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HEP/ CAMP Intern

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Week 1

It has been exactly a week since I arrived to Washington D.C. for my internship. I still remember the day I got a called from Jaime Barajas who is the director of the College Assistant Migrant Program (CAMP) telling me that I was going to spend my summer in Washington D.C. because I was chosen to be interning in the Office of Migrant Education. It was a simple call that changed my life. It was the first time since I moved from Mexico four years ago that I felt like all my hard work as paying off. It was an opportunity to show my family, friends and migrants students that there is still hope for us no matter all the barriers we all encounter as migrants. It was not only a life changing experience for me but for all that people that believe I can accomplish the so called American Dream.

On June 6, 2015, I took my flight to D.C. I was extremely nervous because I didn't know what to expect. I was extremely surprised that there are so many trees and green landscape in Washington. Even though Washington D.C. is a city it is not all covered with



buildings like many of us think. Patrick Doone was extremely welcoming and made me feel like we knew each other for a long time. Patrick took me and the other interns to see the White House. It was an amazing feeling to see the White House and think that President Obama was so close to us. I was extremely excited and proud to be standing there representing my family and Washington State University. I have to say that I feel very lucky because since day one I felt a really strong connection with all the interns. In our first night in

the D.C. we decided to go to Johnny Rockets to get a milk shake and get to know each other better. We are all different in many ways, but also have a lot in common. We have a lot that makes us different from the rest. We all have worked very hard to accomplish our dreams and be successful. I am very lucky to have such wonderful strong interns with me in this journey.

Patrick Doone and Betsy took us to explore the city on Sunday. We got to see the Supreme Court and the Capitol Hill. They are beautiful buildings and it's overwhelming to think that in those buildings many decisions are taken that have an effect in the life of each citizen. Sunday was my favorite day of the whole week because thanks to Betsy, we all had the chance to tell our stories after dinner.

We started Orientation with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI). It was very helpful because we had many workshops that helped us be ready for our internship as well as the life in D.C. I was very inspired by Juan Sepulveda, who is the Senior Vice President of PBD. He is a very successful man, but what inspired me the most about him was not that he was successful, but that he was not scared of taking risks. He is not scared of changing his plans as he goes. This made me realize that to be successful we don't always have to have a plan and if we do, we need to be flexible as we change our plans. I learned that it is OK to not have control of everything.



Coming from a small town in Washington where we don't use the Metro, getting to D.C. and having to use one was very scary. I was very nervous but as the days went I started to understand more how the Metro really worked. Miguel and I decided to go to Walmart to buy food for the week. Food is very expensive in D.C. and since we want to go to New York we are trying to save as much as we can. We decided to go to the Walmart close to Union Station. As we arrived to Union Station we decided to ask one of the workers if we were in our right way and he said that there was no Walmart close from there and we needed to get back in the train. Very confused we did as we were told. We had been in Walmart before with Patrick and Betsy but we thought we made a mistake. We took the two more trains and were completely lost. We decided to get out at George Ave. Thankfully a Hispanic man and his daughter decided to help us. I think we looked extremely confused because he asked us where we were going. We told him and he explained to us that Walmart was still far away and we needed to take the bus. Very discouraged Miguel and I waited for the bus. We left our dorms at 8 p.m. it was 10 p.m. two hours after and we still couldn't find Walmart. We took bus 79 and looked outside the window until we saw Walmart. Relieved that we had found our destination we went in to shop. Our return was quite interesting. We were waiting for the next bus not knowing if it was going to take us back home. We decided to take it anyways and just before getting in the bus our bags ripped. I managed to put some things inside and carried others in my hand. Another Hispanic man told us where to exit the bus and somehow we got to back to our dorms almost 5 hours later. That night I went to bed extremely proud of being Hispanic/Latina and knowing that wherever I go I will always find a Hispanic/Latino willing to help me.



I am very excited to start working with the Office of Migrant Education. I had the pleasure of meeting the team I am going to be working with. Liza Ramirez is a wonderful strong woman that I have admired for quite some time and I am extremely excited to work and learn from her and her whole team. I am even more excited to learn more about the College Assistant Migrant Program (CAMP) because I been part of this program this past year. I am extremely thankful I was part of it because it helped me to succeed in college during my first year. I had the support I needed since the beginning and CAMP became the family I never had in the U.S. I know I will learn a lot from each of them and I can't wait to start working.

I decided to do community service my first weekend in Washington D.C. I am very passionate about helping the community and as soon as I hear they were going to be helping



migrant Latinos I wanted to part of it. Even though I was really tired because of Orientation and I just wanted to sleep, I signed up to do community service with the Head Start program. My duty was to attend the presentation that they were having for the Hispanic community to inform them about DACA and DAPA and I needed to translate the forms to see if they qualify for the program. I was thinking that it was going to be a long tiring day and I was preparing myself for it. But to my surprise it was one of the best experiences of my life. Many parents went to the meeting because they are the leaders of their communities and want to make a change. They want go back to where they live and shared what they learned. They were excited to be there and be part of this. They felt like they were changing history. Many times we think that the Hispanic community is not doing anything to educate themselves and make a change, but the truth is that they are getting more and more involved in the community than what we all think. I am very passionate about immigration reforms and seeing the hard work of these parents makes me believe that we still have a chance to change the world and the life of many undocumented immigrants. Let's start making the change today.

Lastly, I just want to thank Patrick and Betsy for being so welcoming, supportive, caring and wonderful to me and all the interns. I miss both of you already and I am eager to see you in July.