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Going into Career Quest, I was nervous that I would not vibe with the companies we were going to tour. I'm very much an unapologetically "me" person and that type of personality tends to be incongruent with corporate culture. My funky, grayish-blueish-red hair and my loud outfits automatically singled me out when we entered each office. I could have toned myself down to try and give a different first impression, but that just would not have been me. I feel like my first impression should depict me and all that I am.

Each site visit felt like a toss-up: are the people going to look at me funny for being me or are they going to be chill and welcoming. Luckily, many places were the latter and I felt reassured that I could bring my whole self to a professional environment. In particular, KWT Global and NowThis stood out as places I could see myself fitting-in. Both companies strived towards professionalism, but neither felt hostile toward someone who is a bit more quirky than others. In fact, both organizations gave me the impression that they welcomed diversity among their employees. Honestly, KWT Global's office atmosphere surprised me in the best possible way. While they might not necessarily do the type of work I would like to do, the knowledge that there are places out there that say "we're political, we embrace diversity, get used to it," was refreshing.

NowThis, on the other hand, made me feel "oh, this is the type of place I want to be at." Their motto, "stories that move," is exactly how I would describe the work I want to do. Using my resources and connections to enable others who have been systemically silenced to tell their stories is what I've hoped to do my whole life. In other words, their intern hiring team should stay on the lookout for my application!

Despite lots of rain, Career Quest was a great trip. It reassured me that there is a place of employment for me in my future. Although I might not be welcomed with open arms everywhere, there are many places where I can get to be me and do the work I want to do. Thank you!