



Kara took a moment from her busy touring schedule to put her feet up and take a phone call in the mock Oval Office at the Wax Museum.

A Washington Youth Tour Experience:

Father's Day Spent With Fathers of Us All

By Kara Bryce

Once in a life time, a dream comes true, a learning adventure, a new view, or in more direct terms, my week in Washington, D.C. I gained appreciation for our nation-wide cooperatives and national government, and now when I gaze at our brilliant stars and stripes, I feel something more tangible and honor it more. There's greatness about our country and D.C. helped me to see it.

The wars and presidential memorials concentrated these patriotic emotions. Sunday night, June 15, we visited the Vietnam Wall. It was Father's Day and to honor the

veterans, yellow and pink roses lined the polished granite walls. The humid air was mixed with the roses' sweet aroma. As I walked and read names, the wheels turned in my head. These men and all the others we had "visited" were not just the fathers of the people who had left roses; they were the "fathers" of all of us. They are the ancestors of our country and devoted their lives to preserve the things in life I value the most. I've heard stories, read books, and listened to speakers on feeling patriotism, but it never really clicked until I experienced it myself.

The congressional visit was educational. We met with a representative's staff member and asked lots of questions about new bills and proposals. I discovered that if I have a problem serious enough that I want to speak out for or against, I can get my voice heard. I made a goal to keep up with what's happening in our government and be an influence by being an educated voter.

D.C. was F-U-N too! We visited as much of the Smithsonian as we could fill our eyes with, took a Potomac river boat ride into the moon light, ate lunch at Gadsby's Tavern (which we learned is haunted), and met tons of great people. One of my favorite museums was Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum. I got to take a picture with George Washington and prop my feet up on the presidential desk! The military parade really took the cake, too. There is just something great about gun drills, organized rhythmic march and men in uniform. During the Youth Day activities and all week, we met youth from other states to trade pins and stickers. It was amusing to tell others about brown, dry Arizona and brag about our beautiful sunsets. Some were amazed that cottontail rabbits and cacti really do live and grow here. It was also cool to hear the contrast as they described their homes.

The Washington Youth Tour enriched my point of view about our nation. It helped me gain greater appreciation for our history and raise my awareness of our nation today. The tour was incredible, but what I took away from it was even more outstanding.