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DC Journal Week 5

NY State of Mind

I remember after receiving the news that I among the few CAMP scholars selected to go represent HEP/CAMP in Washington D.C. I had received a lot of suggestions on what to do on my free time during the summer. One recurring recommendation consisted of going to New York City. Of course, I am not one to say no to many things so I was determined to go to NYC while I was here and that I would not hold back as a tourist. So with that, from June 8-9 part of the cohort and I took our trip to *the* New York City. Admittedly, deciding to actually go on this specific weekend was quite the spontaneous decision in of itself. We didn't make the decision final until two days before heading off, without knowing what we were going to do, how we were going to get there, or where we were going to stay. Although we were unprepared, we were lucky enough to keep stumbling upon some good fortune and the trip turned out to be a big success.

Three other interns and I, hopped on a bus on Saturday at about 3 in the morning so that we could arrive early to our destination. Once we arrived at NY, it was about 7:30 in the morning so I was not exactly energized but I remember getting off the bus and just looking at all of the buildings that would tower over me, something I have never experienced before. Half-asleep, we made our way to get breakfast so that we could gain some energy, but also plan out the rest of the long day we had in store. It is funny to already reflect on the fact that we had all gone to NYC with virtually no plan on what to do or where to go, the only thing that we had set was our lodging thanks to our colleague from the Department of Education.

After breakfast, we began walking to Times Square since it was only a couple of blocks away from our current location. Once I saw the billboards, the screens, and the advertisements it hit me; a 19 year old kid from rural, Glens Ferry, Idaho was standing in Times Square. As we sat on the steps located in the center of it all, it gave me a chance to soak in everything that was happening and it gave me a very strong feeling because never would I imagine being in New York City but there I was. After Times Square, we continued our journey onto Central Park. The entire day I was just in awe at all of the beautiful sights that New York had to offer, I honestly had many moments where I was already planning on how I could move to live there.

That Saturday will go down as one of the longest most memorable days of my life. After Central Park we went to the 9/11 Memorial, Wall Street, the Rockefeller Center, the Empire State Building, and to top it off we had our hotel in Times Square so I could go to sleep in the center of it all. Sunday was also very compact with adventures considering it was our last opportunity to get to

explore NY. One of the craziest coincidences that has ever occurred to me took place when the rest of the group and me somehow ran into my supervisor, Lisa Ramirez, and her husband at a metro station on the way to the Brooklyn Bridge!

When it was time to leave New York, I was filled with many mixed emotions. I had enjoyed my time so much and I was upset that it was over but also, I was very grateful that I had this experience. Looking at it, I feel that I will have this same reaction once I have to leave back home to Idaho.

The rest of the week consisted of another productive week at work that was filled with memories with the staff members. One of the funniest things that happened to me at work was on Thursday when Lisa sent me to go get a knife so that we could cut a birthday cake; I was afraid of the thought of walking across a federal building with a sharp object. While I was carrying the knife and walking to the conference room, the lights in the entire building went out so I immediately panicked because I thought that it was some kind of emergency protocol aimed towards me! Luckily, it was just bad timing and we ended up enjoying some cake as a staff/family.

As week 6 approaches, it makes me anxious to think that my time here is running very low. While I am excited to get home, it upsets me to think that I will not see many of the amazing people who I have met throughout my journey once it is all over. With only 20 days until I head home, I hope to make each day count and everyday an experience.

