

Fearless Dialogues

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I had the opportunity to participate in the Forum for Theological Exploration's Regional Discernment Retreat for Volunteers Exploring Vocation, which occurred in Burlingame, CA on April 7-10, 2016. The retreat consisted of workshops, reflections, worship services, and service work opportunities. I met many young adults who are on the same journey as me. Young adults who don't have everything figured out. It was great to be able to be around such amazing adults, whose desire is to change the world and live a life out in faith. It was also cool to see all the different work that is going on around the world. I was able to sit and talk to other young adults, about where I come from and what I am currently doing. This time was especially meaningful, because everyone I talked to listened to me without any judgment.

Before I arrived at the retreat, we had the opportunity to choose between a few workshops. That Friday of the retreat, I went to a workshop called "Fearless Dialogues." In this workshop we talked about what our roles are. The leader, Alisha Gordon, led us through an activity where we had to write down four of our most important roles. She then told us to look over what we wrote down. She asked us to throw away, one by one, what we thought was our most important role. For many of us, this activity was challenging because each and every one of us have such important roles. I was able to take a lot away from that workshop; it opened up my eyes to realize that I am beyond blessed to have the roles I do. God has placed these roles in my life for a reason, and I wouldn't be who I am today if I didn't do any of them.

On Saturday during the retreat, there were three groups who went out to three different service sites. I went to City of Refuge UCC, which is a ministry where they use the space not only for church, but also for a food bank ministry and community events, including an art space for people in the community to come in and make art. While we were there, we were able to do some service work, including stocking up the food pantry, working on the garden, and reorganizing pots and pans. This ministry is being used to touch so many lives, and I was so thankful that I got to see what kind of work they are doing and be a part of it.

I am grateful that I was chosen to participate in this retreat. Before I came into the NBA XPLOR program, I knew I wanted to do something that involved missions work. I started working and got caught up in everyday life, and I guess you could say I brushed it off. I went to this retreat, not knowing what was going to happen, but I came home from that retreat realizing why I wanted to go into missions in the first place. My passion and drive were back.

During my time here in NBA XPLOR, I have been thinking a lot about pursuing a degree in social work. I told a group of friends that my next step was figuring out which one I wanted to do. Do I go into social work or do I pursue missions? Someone said, "Why not do both?" That got me really thinking. I feel that God is calling me to pursue both. This retreat allowed me the time to take a break from my crazy life and listen to what God is calling me to do.

*NBA XPLOR is a 10-month service residency opportunity for young adults ages 21-30, with the purpose of empowering young adults to discern and develop a "heart for care" as they live together in simple community, engage in direct service and justice work, engage in leadership development, and discern their vocational calls to honor the various communities they are called to serve. **Learn more and apply at nbacares.org/xplor.***