

**THE NATIONAL SOCIETY
OF
THE COLONIAL DAMES OF AMERICA**
National Patriotic Service Committee Congressional Seminar Project

THE 2009 WASHINGTON WORKSHOPS EXPERIENCE
(Excerpts taken from reports of the 2009 participants)

I truly learned an immense amount of information on U.S. history, Washington D.C. itself, and about myself and my interests. The hands on experience was better than anything I imagined.

I was severely nervous and reluctant to attend the workshop...but to tell you the truth, I loved it. I learned about myself, developed a confidence in myself about my future. I loved every second...it should be two weeks not just one. I made a promise to myself that I will never again be scared of a new experience.

It was an opportunity of a lifetime, one that most of my peers will never experience. Washington Workshops was a stepping stone into an independent life.

Washington Workshops opened my eyes to a side of American I had never seen and showed me that it is an extremely difficult task to manage such an enormously diverse and large country (contrary to the rather simplistic opinions one may hear in the media.)

This trip has made me want to become more politically informed, definitely. I've been reading the newspaper and political blogs since I got home, something I've never done before.

The best part about the trip was meeting and interacting with so many bright minds from all over the United States.

Although our committee meetings could be very heated and even frustrating, it was fascinating to realize that our own debates were not all that different from the same discussions happening on Capitol Hill.

I will share this experience with my children and my grandchildren because it has made a large impact on my life. Thank you for sponsoring one of the greatest weeks of my life.

I learned many things a student cannot learn out of a textbook. Sometimes observation is the key to understanding history.

It was not the typical tour-bus-stop-and-go sort of visitation, but, rather, involved substantive examinations of the historical significance of the city, and by extension, the nation. I just wish I could have stayed in D.C. longer!

I met a ton of intelligent, fun, and generally pleasant people, and learned, much to my amazement, that members of the U.S. Congress, specifically the House of Representatives, are actually incredibly accessible.

Our counselors seemed to understand the teenage need for space and gave us plenty of time to take in the sights while being unencumbered by constant "tour guiding" or calls to "stick together."

What I found to be most informative was not the places we visited, but rather the speakers who came to us.

The friendliness of the students from around the country dispelled any reservations I might have had. We shared meals, conversations, laughter, and a sense of camaraderie that's rare.

I'm already telling all my friends to enter the contest. The Congressional Seminar was a wonderful week, and I really think the perspectives I discovered will continue to influence me for years to come.

I liked the fact that professional dress is required. People look at you differently if you are dressed up.

#