

**Crystal Gallegos**  
**The National HEP/CAMP Association Summer Internship**  
**Journal**  
**Week 4**

It seems like just yesterday I was getting off the plane at DCA to meet all of my fellow interns. Now we are half way into the internship; four weeks went by fast! Everyone says “time flies by when you are having fun.” That has never been more true than it has this summer.

The learning and enjoyment in my office is non-stop. Everyday is different and full of so much new knowledge. This week I continued to work on my assigned tasks such as the “Good News Presentation” for the Annual HEP/CAMP directors meeting and the Competition Analysis. Lisa invites me to meetings with her, which I really enjoy. Another thing that I did this week at my work is attend one of Lisa’s speaking engagements with high school students from Texas. For this event, I also had the chance to help another person in the office prepare talking points for her. Another event which we are also preparing briefing material for is a speaking engagement that the Secretary of Education, John King, has with the Ivy League Project. The Ivy League Project is a program that helps high achieving Latino students go to Ivy League universities all across the country. It is really an honor to have the opportunity be a part of the planning for events like these.

Another huge and very important highlight of this week was the Tri-Caucus Reception that we had the opportunity to go to with CHCI. Interns from the Congressional Black Caucus also attended along with Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus interns. Most importantly, influential political leaders attended the conference such as Congressman Luis Gutierrez who represents Illinois’ 4<sup>th</sup> District. Another person that I ran into at the conference was a Latina leader from my state of Idaho. I met Krista Bustamante at the Idaho Hispanic Youth Symposium where she was serving as a coordinator and volunteer for that event. She is currently working here in D.C.

During the week one of my friends who is doing the SAF internship was in town. Fortunately, I was able to spend some time with her and show her around town. We ate at a delicious Latin American restaurant called Lauriol Plaza. It served as a good remedy for homesickness (I miss my mom’s food).

CHCI programming this past Friday was one of my favorites because we had the opportunity to participate in discussions regarding Latino taboo’s. One of the topics we discussed is assimilation. It was interesting to see all the point of views of my peers. It definitely made me more aware of the way they feel about their Latinidad. From that discussion I learned that everyone has a different Latino story that deserves respect no matter if society considers them “more” or “less” Latin@.

On Saturday we volunteered at a La Casa Ruby. It is a “Bilingual Multicultural organizations that provided life saving services to the most vulnerable of the LGBT community”. This experience provided the opportunity to help communities that I otherwise would not have been able to help. After a long morning of volunteering, we ate some delicious Dominican food at a restaurant called Los Hermanos (Colombia Heights Metro Stop).

To finish off my Saturday, I spent the evening and Sunday morning with my sister. My sister Cruz came to D.C. for a conference she had to come to for her work. I took her to get dinner at my favorite D.C restaurant, El Chalan, where *Pollo Saltado* became my new favorite dish. Afterwards we went down to the National Mall. As it was getting darker, it was magical to see the fire flies buzzing around us. It was truly amazing to be able to share a piece of my experience in D.C. to someone so close to me, my family.



Lauriol Plaza (Dish: Tijuana)



Aleya and Karina (SAF intern) enjoying chips and salsa @ Lauriol Plaza



Latinas from Idaho representing in D.C. Maria Madrgal on the left is also a CHCI intern from Paul, Idaho. Krista Bustamante pictured in the middle.



A fun afternoon walking home after Friday Programming with the CHCI



Left: My hungry sister Cruz at El Chalan ready to enjoy delicious food after a long flight.



Dominican Food at Los Hermanos