



**The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's College Field Trip
University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth
November 22, 2019**

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute held its annual college field trip to University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Youth delegates: **Evelin Perez, Izzy Perez and Maria Rodriguez, Lya Perez and Leaslie Perez.** The Institute is especially grateful to the UMass Dartmouth Admissions Office and the College Now program for their assistance.



For the last three months youth delegates have worked in the Institute's College Prep Program to clarify their professional goals and aspirations. During the weekly meetings they've completed worksheets, explored career pathways and researched departments that would best support their goals. To prepare for the College Field Trip, each one prepared individualized questions: Lya, Nursing; Leaslie, Graphic Design; Evelin, Business; Izzy, Biology-Pre-Vet; and Maria, Management. As first generation youth to attend college, they found this preparation helped them to feel less nervous and more prepared for this important next step in their lives.

"It's important to prepare for a college field trip because you know more about the career pathway you're interested in it and can come up with questions to ask," said Maria.



The College Field Trip started with a tour of the campus with upper class people who shared their enthusiasm for their University. The youth enjoyed visiting the different hubs of student activity. They were impressed by the level of dedication and investment the University put towards its students. It was great to learn about the new student dorm for freshman. They were excited to see the simulation labs for health-related fields, biology labs and media labs. We were even lucky enough to see the University's collection of gamelans!

Craig Elkins, Director of the College Now Program made a wonderful presentation on the program requirements and benefits. Our youth asked thoughtful questions and were pleased with the responses and help they received. Evelin, who is a freshman at community college asked about how transfer students fit into the program and about the application and transition process as a transfer student.

During lunch, our youth enjoyed talking with UMassD students and learned about student life and activities as well as tips on how to thrive at college. They also met the **Institute's Tech Team** from UMassD: **Andi Grozdani, Lokeshh Kumar Raju, Chibike Nwodim.**



After lunch youth engaged in an interactive session with UMassD students from their career interests. They explored how to make major choices, and how to navigate college life. Our youth were very impressed by how knowledgeable and welcoming the student ambassadors were!

The College Field Trip to University of Massachusetts was a great experience because we learned more about the college, majors and resources they offer as well as the perspectives of the student who currently attend there. From this tour I learned that it is very important to visit every school that I'm interested in and to learn as much as I can to make the right decision of what college is right for me.

Evelin Perez

The College Field Trip to UMass Dartmouth was a whole new level of amazing for me! Even though I still have a few years to go to college, my first impression was really great. I liked how the students answered my questions and gave me good examples. I learned the pros and cons of each major and the effort I would have to put in to achieve my goal of becoming a veterinarian. This experience was amazing and I have years to think over of what I want and Dartmouth was a great first step..

Izzy Perez

My experience at UMassD was great because the tour guide and students were all very kind and helpful. The best part of the tour was when they mentioned the new Freshmen dorms and a Dunkin Donuts café! As a senior, I've visited other colleges. I never thought UMass Dartmouth would be one of my choices but now I felt like I could see myself there. Overall, this was a great learning experience. I really like that it was an all-girls trip because we got to bond and laugh all our stress out. Thanks to the great staff and students at UMassD and Marianne, Namgyal, Berta and Katie for making it all happen.

Lya Perez



It's become a tradition after the Institute's field trips to have dinner at Not Your Average Joes. Youth reflect upon their experience and share highlights from the day. The Institute is grateful to NYAJ's in Seekonk.

The trip to UMassD was very fun and interesting for me. I learned new things I didn't know about being a college student. My favorite part it is that the art program is very flexible and buildings are very close to each other. They have all types of art and great technology to use for graphic design. I really liked connecting with the students because we got to know more about the college from their perspectives. The student ambassadors did a good job answering all my questions very honestly. We also got to have lunch with current students which was very nice. After the tour, we went to eat at Not Your Average Joe's, which was very nice to have some time with just the girls and enjoy ourselves.

Leaslie Perez

The field trip was a really cool experience. It gives you like an idea of the things you're going to face in college, the environment, the variety of people. It was really helpful having a Q & A with students from UMASS DARTMOUTH since they each have a different perspective. They tell you about what they went through and that helped me clarify many things. It makes me feel more secure and now I'm definitely excited about going to college. I now know that I have lots of options for my future and I get to choose whatever is best for me.

Maria Rodriguez

I really enjoyed joining the Institute's team and youth on their visit to UMass Dartmouth. I was struck by the warm and encouraging friendships that were evident among the students, and by how they supported each other in the pursuit of their individual goals. While on campus I could see and hear them thinking through what it would be like to be a student there, and how it could help them achieve their goals.

Katie Fairhead

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