

Jasmine Meraz

Week 6 Journal

As we came to another week at the office, I could not imagine a better week to be here. My week started with a briefing on the Blue Campaign from the Department of Health and Human Services to raise awareness about human trafficking. This was something I was really interested in because I have always wanted to learn more about it and also what could I do to end something as heartbreaking as this that happens to thousands of women and men. This week, I also had the great opportunity to meet Giev Kashkooli, Vice President of the United Farm Workers (UFW), that was started by our very own Cesar Chavez over 50 years ago. Meeting Giev was amazing because we were able to tell our stories of our parents and the struggle of being children of immigrant parents and how these obstacles push us to want to achieve more than we can imagine.



The opportunity to meet such a great activist for my community and many of ours around the west coast made me grateful to meet him and know he is there to help my Latino community in need of justice in their work place. I know that we can all do something to help our families to better their work environment and I couldn't be more excited to help UFW in any way that I can.

The weekend was definitely the best time to be in Washington DC since it was 4th of July weekend. Saturday we all went to a BBQ with other Latino interns and staff members working on the Hill. It was amazing to see so many Latinos in one setting talking about their passions and their work. After spending some quality time with our fellow Latino brothers and sisters, we headed off to get groceries for the holiday that was much needed. On Sunday we were invited to one of the intern supervisor's home for a vision board party. When I first heard of a vision board party, I thought it was about all of us coming up with ideas together. Little did I know that it was about ourselves, what we wanted to do with our lives, what we wanted to work on physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally, etc. For my vision board, I decided to dedicate to everything I must work on before making any plans of where I want to go in life, think more of it as short term goals for long term results. My vision board was based on things I must work on within myself to help me grow as a person, as a woman, and as a first generation Latina going through the higher education system. Before I can plan my life, I must take a step back and recognize the things that are holding me back so I can confront them and acknowledge that I need change in my life to become a more open person. After doing this vision board, I believe that I now know what I need to do to become a better student, daughter, woman, mentor, and teacher. Not taking a picture of it is a personal choice I made which is why there will be no presentation of it. I must think of myself first and not let outside minds contribute to what I need to work on for myself. After 18 years of spending my 4th of July with my family and best friend, this year, at 19 I had to go through a difficult moment of knowing that my tradition changed. However, I did get to spend with a great group of people that made my experience worth it. We all got ready and headed out around 12:30pm to sit down for 9 hours to watch the famous fireworks from the Abraham Lincoln Memorial. Unfortunately, for us the rain from back home followed us and we got rained

most of the day and we had to go back and change into suitable clothes. Although the weather was not on our side, just being able to say that we watched the fireworks from the Lincoln Memorial and got to be around great people made me feel like home. It made my experience better and I couldn't think to be with any other group of people to experience this moment. I'm grateful that I have this amazing opportunity to live something as great as this. I will forever remember this and cherish it for many years to come.

