

Crystal Gallegos  
The National HEP/CAMP Association Summer Internship  
Journal  
Week 1

All of my life I grew up in rural areas. Whether it was in my small hometown of Parma, Idaho or on my parents' ranch in Michoacán, México. Not until this week did I have the opportunity to experience metropolitan life. When I found out I received the National HEP/CAMP Internship I was filled with excitement; I would be in Washington D.C. for the summer (one more city I could check off on my list of places I want to visit). Although I was very enthusiastic about this trip, there were also many things that I was worried about, for example, flying by myself, metro transportation, and who I would spend most of my time with. After my first week in Washington D.C. all of these worries faded.

After a six-hour flight from Boise, Idaho to Washington D.C., I was exhausted. As soon as my plane landed, I received a call from Patrick Doone saying he was waiting for me outside of security. I had never met Patrick, so when I exited security at the airport, I waked right passed him. I found that I was the first intern to arrive so we waited patiently for the others. Monse was the next to arrive from Fresno, California. I was excited to meet her because she would be my roommate for the next 9 weeks. Aleya and Jazmin were next from Oregon, and lastly, Jose from Florida.

When everyone arrived the six of us took a shuttle to our new home for the next nine weeks, George Washington University. We unloaded our luggage and took it up to our rooms. After a long day of travel, we were all exhausted and hungry. Patrick took us to an Italian restaurant down the street from the university dorms.

Everyone seemed like nice people, but it was obvious that we still were not comfortable with each other yet. At dinner I got to learn about everyone a little bit more. I learned that Aleya is allergic to seafood, Jazmin loves sports, Jose had just spent two weeks in Nicaragua, and Monse was left a loving younger brother at home. After dinner Patrick took us to the place he was staying and gave us maps of the metro and the city, our business cards, and our metro cards. At first all of this information was overwhelming, but I found it to be very helpful throughout the first week. Afterwards, we walked back to our rooms and prepared for the next day: our first day of orientation with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute.

The first time using the metro was not as complicated as I thought it was going to be. Patrick had gone over the metro map and told us what to do and watch out for on the metro. Orientation the first day was very empowering. We participated in different trainings given by Latino leaders in Washington D.C. My favorite speaker was Cristina Antelo, a driven and knowledgeable businesswoman. Listening to her story, I felt empowered as a Latina. Her story reassured me that I can be successful in any career I choose, regardless of expectations many may have of me. Later that night after work, I went with my roommate Monse to El Chalán, a delicious Peruvian restaurant. I was glad to find out that we could just walk to many of the places around us. After dinner, we took a short walk down to the White House. It was amazing to see. Up until that point, the White House was only something I had seen on TV or learned about in school. It was

amazing to think that I was standing in front of the house where so many of our presidents have lived in.

Throughout the week we did so much; we listened to so many inspiring Latino stories, as well as learned from different trainings.

