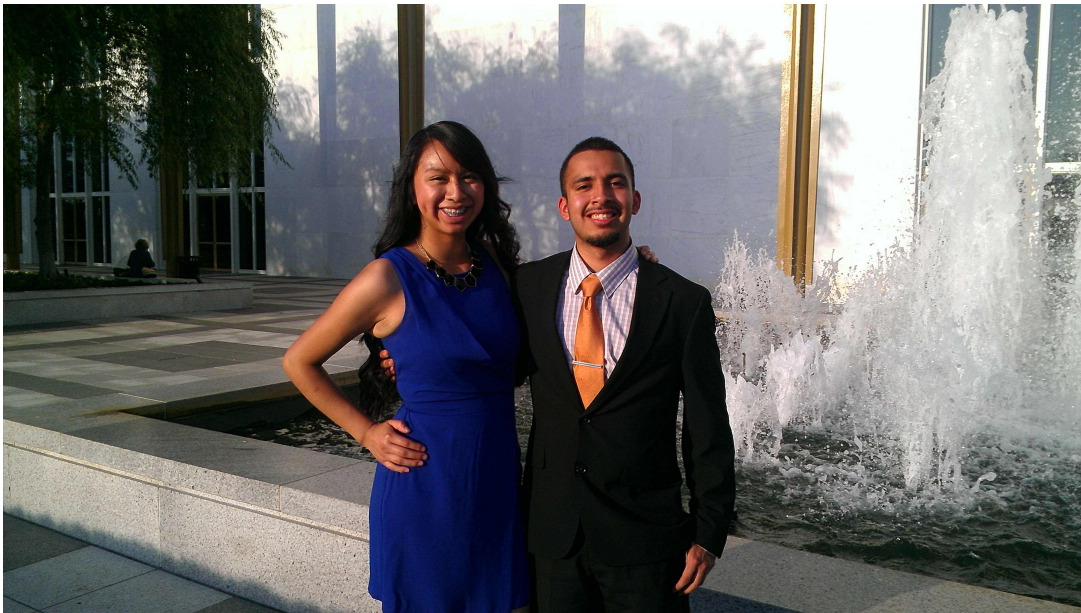


It is often the smallest of ideas that can lead to the biggest of empires
-Unknown

Well it's been a pretty slow week for me; the time is 6:46 PM on a beautiful Sunday afternoon here in the city of Washington DC. I say that the week has been quite slow for the reason that not much occurred at work except for Friday. Therefore, I will be brief with my work experiences and go more into depth over what occurred outside of work. On Monday after work, the intern class had the opportunity to go to the John F Kennedy center for performing arts to attend a salute for the Presidential Scholars of 2014. The salute included a performance by twenty of the presidential scholars, which involved a variety of different performances involving singing, tap dancing, and instrument playing. I was impressed with the performance not because the scholars performed at an exceptional level but because they were able to do so at such a young age. After a good two hours, the performance went to a close and the intern class decided to walk back to the dorms. However, Vianney, Alberto, and I decided to grab a late night snack at the local CVS Pharmacy and although the hours were late, we ultimately decided to watch a late night movie while indulging in some late night junk food.



On Tuesday not much occurred besides having some late night conversations with some of the intern class, and I won't go into depth on that day. Wednesday was a little

more exciting for the reason that Alberto and I went to go try out a new burger place that we had never heard of. The name of this place was Bobby's Burger Palace and when I first looked it up, I figured it would be your typical fast food burger joint. I asked Alberto if he wanted try this place out and he said he would like to go. After a ten-minute walk, we found the restaurant and I was curious of its layout because it clashed against my past perception of the place. It seemed to have a retro 70's feel to it due to its clashing colors, old school furniture, and music playlist. Upon realizing this, I felt a little iffy about the place, but I did decided to try it out in order to gain a new experience. The menu of the place was unique because it did not sell your typical hamburgers. For example, the Miami burger, which was the one that I ordered, came pressed with ham, pepper jack cheese, mustard, and pickles. It was a good learning experience eating that burger, but I can tell you that whenever you try new things, you either love it or hate it.

