their belongings, we stumbled across a White Castle; Alberto became ecstatic when he saw the restaurant and was anxious to purchase food there. Once we had our fill of the miniature burgers, we decided to visit the world famous Empire State Building. Luckily the tickets that we purchased came in a combo



that included a virtual aerial tour of New York which was voiced by Kevin Bacon. After the virtual tour, the time came for us to take the elevator which was to take us to the top of the Empire State Building. Once we walked out of the elevator, a sense of awe began to overcome me because I could not believe that I was truly on top of the Empire State Building. After about an hour on top of the skyscraper, we decided to head back down and to look for a

souvenir shop. It was a lucky coincidence that we were able to find souvenir shop a mere block from the Empire State Building. After purchasing our souvenirs, we became rushed for the reason that we had difficulty finding the location where our bus was to pick us up. Once we picked up our luggage, we literally ran to find our bus pickup and fortunately, we were able to find the spot with about 30 minutes left to spare. Once we got on the bus, a bittersweet moment overcame when we finally said goodbye to the city that never sleeps. We arrived back at Washington DC at 10:10 pm and we returned to our rooms and went to sleep.