

Weekly Journal 7

Friday July 8, 2016

For Friday programming we visited Lincoln's cottage on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home. We learned about the history of the Soldiers' Home and how it came to be a getaway for a few of our presidents, especially for Lincoln who used this cottage the most extensively of all the presidents. Lincoln stayed in this cottage for several summers, even during the Civil War, where it served as a great lookout spot into Confederate territory. We were joined by Global Jewish Advocacy Group, AJC, for our programming. I was able to meet and learn about other interns of Jewish background. We talked about issues that both Latinos and Jews face and we were able to draw many similarities. Instead of focusing on differences that divide us, we were able to see that we were more similar than we may have thought and thus we were able to bridge the divide that may have previously existed. We ended the day with a Shabbat dinner, which is usually a Friday dinner where the family gets together. It is a Jewish tradition that they shared with us. We were able to share some of our own customs. It was truly a beautiful evening with AJC.





Saturday and Sunday July 9-10, 2016

It was about 6:15 am when the sun poked its way through the clouds onto my face, forcing me to get up. I looked out the bus window and the very first thing I saw was Freedom Tower. I did not know at first that the tall skyscraper was Freedom Tower, I just knew that I was looking at New York City. I had never seen New York City before. Before I can get a good look, we went into a long, dark tunnel. When we came out the other side, we were in the heart of New York City. When we walked out of the bus station, there were large screens everywhere. Lights were flashing all around me, I could not process everything that was before me; I was in Times Square.

In New York, we visited the 9/11 Memorial, Liberty State Park, Brooklyn Bridge, Little Italy, Chinatown, Central Park, Wall Street, Times Square and last, but certainly not least, the Statue of Liberty. Seeing the State of Liberty was special experience in itself. The Statue once welcomed thousands of immigrants into the country. It represents “the poor-huddled masses”. I come from a family of immigrants so I am familiar with the immigrant story. It is a moment that I believe no immigrant forgets. It is arguably the most iconic image of the United States; it signifies that you have arrived to a new land, a land of opportunities. The Statue symbolizes a dream, the American Dream, of being able to move to a new country to better the life of oneself and one’s family. The fact that I was able to travel to New York because I was interning in D.C. for the summer demonstrates that my family’s dream is being realized. I understood that I reap the

benefits of my parents sacrifice and hardship. While they arrived here with a dream, I get to have the opportunities they never had. I am and will forever be grateful for my parents and I hope that one day I can help them have a taste of their own dreams, no matter how briefly.

New York was an amazing experience and I am glad I was able to share this experience with amazing people.



