

The National HEPCAMP Association DC Internship

Weekly Journal Entry

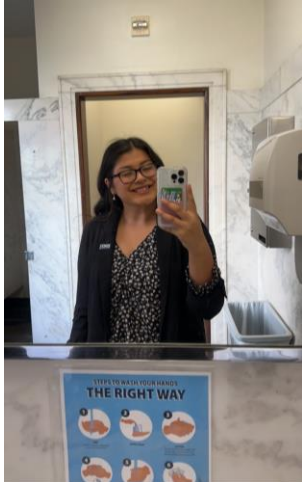
Name: Annai Aguilera Gonzalez

Date(s): 6/5/2023 - 6/10/2023

Monday

“First Day of Work!”

Although I didn't have to leave my dorm till 10 a.m., I was up and ready by 7:30 a.m. The nerves definitely made me lose sleep, so I ended up arriving at my office an hour early and spending that hour roaming the halls and letting the excitement sink in. I spent the majority of my first day reading a big internship training binder and getting to meet the staff, interns, and the office dog Bernie! Whether it was getting adjusted to my new office desk or keeping an eye out for Bernie to not eat my food, I had a pretty good first day of work! I got off after 6 p.m. and for the rest of the night I used it to catch up on other responsibilities and prep for the next day of work.



Tuesday

“My First Phone Call!”

Today I worked my first 9-5. Since I was the first out of the rest of the interns to arrive, I got to sit at a desk with a working phone! That meant I'd be answering my first constituent phone calls, and to my surprise I answered 5! Granted two of the five, were no responses on the other end but I still answered them! There were a couple bumps I ran into when I was answering them but it was a learning process. I also got to write my first one-page report on an issue, signed up for my first hearing, and learned so much more! I also ate some yummy cake one of the staff members brought in!

After work, I went straight to dinner hosted by some of the members of the United Farm Workers. I met with the first Latina and immigrant woman to become president of a national union in the United States, Teresa Romero, current President of the United Farm Workers (UFW). As well as a good friend now, Giev Kashkooli the 2nd Vice President of UFW, and my University of Idaho CAMP Alumni Mentor and Political Legislative Director for UFW, Areli Arteaga! We ate some yummy sushi, and some interns and I got to share our stories with them and reiterate the importance there is to have representation of migrant/Latinx children in powerful spaces!



Wednesday

“Big Projects!”

During work, I was able to attend my first hearing! I also got to start on a lot of great projects and on one of them specifically I was able to use my dad’s expertise in my research. After getting the greenlight on being able to do this, once I got home, I called my dad right away! It was such a special feeling being able to bring my dad onto this project and represent him in some way.



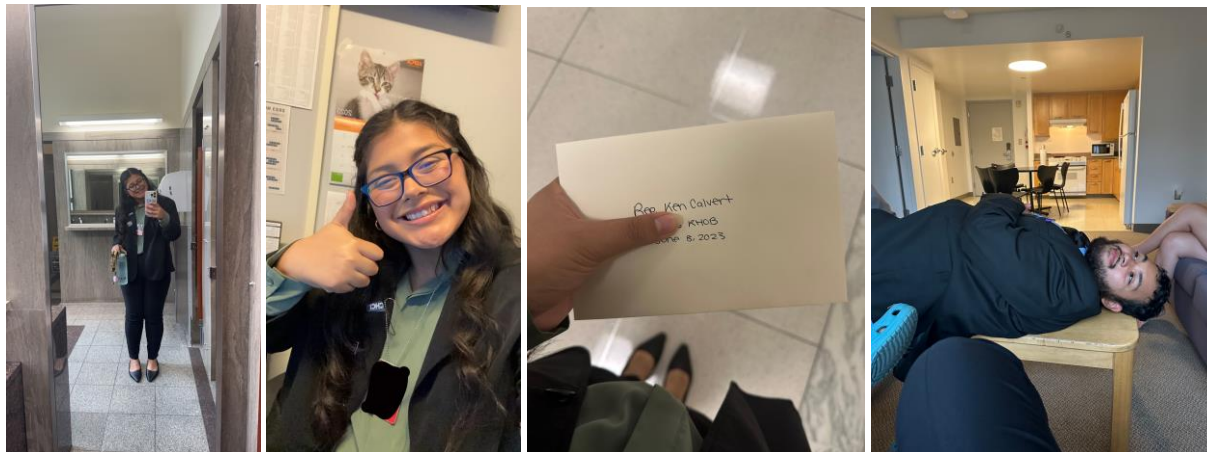
Thursday

“New Building Unlocked!”

As nervous as I was to start press-clips by myself this morning, it felt so good being able to get it done. Though I definitely learned quickly it is not a one-person job, and when Owen (another intern) arrived at the office, I had never been happier.

Throughout the work-day, I also got to go to an event packing up goodies for the United Service Organizations with Owen and our Congressman Scott Peters. I even got to explore a new House of Representatives building, Rayburn, when I went to deliver birthday cards.

After work, I made dinner with some friends and we debriefed everyone's day. In the picture below you will see my friend Ismael after a long day of work.



Friday

“Madam Chair”

Friday was our first day of programming at CHCI! For today's agenda we were going to have a legislative hearing simulation and government class with our GW professor Nicole Bartels. For our legislative hearing simulation everyone got assigned as either a Democratic/Republican Legislature, or a lobbyist from a special interest group. Our bill to discuss was a Banning Assault Weapons, and being assigned as Republican Chair, it was definitely an interesting role to play. Though I had a lot of fun being chair, and our cohort all brought their A-game so it was even more fun and engaging! After our class portion of programming we got to explore different leadership exercises with our CHCI staff.

Once programming was over, I headed home and grabbed some pizza with some friends and just relaxed for the rest of the night.



Weekend

“My First Pride!”

Saturday was full of so many adventures! We woke up bright and early to head to the U.S. Botanic Garden before we headed to the Pride Parade and festivities. The Botanic Garden was beautiful and full with so many exotic and unique plants. It was so cool getting to experience all the different climates they replicated to keep the plants alive (tropical, dry, ect.). When we finished taking hundreds of photos at the garden, we headed to Starbucks and then Dupont Circle to go watch the Pride Parade.

This was my first Pride Parade and it was so amazing and heartwarming, and I wouldn't have wanted a different first time Pride Parade anywhere else. Seeing all the love, joy, and support made me so happy. My friends and I came to the parade with really not that much color and ended up leaving decked out. I even got glitter tapped on my face, and although I will be seeing glitter everywhere for a couple of days, it was so worth it! Safe to say, this was definitely a core memory for me.

Once we came back from the parade, my friends and I just ate and played card games because the next morning we had to be up by 6 a.m. to volunteer for our CHCI 5K. As early as it was, the 5k was really fun. I got to direct runners along their path and just cheer them on. After the race was over we got to eat, take pictures, and dance! The D.J. had an amazing playlist!

