

Washington DC Trip

The Wapakoneta High School 8th grade Gettysburg/Washington DC trip, students leave the Friday before Thanksgiving. The trip always begins the Friday before parent-teacher conferences and Thanksgiving. Having the trip at this time of the year decreases the number of days students are out of the classroom, in addition to being able to rest over the holidays from the trip.

The district has sponsored this trip for over 20 years. Jason Johnson serves as the coordinator for this educational experience. His first time on the trip was almost 20 years ago when he attended the trip as an 8th grader at Wapakoneta City Schools. This will be his fourth year organizing the trip. Jason has taught in the district for seven years, currently teaching Physical Science & Advanced Physical Science at the High School. Jason is also the head boys' varsity tennis coach, head girls' varsity tennis coach, and is the business manager for the yearbook.

The trip is a very important stepping stone in the lives of the 8th grade students. For many, this may be their first trip of any distance without their parents. It gives them the unique opportunity to experience the history of the Battle of Gettysburg and the nation's capital with fellow classmates and teachers. They will visit some of the country's most important historical treasures.

All meals are included in the price of the trip. The students have had an opportunity to participate in a fundraiser in the 7th grade, which gives them the opportunity to raise money for the trip. They sold discount cards for \$10; for every discount card they sold, \$5 goes into their individual trip fund.

The tour company, Brightspark Travel, pays for the cost of the chaperones at a ratio of one chaperone for every ten students; none of the student fees are used for this. The chaperones are generally chosen from Wapakoneta City School District employees and their spouses. While on this trip, students are expected to behave as they would in school. Classroom teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and aides are all trained and experienced in dealing with large numbers of students. The spouses may be included as chaperones and are accountable to their district-employed husband or wife; this also assists with rooming assignments.

Information about the trip and registration can be found by going to www.brightsparktravel.com. If anyone has questions about the trip, they can contact Jason Johnson, at johnja@wapak.org or at 419-234-2416.

Any individuals or businesses who would like to assist students who cannot afford to pay for this educational trip may donate to the DC scholarship fund or sponsor a student. This may be done by contacting Jason Johnson at the above email or phone number.

What's Included?

- Round-trip motorcoach transportation
- All admission fees to scheduled activities
- 3 nights at hotel & overnight hotel security
- 3 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners
- Guided sightseeing
- Brightspark staff including 24-hour emergency hotline
- All taxes gratuities
- "Help me travel" online fundraising tool
- Lanyards and emergency cards to each passenger
- Drawstring backpacks
- A one-of-a-kind, fun-filled educational experience

Tour Highlights

Here's what you can look forward to:

- Arlington National Cemetery – Guard change, tomb of the unknowns
- US Capital Building Tour
- National Cathedral
- Embassy Row
- Ford's Theatre
- George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens
- Iwo Jima Memorial
- Jefferson & FDR Memorials
- Library of Congress
- Lincoln, Vietnam, and Korean Memorials
- Newseum
- Gettysburg Guided Battlefield Tour
- Pentagon memorial
- Smithsonian's

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- US National Archives
- Washington Monument
- White House – Photo Stop
- World War II Memorial
- Wreath Laying Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery