

Nguyen Thi Mai Dan- Montana University- USA

Nguyễn Thị Mai Đan is a student of advanced Biotechnology course 34. She has received a scholarship of Montana University of the program “Study of the United State Institute for Student Leaders on Global Environment Issues (SUSI)” in the summer 2012. The story below retells the trip:

Five weeks of joining Study of the United State Institute for Student Leaders on Global Environment Issues (SUSI)” are full of memorable moments. This program sponsored by USA Department of Foreign Affairs is for 3rd -4th year university students. Participants of this program are 19 students coming from 4 countries Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Indonesia (5 are Vietnamese).



Vietnamese students at The State Capitol, Montana

I have still remembered the first day we have met at Native American center, University of Montana (UM). Although we are from different countries, we soon had the common voice after self-introducing and playing get-closer games in the first meeting. Later, we

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strictly followed the schedule with intensified courses. A day started at 8 a.m filled with seminars, activities of leadership skills, and meeting with represents and leaders of USA government and ended at 5 p.m, leaving me only 1 hour for lunch and break. Despite of this harsh schedule, I felt satisfied and content because I really had chances to meet Mayors, Governors of States to explore about institutes and policies for protecting environment.

Besides, I joined several field trips such as volunteer at Food Bank, PEAS Farm, and waste dispose at Milton Dam. I also took short training of camping for environment protect, contact with students majored in Environment at UM. Apart from that, I participated in a lot of recreational activities including rafting, hiking, rope course, climbing wall and horse riding. I also had an interesting trip to discover the ecology and climate change within 4 days at Glacier National Park, one of the most famous national parks of the USA, is popularly known as Crown of the Continent.



SUSI students at White House, Washington D.C

The most wonderful time I spent at Montana was the time I home-stay with an American family. Within 3 short days, I learnt deeply about the culture, food, life style of Montana locals as well as the American in general. More than that, I absorbed several new things about nature, environment and ecosystem of Montana as well as high awareness of local people in terms of environment protection.

In the last week, we visited New Orleans, Louisiana and Washington D.C that gave us a chance to meet Vietnamese community at New Orleans, Muslim community of Baton Rouge, and sight-seeing Capitol Building at Washington D.C and Smithsonian Museum. Besides, I met and learnt interesting information from experts of Environmental Science, visited WWF (World Wildlife Fund), USGS (The US Geology Study).



After this program, I have broadened my knowledge, made a lot of new friends and learnt life skills. These facts motivate me and other participants finalize our projects in order to contribute to our hometown as well as the state.



At a field trip to measure the flow velocity