

Jasmine Meraz

Journal - Week 1

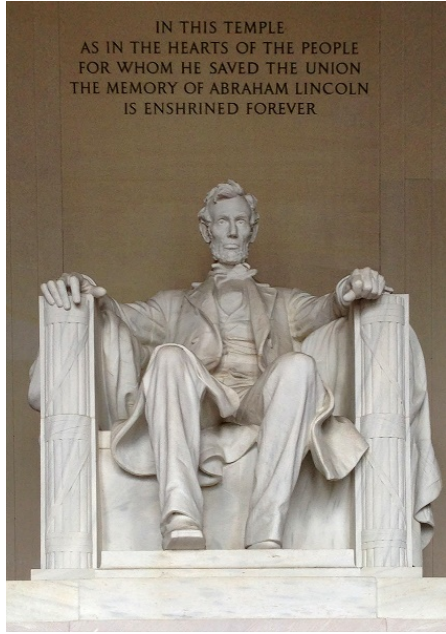
Waking up to go to the airport was the hardest thing for me, not because I had to wake up at 2:30 am, but because I only got to spend few hours with my mom who I hadn't seen in almost three weeks. Leaving my mom behind at the airport checkpoint entrance was the hardest thing because I haven't been so far away from my mom for such a long time.

Stepping out of the airplane in D.C. was the biggest step I have taken in my life to make my dream a reality. It was raining that afternoon so it felt like home, but we had not only to wait for our luggage, but we had to look for Patrick who we had no idea how he looked like. All the HEP/CAMP students arrived and we headed out to settle into George Washington University quickly because we wanted to get dinner and I needed to buy some food for the next day because unlike the rest of the interns, I did have to work the next day. I started work at exactly 9:00 am



with orientations with another intern who also was her first day at work. The older interns and staff showed us around the office and the run-down of how everything worked. The best part of the day was that I actually got to meet Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon who I am interning for. The week consisted of getting a tour of the Capitol which was amazing to see all the architecture and paintings that were intertwined into the Capitol, answering phone calls and emails from constituents, running past Senator of

New Jersey Cory Booker as I was running charts down to the Senate, and the highlight of the week at work was meeting Secretary of Rural Development Lisa Mensah!



Aside from work, I had the opportunity to explore Washington D.C. We decide to visit Georgetown University, which is one of my all-time favorite schools and explored its campus. I also got to try the famous Georgetown Cupcakes from the TLC show *DC Cupcakes*. My favorite places I went to this week were the Abraham Lincoln's and the WWII memorial. They meant the most to me so much because these individuals, although in different time periods, fought for something bigger than they could imagine. I believe this has to do a lot with me. I never thought that I would be making such a big impact on people's life back home in Oregon and making them so proud of everything I am accomplishing in order to get myself ahead in life, and to make a difference in my community. Being in front of and inside these two memorials shows me that I am here to accomplish something and I will and am making my family proud; although I am really far away from home and a three hour time differences, I know this experience will be worth it and my accomplishments will be that much more worth discussing.