

Attend Youth to Washington as a Willie Student

“Willie Wired-hand” students are those relatives or friends associated with SIEC who participate in the Youth to Washington Tour at their own expense. The cost for a “Willie” student is \$1,200. We recommend that “Willie Wiredhand” students be high school sophomores, juniors or seniors in order for them to obtain maximum benefit



from the tour. We welcome and encourage any interested students to become involved. Please call Jerri Schaefer if you have questions about becoming a Willie student at 800-762-1400. **Elizabeth A. Hunt**

Below is an interview with a previous Willie Wired-hand student, Priciliano Fabian:

What was your opinion of Youth Day?

Youth Day was a great experience. It was the first time I got to really experience Springfield. I learned a lot from it and from the individuals that I met there.

When you found out you were not chosen as one of the two students to move forward with the Washington D.C. trip, why did you choose to become a “Willie” student?

I really wanted to go to D.C. and after going to Springfield I had a little aspiration of running for office some day. I felt that if I go to D.C. then I could learn a lot more and experience something that a student from the southern Illinois area doesn't get to experience every day.

Describe how you raised the money to be a Willie student.

I started by asking Jerri Schaefer's (SIEC Director of Communication) help in who to contact. After I knew whom to contact I went out and made calls, wrote letters and made appearances to various organizations such as the Lions Club in Cobden, the VFW, Kiwanis, etc. in Anna. I even raised more than I needed at the end of it all.

Describe the experience of being a Willie student on the Washington D.C. trip.

The experience was great. I got to go to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania before we arrived in D.C., which brought things to life for me after reading about it in textbooks and learning about it in my classes. Once we got to D.C. we went to the various Smithsonians, walked by the White House and went to the Capitol. We went to the Saudi Arabia Embassy and the Holocaust Museum. I also

met Barack Obama when he was still a Senator and I met Representative Jerry Costello. There was so much to this trip that I enjoyed from the places that I went to, to the long lasting friends that I gained.

High school attended and year graduated?

I attended Cobden High School and I graduated in May 2007.

What is your current school status?

I'm a junior at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. I'm part of the Wesley Foundation, Illinois Education Association, Student Leaders of the College of Education and Human Services, Undergraduate Student Government, Skydiving Club, and the Recreational Student Services Advisory Board.

I was a Senator in the Undergraduate Student Government during my freshman and sophomore years and then ran for President and won. I now have the title of President of Undergraduate Student Government and with that I sit on various committees and at the front table in front of the Board of Trustees. I also sat on two search committees, one which was the Chancellor Search Committee where we narrowed down the finalists to Dr. Rita Cheng and Dr. Barbara Couture. I also sat on the Associate Chancellor for Institutional Diversity Search Committee.

I was Vice President of IEA during my freshman year and Vice President of Student Leaders of COEHS. I would have been President of both of those organizations during my junior year as well, but my role as the Student Body President took a lot of my time and commitment.

What are your future plans after college graduation?

After graduation I plan to get my Masters in Educational Administration and then my Doctoral degree in Public Administration. I even have some aspiration of running for office because there's a lot of things that I see every day that I would like to help with and be that Child and Educational Advocate in Congress.

Do you have any advice for juniors attending Youth Day and Youth to Washington for 2010?

Don't take the experience for granted! I learned a lot from my experience and the possibilities. I say go and enjoy them both... Youth Day especially, if you have an aspiration for politics and you want to be a part of it someday.