On Thursday, work was typical for me except for the fact that Senator Merkley's staff and I had the opportunity to give Capitol tours to an elementary class based in my home state of

Oregon. The experience with this tour taught me that if you overstress yourself whenever you're given a challenge, the barrier in the way of your success will only climb tremendously. Although the tour was quite stressful, I disciplined myself to keep calm and to think things out. I am happy to say that the Elementary class was happy with the tour and I myself was impressed with how well some of the students knew their history. After the tour, I went out to take my lunch break with my world famous sandwiches and chips; once I returned back to the office, the staff interns received a unique request. The staff informed us of an ice cream giveaway sponsored by some local ice cream companies in area. Back to my point, the staff asked us if we would like to go get them ice cream so that we may indulge in some much needed free ice cream. We all gladly accepted to bring ice cream; therefore, we brought a metal cart full of ice cream to the staff. There were a variety of flavors ranging from pistachio to mango ice cream; I just went on a whim when I chose my ice cream and I ultimately ended up with cinnamon roll flavored ice cream. It was nice to see that even though the staff members are highly educated people with highly regarded careers, they were all glad to indulge in some ice cream. Upon observing this, I came to realize that at the end of the day, when all is said and done, we are only human beings. Overall, the day went fairly well at work and once I returned to my dorm, I was only able to stay awake for a few hours before falling asleep for about 10 hours.

I could already tell that Friday was going to be a good day for the basic fact that Fridays in the office are considered semi-casual meaning that the staff are allowed to wear jeans with a collared shirt. After a few hours of working in the office, one of the staff members invited me to join him to a Hispanic student hearing. I accepted his invitation and little did I know that I would be attending a CHCI meeting that my fellow interns were also attending. I was happy to see them for the reason that I only get to socialize with them after work so you can say that seeing some friendly faces brought joy to my heart. The purpose of the meeting was to get us acquainted to many Hispanic staff members who work in Capitol Hill including the staff member who works in my office. Once the Friday workday was done, I decided to call my grandmother to see how she was doing. You cannot imagine the amount of joy in her voice when she heard me talking to her about how things were going in DC. I was extremely joyous to call her because she is after all, my mother's mother and without both of these women, who knows where I would have ended up in life. After finishing my conversation with my grandmother Alicia, I decided to text my fellow interns to see what they were up to; they explained to me that they were planning to go to a local jazz festival on the National Mall. I decided to walk over there and after walking for about thirty minutes, I reached the jazz festival; for some reason, I did not feel like attending the jazz festival, so I decided to walk back to my dorm. Upon walking back, I noticed a Smithsonian folk festival that was taking place nearby; the countries being represented were Kenya and China. Seeing as to how I did not eat for a good while, I went ahead and purchased some Chicken Low Mein with an ice cold coca cola. After buying the food, my next challenge was to figure out where to eat it; after a few minutes, I decided to walk to the Washington monument eat my food there. It was quite calming because I was able to absorb the day's rich warmth while indulging in some Chinese food in front of a nationally recognized monument that not many are fortunate enough to witness.

After having my fill of food, I decided that I was now going to walk back to my dorm; however, I had another change of thought and decided to go explore the west side of the city. While walking, I called my brother, Eduardo, to see how he was doing; our conversations tend to quite random for the reason that we can be talking about sports one second and then video games the next. After a good thirty minutes of speaking with him, we had to say our goodbyes for the

