

STUDENT TRAVEL VETERAN TELLS ALL:

History Teacher's D.C. Trip



TRACIE H.

Title: American History Teacher
of Years Traveling with Brightpark: 2

MEET TRACIE

Tracie is an 8th grade history teacher from Florida who has been traveling with students to Washington, D.C. for nine years. This year she's changing her itinerary by adding on a trip to New York City. As a student travel veteran with past experiences working with different travel providers, Tracie has some great insights.



PARENTS IN THE LOOP

"Communicating with the parents builds trust," says Tracie, who keeps in touch with parents via Brightpark's portal email and a mass-text communications tool called Remind. She remembers one year when her group ran late because they were stuck in St. Patrick's Day parade traffic. Using the group text tool allowed her to tell the parents they were running behind and take a happy photo of the whole group before her students could hastily send texts home. Tracie explains, "Sometimes the kids just send off a text and they don't realize it is upsetting the parents. I try to use the group text so that they aren't just seeing the text from their students but also hearing reassurance from the group leader."



CURRICULUM INSPIRATION

In Florida, civics is taught in 7th grade and American history is taught in 8th grade. This means that by the time students go on their trip, they are extremely familiar with subjects they'll explore in D.C. and New York. To add in a personal element to preparation, 7th grade teachers use pictures from past trips throughout their curriculum. For example, "if they're teaching the bill of rights, they can pull out a picture of the national archives - with them literally standing right in front of it."



TIPS FOR ROOKIE TEACHERS

Tracie has plenty of know-how when it comes the logistical details of tour planning. For example, she has kids pick a couple different roommate preferences so she can put friend groups with the same chaperones. She also has parents sign a paper medical form that allows group leaders and chaperones to provide medications and take students to hospitals if needed.

"I have kids who I've traveled with who are going to college at Georgetown or they're going into politics, because of this path that we've led them on."

THE BEST PART?

Seeing students' expressions when they walk into an attraction they recognize from textbooks, T.V. or teachers' pictures. "That's what gets me. That's why I do it."

UNIQUE TOUR IDEA

Tracie uses Remind to communicate with students as well as parents. While on tour, she can use this tool to send mass texts to students 15 minutes before they depart an attraction. "Because I don't want a hundred kids going to the bathroom 3 mins before we leave," says Tracie.

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A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Washington D.C. and Philadelphia

DAY 1

Depart School
Dinner at San Antonio Grill
Tour of the Memorials
Check into Hotel

DAY 2

Breakfast at Hotel
Visit the Washington Monument
Enjoy Lunch
Holocaust Memorial Museum
Visit the Museum of American History
Dinner at Carmine's
White House Photo Stop
See the Pentagon Memorial
Return to Hotel

DAY 3



Breakfast at Hotel
Library of Congress
Tour the U.S. Capitol Building
U.S. Supreme Court
Group Photo at the Capitol Building
Enjoy Lunch
Guided Tour of Arlington National Cemetery with Wreath Laying
Dinner at King Street Blues
Ghost Tour
Return to Hotel

DAY 4



Breakfast at Hotel
Depart for Philadelphia
Franklin Court
Visit the National Constitution Center
Enjoy Lunch
Tour Independence Hall
Guided Tour of Christ Church
Dinner at the City Tavern Restaurant
Depart for Washington, D.C.
Return to Hotel

DAY 5

Breakfast at Hotel
International Spy Museum
Ford's Theatre
Souvenir Shopping
Enjoy Lunch at Hard Rock Cafe
U.S. National Archives
Visit the National Air and Space Museum and the National American Indian Museum
Tour of the Memorials
Enjoy Dinner
Depart for home

DAY 6

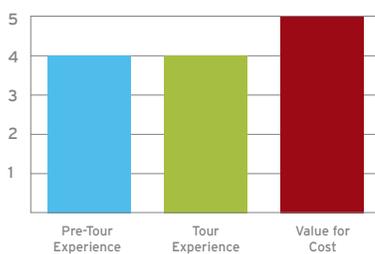
Arrive at school

A GREAT SUCCESS

After all this time, Tracie's Washington, D.C. student tours have become a beloved tradition at her school. With nearly a decade of student travel behind her, Tracie can see the influence trips have had on students; she recalls several particularly inspired students who are now pursuing careers in D.C. politics.

TRACIE'S TOUR SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the following:



CHOOSING BRIGHTSPARK

Tracie's groups started traveling with WorldStrides, but she switched to Brightspark Travel two years ago because of its competitive pricing. Since, she's found that Brightspark has what it takes to run great, smoothly run trips. They've managed to help her overcome every obstacle she's encountered. "I don't know how they do it," she says, "they just like wave a wand in the air, it's amazing."

On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend Brightspark Travel to a friend:



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