

Devin McMahon, NH – 2015

I have been to Washington, D.C. several times before, but never have I experienced the country's capital as I did during Washington Week. What made this trip unique to me is that I was not a tourist roaming the streets, but rather an impassioned young person learning the ins and outs of what it takes to run this great country. Each day, each location, and each speaker added to the inspiration of the week, and built upon the last to leave an undying impression of the district, our government, and the future of this nation. I left with a renewed faith in our country and the potential of the coming generations to truly work as one republic in order to make change that will benefit the world.

Washington Week 2015 was without a doubt one of the most phenomenal and eye-opening weeks of my life. I went into the week filled with apprehensions about my future that I am sure many other seniors were facing at the time, and I left feeling encouraged that I would be a successful and contributing adult in whatever field I choose to pursue. By the time Washington Week came to a close, I knew that I would incorporate my passion for public service into my future. Perhaps one day I will even run to be an elected official in Washington, after gaining the real world experience that would qualify me to represent the people of this country in the legislative, and possibly even the executive branches. Before this week, I believed that my future would be limited to the career and college decisions I am making today. After this week, I know that my future is truly limitless and will not be restricted by the foundation I am building for myself in the coming years.

Hearing from some of the men and women who have made names for themselves in Washington, D.C., the country, and for a few even the world, brought my perspective on politics down to reality. I had always seen being a member of congress as an elite position that everyday people could never hold. The fact that the people running this country are no different than my family, friends, mentors, and even myself was a concept that never hit me until this week, when the curtains were brought down and I was able to touch the world of politics so unfamiliar to much of the country. I met my senators, the president of the World Bank, Justice Breyer, and President Obama, and contrary to my original thinking, they were all no different from myself and the other students attending the program. Just like all of us today, those important leaders were once trying to figure out friendships, college, and the future. They once had dreams and goals to make an impact on this country and world. They had the passion, drive, and commitment to step up and achieve those dreams and goals, just as all of the student representatives participating in Washington Week do. Those leaders would one day be us, and we proved that throughout the week in our conversations, accomplishments, and obvious passion for creating change.

More than the speakers and the experiences, though, what made this trip unique for me were all of the students from across the country, Korea, and Germany, who came together and have created friendships that will last a lifetime. I was impassioned by the Week and all of its amazing activities, but my peers inspired me. What each individual has already accomplished is indicative of the true potential we have to benefit the world, and that each of us worked together despite differences in opinions and backgrounds shows that our generation will work as one to lead this country. They are what made my week amazing beyond the incredible experiences of the program, and I have left excited to help them to benefit this world in the future.