

Annie Stockham
Barron Collier High School

Summer at Georgetown

The Summer National Security and Counter Intelligence Institute at Georgetown University was truly an exciting week. I am so glad I was selected for this humbling experience. I learned so many things, like how our country protects its borders (as the course would suggest). As part of the curriculum, we got to hear lectures from people who have worked in the CIA, FBI, and even the NSA. We got to hear a range of lectures, from biometrics to demographics to terrorism, and from a range of accredited speakers. We got to visit the National Cryptologic Museum, International Spy Museum, and the House and Senate Galleries in the Capitol Building. The day we visited the Capitol, the new healthcare bill was being debated upon, and we got to hear from Bernie Sanders himself! It was an exciting moment that Democrats and Republicans both were appreciative of. It's not everyday you get to see or hear from such an influential person in your government.

Every night, we had a two hour block to work on our capstone projects. Basically, we were separated into groups of about 10, and were assigned an agency. Our task was simple; we had a budget we needed to cut. We were faced with challenges like making judgement calls on what projects were too risky to keep and which were too risky to get rid of. At the end of the week, we gave a presentation to the class, and our capstone project leader played the role of the Director of National Security, who oversees the Intelligence Community.

Apart from the awesome learning experience, I got to make great new friends! I went to Georgetown as the only person from Naples, and I ended up not having a roommate. At that point, I wasn't expecting to make any meaningful or long lasting relationships, but I could not have been more wrong. I made friends with people all over the country, from New Jersey to California, and all over the world, from Italy to Japan. The sheer number of kids from foreign countries surprise me; I hadn't thought about how this course could translate to people from other nations. It was so interesting to hear their opinions on the lecture, because they have their home country in their best interests.

The week was jam-packed with lectures and field trips, so I didn't think I would have a lot of time to explore the city of Georgetown. Again, I was wrong. We had long breaks for lunch and dinner, and had time before curfew to explore the campus and parts of the city. This really set in the "college experience," and going into college next year, it was something I needed. My mom wasn't around to guide me along, and she won't be when I leave for college, wherever I end up. This week showed me that I will be able to handle it, and was a huge relief. Overall, the week was amazing, and I would like to thank the Naples Council on World Affairs for this opportunity of a lifetime.