



Week #8 -- Perla

The final week came far more quickly than I imagined it would. On Monday I had the opportunity to go on a run around the monuments. It was a fun experience. On Tuesday us interns had the opportunity to take pictures with books that we are currently reading for the Read Where You Are event that the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics participated in. During lunch, us interns headed towards

one of the museums and took pictures on a shady bench with our favorite books. My friends were reading *The Alchemist*. Among the books was *My Beloved World* by Sotomayor, of which I had the privilege of getting ahold of an autographed copy. I also had the opportunity to purchase the book *The Alchemist* and am currently reading it during my free time. The park which we took pictures in was just beautiful and the weather was fantastic. That same afternoon I left work a bit earlier and headed towards the Capitol for my second meeting with Senator Murray, although this time I would actually have the opportunity to speak with her directly instead of just her staff. During our brief meeting with Senator Murray and United Farmworkers, our goal was to share with her the unjust working conditions that I, among two of the National Migrant Head Start Program interns, endured while working in the fields. What we asked for was not complicated; we want farmworkers to receive shade and water. These farmworkers work hard to harvest the fruits and vegetables we eat each day, in weather that is usually above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, for very little pay. These workers are exposed to harsh working conditions on a daily basis. It is difficult to understand why they are not allotted the same rights that other hardworking Americans have. Why is it that in America a human being who provides for our country does not have access to basic necessities,



like fresh water and shade? Why is it that we do not take the time to recognize that the people who pick our food under difficult circumstances deserve to have equal rights? This brings up yet another question I have, why does a horse in California have more rights than a human being in Washington State? I truly hope that more people will be willing to work for this cause, and although I know it may

take time to have the law pass nationwide, I know it will be a worthwhile journey. On Wednesday we had the Farewell Reception for CHCI. Our reception was wonderful and we were able to hear congressional staff and the advice they had to give. This week has been a bittersweet one. For one I am excited to go back home and see my family before I return to college, yet it will be difficult for me to leave my

co-workers. I enjoyed living in Washington DC. It was a place that challenged me and pushed me continuously. Regarding the reception, the main message that stood out was that we interns are capable of creating positive change. Hearing the speakers that day made me realize that although I may be studying medicine, I can still be involved in policy. I was fortunate enough to have such caring coworkers who came to the reception and celebrated with me the end of my internship program. The advice that my coworkers have given me has been wonderful and I am very appreciative of their support. On Thursday, it was my last day in the office. I am thankful for the support of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and their continuous efforts to providing me with tasks that challenged me. I am looking forward to continuing my work with them. My plans with one of the WHIEEH staff is to create Google hangouts which will provide parents, students, as well as leaders in communities, with information regarding STEM, Early Learning,

Post-Secondary and College Attainment. We will also focus on the needs of DACA recipients as well.



When I applied for the internship I had two major goals in mind. One was to find ways to implement safer working conditions for farmworkers and the second was to find ways in which I can help migrant students gain a post-

secondary education. I am glad to say that I was able to begin my work in both areas and now have proper connections which will help facilitate the process. This experience is one that I will never forget; it strengthened me, and taught me that hard work and perseverance will help me become closer to achieving my goals. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share with others just how wonderful the CAMP program is and how essential it is to the success of so many deserving students nationwide. A very BIG thank you to all of those who believe in what this internship can do for us CAMP students and for believing in our abilities.

I'd like to leave all of you with a quote I stumbled upon not too long ago, by First Lady Michelle Obama:

“When you have worked hard and done well and walked through the doorway of opportunity - you do not slam it shut behind you. You reach back and give others the same chances that helped you succeed.”

During my time here in DC, I have come to the realization that it is no longer about me, rather, the migrant students whom are still caught up in the vicious cycle of working in fields. I want to break the chains and help uplift students and show them that education has been the key for me, and can be for them as well. This internship was so much more than I ever imagined it could be, I will forever be grateful towards the CAMP program and their efforts to help students like me turn their dreams into realities.