

## **Tyler Spencer's reflection that was shared at the ATP conference**

The Appalachian Teaching Project has been an amazing experience for me....one that I will never forget.

Doing this research project about my home town, Morehead, KY, has opened my eyes to many things in the community that I was unaware of before. The project that my group did on Parks and Recreational areas explored an area of my community that I had previously not given much thought to. This project gave me the opportunity to familiarize myself with various community groups and meet a few members of the local government. Before this project, I knew almost nothing about my local government or the community groups involved in the area. I now know more about my home county's organizations and planning processes and what the local government is doing to address various problems. I also now know what group's citizens have created in the community and how they influence the planning process. I am now confident that I am a more aware citizen for doing this project and see my local government in a new way.

This research project has also greatly improved my research skills and has given me a great experience doing a research project with a group. The further the semester progressed, the better we worked together as a group and accomplish more things. We hit some rough spots along the way in doing our project, and even feared that we wouldn't finish our project on time. However, our group was pleased with the final results, and I believe that we all gained invaluable experience in doing this research project.

This conference has also been another wonderful experience for me. I have gained experience in presenting research and have also learned many interesting things and ideas in the Appalachian region. All of the presentations were great and unique and addressed many different problems in many different areas of the Appalachian region. I now have a new perspective on the true uniqueness and diversity of the Appalachian region.

In addition to my research and conference experience, I also had a wonderful time and many great experiences on this trip to Washington, D.C., and have even learned some new skills. For example, I now know how to navigate the D.C. Metro system. In our tour of our nation's capital, we had the opportunity to visit the Capitol building and see the House of Representatives from the Gallery. I also got to experience many delicious meals, attended a Medieval-themed dinner and show, and explore a few of the many great Museums here in the city. Even when we were walking in the rain with sore feet or stuck in traffic, our group always had a great time exploring the region and we all had a lot of fun together.

I believe that this experience is definitely a huge contribution to my overall college and educational experience and will help me be a better student, person, and citizen.