

Crystal Gallegos
The National HEP/CAMP Association Summer Internship
Journal
Week 2

Week two was another success. We started off our Memorial Day with a trip to Arlington Cemetery. Walking past the endless rows of fallen soldiers, I got a strong sense of patriotism. On Memorial Day we remember all of those who have fought and passed for our country and our rights. Everyday, but Memorial Day especially, we value all of these sacrifices a little bit more. While visiting all of the amazing places in Washington D.C. I also remember my parents. I know that because all of the sacrifices they have made for my family and I as migrant farmworkers, I have the opportunity to be here.

My first day of work in the Office of Migrant Education (OME) was on Tuesday. I was nervous because I did not know what exactly I would be doing. Luckily for myself, I have a great supervisor who walked me through the different tasks I would be working on. I was welcomed by everyone at the office when I attended my first weekly staff meeting. I am looking forward to getting to know everyone better and learning from all of the things they have to share. I am also looking forward to improving my skills in the office.

My supervisor, Tara, assigned me a few duties that I will be working on throughout the next seven weeks. One of the projects that I have to work on is putting a PowerPoint together for the annual HEP/CAMP Director's Meeting. The presentation is referred to as the "Good News PowerPoint." The purpose of this is for the different programs around the country to get their stories highlighted. I was in charge of contacting all of the program directors and asking them for some pictures, stories, and accomplishments from their students. I am very excited to see all of the amazing things that students like myself are doing.

Another project that my supervisor assigned to me is interviewing all the staff in the OME. With this project Tara gave me a lot of freedom. The purpose of this project is so that I can know more about everyone I will be working with. One of the most interesting things about interning in D.C. is the people that one meets, and their stories. I find it interesting that many people who work in D.C. often don't have undergraduate degrees related to exactly what they are currently doing. This fact is very thought provoking. It makes me wonder where I will end up with my chemical engineering degree. It also makes me more open-minded to all of the possibilities for future careers.

Another important part of what I do at the Office of Migrant Education is putting information from the grant competitions into an excel sheet. This is interesting because I get to learn a little bit more about the policies regarding federal grants. I also get to read documents written in "plain language," which is the kind of writing that most government documents are written in.

The most important reason that I enjoy working in the Office of Migrant Education is because I feel that it is a way of giving back. Through my first year of college, CAMP played a very significant role in my success. It feels awesome to get to know how everything works on the national level. It is also a good feeling to know that I am a product of one of the programs who receives the grant.

Every morning I take the metro to work, but in the afternoons I prefer walking home. It is a bit of a long walk but I enjoy it because I get to see more of the city. Every day I walk past the Washington Monument. I am still amazed by it every time I pass by.

So far this experience has been great. I cannot imagine going through this experience with anyone else though. So far I have gotten along unbelievable great with everyone I am interning with. Most evenings, we all get together and cook dinner. Everyone contributes to bringing the ingredients together, preparing the food, and of course, eating it. We all like to hang out in Monse's and my room. One of my favorite activities that we do is take walks after dinner. On Friday after dinner, the five of us walked a couple blocks down to Captain Cookie, a delicious ice-cream place down the road. Afterwards we walked down to the National Mall. It was a whole other experience seeing the National Monument at night. It was also really fun because I feel that I was getting to bond with my peers so much more.

On Saturday, one of my friends from the University of Idaho who is interning for a nonprofit organization, invited me to the National Art Museum. I was exciting to see someone from back home here in DC. We spent the whole day looking at all of the interesting pieces of art, but even then there is still so much I want to see. I am excited to be going again soon with the other interns.

