



National Benevolent Association

XPLOR
FAITH, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

XPLOR the Journey

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Webster's Dictionary defines the journey as "something suggesting travel or passage from one place to another." These past 10 months, I definitely traveled from existing life to living life. If you'd asked me where I would be 10 months ago, I probably would have laughed if you said NBA XPLOR. Little did I know that XPLORing these past 10 months has changed my life forever.

A little over a year ago, I received a text from one of my mentors at my church, saying "Hey Imani, there's this program called XPLOR, I think it will be a good fit." I looked at my phone and was like, hmm, I don't know. I thought that maybe if I didn't respond that it would go away.

Then two days later, I received a text message from my former youth pastor saying, "Rev. Monica was telling me about this program called XPLOR, I think it would be a great fit. Take a look and apply." After that text, I remember yelling "OKAY FINE, GOD, YOU WON! You got it. I heard your message loud and clear."

God was making it clear that I needed to do this program. And as much as I thought of ignoring it, God kept sending me signs. You see, the thing about how God works is that when he wants you to do something, he will send you different messages by different messengers.

God knew that I needed to XPLOR the journey he envisioned for me, where I was living my life and not just existing. I am forever thankful that God didn't let me run away, because these past 10 months have helped me XPLOR the journey. I am thankful God blessed me with people who brought new eyes to an old situation.

I have discerned a lot these past 10 months. I discovered that saying yes to XPLOR was one of the best decisions I ever made. For once in my life, I felt like I was doing something for me without the distractions of my present reality. I spent a lot of time thinking clearly without the foggy distractions of my "adulting" reality. I spent a lot of time accessing what I needed to heal, forgive and amend broken relationships. "The journey" allowed me to actually live my life.

Being fresh out of college, my only focus was to make money to pay back the many loans. Being on "the journey" for 10 months taught me that money isn't everything, and if I am a believer of God's word, God will provide and take care of me no matter what. I have to FAITH it, always.

XPLORing the journey helped me understand for the first time in my 22 years of living, I actually got to LIVE my life. I got to be present in the moments. I got to put IMANI first. I got to XPLOR my voice. I got to XPLOR my passion. I got to XPLOR what my purpose is. XPLORing the journey, I learned that I have more strength that I give myself credit for. I learned more about myself in these last 10 months than I did in my four years of college trying to figure out what's next. I thought that I had my life all figured out. I was for sure what was next. But God's shift in the journey allowed me to pause and spend time faithfully with God. Over these past 10 months, God has been my rock more than ever before. I allowed God to be first in my life. For once I listened to what he was trying to get me to do, and I stopped running away from the gifts he destined me to have.

XPLORing the journey has made me a better person. I'm definitely not the same IMANI I was 10 months ago. I am more open to change and XPLORing new possibilities. I know I can live simply. Money does not define my happiness. I have learned that the POWER is all in my mind. I have the power to choose whether or not I want to be happy. After all, happiness is a choice.

XPLORing the journey helped me realize that my life is a testimony that I made it. I let nothing stop it. Despite all the things I had against me, I made it. Finishing something that I started is another accomplishment I can add to my book. I am so grateful for this program. It's made me a better young adult, aware of the change I need to make to help make the world a better place.



I've gotten to meet various people on their journey, which has helped me want to know more about my faith journey. Working at a senior living community has inspired me in so many ways I couldn't imagine. To be honest, I wasn't thrilled to find out that I would be working with elderly people. But it always seems like the things you are less hyped about, you enjoy the most. Juliette Fowler Communities was an incredible place for me to work. I got to see the ins and out of how a nonprofit works. I have had amazing conversations and created bonds and memories with residents that I would have never imagined.

This experience has been so life changing that I have decided to answer the call to be a granddaughter. I am going to go live with my grandparents and help them write their life stories. I am excited for all the things that God is doing in my life. Wherever you are in your life, no matter how old, you always choose to do you. Life isn't about the destination, but the journey. XPLOR the journey, and life will always guide you to that final destination.

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.