

As Promised, here is the update from itsnotwhoiam.com and my very successful trip to Washington D.C.

Sara-Elizabeth Goes To Washington
March 28 to April 2, 2008

I just spent five incredible days in Washington, D.C. representing the Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern New York. My trip started early Friday Morning on March 28, as my parents, two sisters, Machele and Kymmie, and I drove from our home in Gardiner, NY to our Nation's Capital. We arrived in at the Marriott Key Bridge Hotel in the early afternoon. The staff was friendly and helpful. We quickly unpacked, toured the hotel, and changed our clothes to attend a VIP dinner in the Ronald Reagan Building for the Epilepsy Foundation. This was my first trip on the metro, and it was packed with people. However, once we got to the reception, I was happy to see Susan from the Foundation because she was someone I knew. There was a lot of food and I got to meet three different players from the NY Jets, and actor Greg Grunberg from NBC's Heroes. Gary talked about his son Jake's battle with epilepsy, and how it did not stop him from living his life. I have the same attitude.

On Saturday morning, my family went to the National Walk. I could not believe how many people were there! I've been to walks before, but never one so immense! My family and I paraded through the walk with me and Daryl holding the Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern NY's Banner. Darryl is from Albany. It was really cool to have a walk right in front of the Washington Monument! My family and I had made up really bright yellow t-shirts that said Sara's Walk 2008 on them. We were not hard to spot in the crowd. After the walk we met our friend Scott who now lives in Washington. We went to lunch, the Spy Museum, and The National Art Gallery. Anyone who knows me, knows that I hate too much exercise, so I was done walking by then and happy to go back to the hotel and swim.

Sunday morning was the "Official" check in point for the Kids Speak Up program. My father registered us early, and we then went to the zoo. Of course, I liked the reptile room the best. The rest of my family liked the Pandas the most. At 5 p.m., the program began. Joyce Bender started it off. She told everyone in the room about how we were all champions for what we were trying to accomplish and she told everyone what I had done for epilepsy awareness so far. I was so shocked, and have no idea how she even found this out. She gave me a big hug and said I was awesome. She is awesome too!

On Monday, I spent the entire day with all the kids from the Kids Speak Up program. We discussed matters for Capital Hill. I made a friend from Alabama named Kelsey. She is my age, and we spent the entire day together. Mighty Mike from the Harlem Wizards came and showed us some basketball tricks. He is a nice guy. Kelsey filmed him on her camera. I also met and talked with Senator Tony Coelho, he helped write the original ADA Law in 1999 and he talked about how he wants to see the law restored to its original intent. We learned how to speak to Congress, what to say, and wear. We also received DVDs about epilepsy. After we all ate dinner at a cocktail hour together, we then got to take a bus tour around the capital. I got to see the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Roosevelt Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, and The White House. My favorite was the Lincoln Memorial. On the ride back to the hotel, the driver made a turn too close to the hotel and ripped the fire hydrant right out of the ground!

Tuesday morning was my big day on Capital Hill. I had written my speech in advance and practiced it many times before we went to the Hill. In my speech I talked about the Epilepsy Foundations Message to Congress, which includes the ADA Restoration Act (H.R. 3195), the Americans with Disabilities Act Restoration Act (S. 1881) and the VA Epilepsy Centers of Excellence Act of 2007. I met Senator Clinton's aide, Elizabeth Lee first. She offered me a job as a lobbyist. I thanked her for the ADA Restoration Act, and voiced how I felt about the soldiers coming back with TBI and needing our help as well. She took notes, and posed for a picture with

me. Next we met with Senator Schumer's aide, Stacey Warady I spoke again, and thanked the senator for the co-sponsor of the bill as well. I was pleased with my two senatorial meetings. We also saw Senator Ted Kennedy in the elevator! Then we went off to the other side of the hill to meet with Kirsten Gillibrand's aide, Jill Greco, and Maurice Hinchey's aide, Terra Sabag. These meetings also went well. I kept adding different things at each one. I wanted them to know that I was a child with a voice and needed to be heard. They heard me! Both Senators and both Members of Congress as supporting these causes and I encouraged them all to get other members of our government to join them.

I spent five whirlwind days in Washington, D.C. I met so many new people, and felt that when I spoke to the Senators, and Congress, that I was really listened to, and respected. I can't wait to go back with my class next year as an eight grader, and I hope I will be invited back as a representative for the Epilepsy Foundation again. I loved this opportunity.

Photo's from this wonderful experience will soon be on my webpage. And as always visit www.itsnotwhoiam.com for updates.

Sara-Elizabeth