

# St. Joseph High senior studies history of Constitution

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OGDEN -- St. Joseph Catholic High School senior Ciera Archuleta is a self-proclaimed "history junkie," so when she received a scholarship allowing her to spend six weeks completely focused on the history of the Constitution, it was like a dream come true. Ciera's mom, Elaine Archuleta, read about the Bill of Rights Institute scholarship, called the Constitutional Academy, last year in the newspaper.

"I knew it would be something she would love," Elaine Archuleta said.

Ciera applied, and soon she learned that she and 42 others from across the nation would spend five weeks studying documents relating to the Constitution, and then the capstone -- one week in Washington, D.C., touring historical sites.

Ciera said the whole experience was amazing. She admits studying all the founding documents was quite tedious, but said she learned so much about the Constitution, it was worth it.

"It gave me a new appreciation for the Constitution and for America," she said.

Before her weeklong experience in the nation's capital, Ciera spent five weeks studying the documents with the other scholarship recipients in online discussions. Various professors also weighed in on the discussion, asking the students difficult questions that really made them think, she said. She also wrote reading responses for each of the papers she read and then wrote a final paper.

Ciera said having the background going into the trip made it that much more meaningful when the group visited each of the Founding Fathers' homes and heard lectures on those specific people.

"It is really mind-blowing what the Founding Fathers went through. It gives me a big appreciation for what America is today," Ciera said.

They also got a first-class tour of the Capitol and met with Sen. Orrin Hatch's office staff. Ciera loved the lectures, but said her favorite part of the trip was a nighttime monument tour.

"I had this new-found appreciation for all that I saw, and this was just the icing on the cake," she said. Making many great new friends also has proven to be a highlight for her, he mother said.

Ciera plans to study political science in college and knows this experience will help her immensely.

"I was just taking it all in," Ciera said. "Hopefully, I will be able to do something relating to the Constitution."

Elaine Archuleta said it was very exciting to watch her daughter go through the six-week experience this summer.

"It was awesome for her. She has always loved all those things so much, so it was exciting for her," she said.

Ciera has always had high goals for her future, and for her to receive the scholarship and tackle it with such enjoyment makes her mother very proud.

Ciera isn't just about history and political science, though. She's a cheerleader and dances on the drill team. She said she spends a lot of time on homework, but likes to do the "usual" stuff too -- hanging out with friends and family. She is very excited for her future and thinks her summer experience is one she always hold close to heart.

For more information on the Bill of Rights Institute and the Constitutional Academy, visit [www.BillofRightsInstitute.org](http://www.BillofRightsInstitute.org).

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