

Lupe Perales
Week Six- Best Week So Far

This marks my sixth week in Washington D.C. and it has been the best. As I mentioned in my previous journal, I was organizing the mailroom into efficient sections to facilitate constituent correspondence. However, I was not able to accomplish my goal of finishing it this week as I had originally planned. I made great effort to do as much as I could daily. Each morning, I arrived to work and went directly to the mailroom to tackle my mailroom project until it was time to meet the Senator. I had the opportunity this week to have lunch with the Senator. The amount of time that I had to converse and meet with him was very short, but interesting. He took the time to get to meet each and everyone of the interns and had a photo shoot. I was disappointed to only receive 45 minutes of his time, but I understand that he has a very busy schedule to maintain. However, I do appreciate the time and effort that he made to meet with us.

After our lunch with the Senator, I attended a hearing titled, "Agricultural Guestworkers: Meeting the Growing Needs of American Agriculture." The bill that was introduced at this hearing was a bill that I was assisting with which required numerous meetings with different Congress staff. I was honored and very lucky to be able to attend the hearing and listen to many Congress and Senate figures support the bill that directly supports farmworkers. This was a very proud moment for me as I helped members of the United Farmworkers' Association make this bill possible. My role might not have been big, but I played a small role that assisted in the creation of this bill. I was full of happiness because I realized that there are individuals on Capitol Hill fighting for my community. A community of farmworkers who work from sunrise to sunset to feed their families and the American people.



Two of my role models and an incredible CHCI cohort!

On Thursday, I received the opportunity to attend a conference hosted by the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute (CHLI). This conference is known as the "Future Leaders Conference, Preparing Leaders of Tomorrow for The World of Today." Attending really motivated me to keep on going. It made me realize that the encounter of large amount of challenges is unavoidable and that challenges will not stop coming my way. I realized that I need to learn to overcome them, and push myself until I reach success. During the conference, we were told several times that we were the future leaders of America. Before I attended this event, I knew I wanted to be a leader, but I was not confident enough or quite sure how to become one. The many stories of achievement amidst hardship have empowered me to believe in myself and that I am capable of becoming a leader. It was stated that my duty was to

represent my community. I have quickly learned that Latino leaders are a minority and D.C. is desperate to have more Latino leaders in Congress so that all communities are well represented.

Lastly, towards the end of the conference they hosted a raffle. The raffle consisted of some books and a Southwest Rapid Reward. Luckily, I won the Southwest Rapid Reward. I was so happy that I won the biggest prize and my friend won a book too! This conference has motivated me to become a leader and represent my community to the best of my ability.



Future leaders of America!

On Thursday and Friday morning, I completed my community service hours at the St. Jude Research Hospital. I was able to do this through the radio station EL ZOL 107.9. There, I with a few other volunteers answered phone calls from potential donors. The calls were regarding donations to become an *Angel de Esperanza* by donating \$20/month to the St. Jude Research Hospital. The training process was clear and simple. The phones would start ringing at 6 a.m. and with great pleasure I answered. To be part of a process that helps sick children really made me feel joyful. It felt so good to volunteer for a cause that helps others. I did not care much about waking up at 4:30 a.m. because the calls that I took, made it all worth it. The environment at the radio station was welcoming and the staff members treated us very well. They were very attentive and appreciated the work that we accomplished.



Thank you, St. Jude Research Hospital for helping so many children!