reason that he had to go to work in a few minutes. Once I hung up with him, I noticed a little ice cream shop called Gelateria Dolce Vita; I contemplated for a few minutes and then decided to try out the ice cream. I was so glad to see that Hispanics owned the shop because it nice to speak Spanish to those who truly know it. I ended up purchasing a coconut gelato because its taste reminds me of ice cream paletas that I always bought when I was back in the West Coast. Once I reached Georgetown, I came to realize that this the most beautiful part of the city due to its vast variety of local stores and restaurants. While exploring Georgetown, I decided to call my cousin Erik Galarza to see how he was doing. It was nice to hear that he has not changed one bit at all for the reason that whatever comes out of his mouth tends to make me laugh and chuckle. Our one-hour conversation revolved around him preparing for his senior year of high school. I gave him many tips over how he can conquer his final year such as by avoiding procrastination and more importantly, not to overstress over minor details. I was glad to hear that he was serious over what he needed to do because he tends to hang out with the wrong crowd and I always say that if he wants to achieve in life, he must be willing raise his levels of discipline and dedication. While I was talking with him, the neighborhood of Georgetown has some of the most beautiful



yet simple homes I have ever seen. It is a nice quiet neighborhood in Georgetown and I plan on taking many more trips to this area to see what other hidden secrets I can find.

When I finally returned to my dormitory late at night, I received news that my fellow interns were planning on going to Virginia to go paddle-boarding with Dr. Lisa Ramirez, Director of Migrant Education in the U.S. Department of Education. The following morning, the interns and I rode the metro all the way to Virginia where Dr. Ramirez picked us up. Our time at the river was incredibly fun because I had never rowed a boat in my life. The way the group split up was that Diana and Samantha decided to rent a rowboat while Elizabeth, Ariana, and I rented a three-person canoe; the rest of the group rented paddleboards. Even though I looked calm while rowing with the two girls, my heart was literally beating out of my chest because I was so nervous about falling in the water. After a good half-hour of rowing, we decided to catch up with the rest of the group of the river; little did we know that something would have occurred while on the river. It was funny because out of nowhere, our boat flipped upside down and we all fell into the river; my initial thought was "I can't believe we fell into the river". It was also funny for the reason that the three of us

attempted to take the boat back to shore with little success. That was pretty much the highlight of that moment and once all was done in the river; Dr. Ramirez was generous enough to let us visit

her home. The interns and Dr. Ramirez's family prepared freshly ground hamburgers which we all gladly indulged, but the highlight of the night was not the food, but the message that Dr. Ramirez and her husband gave to us.

We arrived at her house around 6 pm and we did not leave until the midnight hours and although the hours were great, they seemed to fly by because we were so engaged in the conversation. She spoke to us of her journey that led her into the life that she is living today and I have to say, she has been able to experience and overcome many hardships that many are able to overcome in their lifetime. I also loved how generous and humble they were with us, a group of kids who they did not know until yesterday. To get back on track, I came to realize that although the going may get tough, you must never give up in your dreams because if you do, then all the sacrifices that many gave for you will be in vain. It also important to look at a glass half full, because if you ever look at it half empty, then the hardships will prove to be too much for you. I was also glad to know that Dr. Ramirez is Greek sister for the reason that she is an alumni for Kappa Delta Chi whereas I am a brother of Omega Delta Phi; to give a little history lesson...OD-Phi and KDCHI were both founded in the same year at Texas Tech University which ultimately makes us sibling Greek organizations. After a meaningful and extraordinary night, it was ultimately time for us to return to dorms.

This morning, we did not leave our dorms until two in afternoon, but we decided to eat some Chinese in DC's Chinatown district. After eating some Shrimp Low Mein, we planned to



visit the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. It was interesting to see what the museum had to offer because I had never visited a museum in my life. To be brief, my favorite exhibits within the museum were the diamond and

Egyptian exhibits. Although this week started off slow, we were able to end it with a bang; although I get homesick, my new friends have been able to help me overcome this. It's funny how God has a plan for you; you may not think so, but there have been a number of coincidental circumstances in my life that have led me to the position where I am today. It's important to be

thankful for every day that you have because each day that we have to live is a gift and what good is to live if you always look at the glass half-empty than half-full? By the way, the quote on the top of paper tells me that no matter where your life began, no matter how you have lived it, you can always achieve your dreams to cause changes so great in this world that you can make history within it.