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My Best Memories of the Summer of 2009

At the end of May 2009, I packed up my belongings and moved over five hundred miles to start a new job in Washington DC. I moved from the Detroit area where the economy was hit hard. I was a senior manager for an automotive firm. I moved up the ranks at my place of work. Until one day, this all came crashing down and my department was downsized. Yes, I worked hard to get where I was in my career. I would never think this would happen to me and within a blink of the eye it was all gone. I was part of the massive corporate downsizing effort in 2009. Of course I was sad and wondered why me? As the weeks went by, I realized that things happen for a reason. People constantly told me “as one door closes a new/better one will open soon.” Of course, looking back over the past few months, the saying holds true.

At first, I was sad to move out of state away from the majority of my family and friends. Yet, I was grateful that I was able to find a great job with benefits and pay. It took a few weeks to settle in my new place, but I managed quite well. I went from having a company car to no car. Honestly, I didn't need a car. I was able to take public transportation to/from work and to get around on the weekends. As an added bonus I was able to get some of my exercise in while walking to/from the metro/bus. I was able to explore the various metro lines in DC to find out where to shop, eat and see interesting places of history. I love taking public transportation now. It's so easy. I like being able to read the newspaper on the train to work.

As the summer months went by I was making new friends and acquaintances. I joined a new church and participated in their activities for the 20-30's group. I attended the PBS show “*A Capitol Fourth*” featuring star-studded entertainment such as Aretha Franklin, The Jersey Boys, Barry Manilow and many more musicians and entertainers. It was a crowd-pleaser on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol. Followed by a spectacular 4th of July fireworks show with the Washington Monument in the background.

On my weekends I was able to explore all of the free museums as part of the Smithsonian. There's just so much to see in each museum. I work near the Foggy Bottom metro. I often took the Kennedy Center shuttle bus to see the free 6 PM shows held at the Millennium Stage. I saw singers, dancers, poetry, mini skits, and so many international and cultural bands. It's a beautiful building to go and just look at The Hall of Nations (Many flags from around the world hang here) I also saw a beautiful view of the Georgetown waterfront and a view of the Rosslyn boarder across the Potomac River.

I have experienced streets being completely blocked by large Sport Utility Vehicles. Meaning I had to find a different path to walk or navigate around the commotion. Helicopters circling over my head. Lots of police officers and secret service agents in dark suits means President Obama is in the area. Yes it is a big thing for out of towners, but the locals get used to “extra noise” I'm told. I attended a piano concert and gallery preview at the Austrian Embassy. There are lots of Embassy events some are free and some a paid. I think I have learned so much about other countries that it makes me want to learn more about my own heritage. I was on my mission to find some good Polish food in the DC area. This is still a challenge, but I did find a place to by some

great kielbasa in Maryland. Also, I did find one Eastern Europe café in Arlington, VA which serves stuffed cabbages. I did learn to make my own stuffed cabbages just like moms. I discovered The National Polish Center a few blocks away from where I work. They have Polish films and recently had vodka tasting there. They have a selection of Polish arts and handicrafts to view. It reminds me of being in Hamtramck, Michigan a lot.

I look back this past summer at all the cultural activities I have attended and learned from. I never realized that my own Nations Capital had so much to offer in history and culture and a lot of activities are free or for a small nominal fee. I know I will never be too old to explore and learn new items. In addition, I will always remember where my roots came from. All of my past experiences made me who I am today. Who would think that losing a job and moving would be that bad after all? It just goes to show you that the phrase “as one door closes a new one opens” did hold true for me.