

A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE *by Alyana Klco*

By the time I entered high school, Michigan History Day (National History Day in Michigan) had progressed from an extracurricular program to a way of life for me. With projects ranging from folk music to flappers, I had developed, by graduation, a working knowledge of the vast majority of the twentieth century and, more importantly, learned how to find resources, analyze information, and conduct interviews with confidence. Upon entering college, I knew I had gained valuable skills and learned a lot from my seven years as a national competitor in individual performance. I didn't realize just how much until several months into my freshman year at Case Western Reserve University.



Having come from a small rural high school, few assignments had prepared me for the dramatic increase in workload that came with college. Fortunately, Michigan History Day had honed my investigatory and writing skills and taught me to work hard, filling that gap. Today, I am thriving at Case, a university I decided to consider only after learning of the scholarship through National History Day (NHD). Similarly, my decision to pursue an international studies degree was the result of an interview I conducted with a former Immigration and Naturalization Services employee for a History Day project. When I hung up the phone, I had a huge smile on my face, knowing that my dream job had just been described. Since then, my plans have altered to focus on linguistics, but the desire to foster a supportive international community remains prominent in my future goals.

As a seven-time national qualifier, I soon realized that “D.C. or Bust” meant that College Park was the best place to be in June, and the words “Happy History Day Everybody!” marked the start of a wonderful whirlwind week. That is why I am so thrilled to have accepted a position with NHD this summer as an intern. Being a part of the NHD competition as an intern is a way for me to have fun and give back what History Day gave me: confidence in public speaking, the tools to research effectively and go to the source, and the lesson that hard work and determination pay off. While I didn't fully realize the extent History Day shaped me until after I had graduated from the program, I hope to be able to share this invaluable experience and perpetuate the legacy of project-based learning for future competitors.