



National Benevolent Association

XPLOR

FAITH, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

Take Care of You, So You Can Help Others

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This is something I have had to learn being in NBA XPLOR. I was raised that others come first, to help those who are in need. As I am in the second half of my second year in the XPLOR program, I have learned that if I don't take care of myself, how will I help others? If my spiritual, mental, and physical needs aren't met, how can I help others' needs?

I have a hard time taking time for myself, when I know there are people out there who are suffering. I know so many people who work so hard and never get a break, so that when I take a break, or do something fun, I have this guilt inside me. Because I know that so many others don't get that time for themselves. It's especially hard working for a non-profit organization; when so many people are in need, all I want to do is help them. I just want to go and never stop.

But I know I can't do that, I am slowly realizing that I have to nurture myself, in order to be able to nurture others. In this program, I am learning that even one little thing you do for someone can go a long way. It's about one small act of kindness at a time. Sometimes it's just simply being there for someone and listening to them. I have had a chance to do that a lot in this program, and also vice versa.

XPLOR has inspired me to go out and help. XPLOR has taught me that life is so much bigger, and the opportunities I have around me, are endless. Helping others is one small part of it; I am learning the best way I can help others is by showing them love.

There is need everywhere I look. I will continue to help as much as I can, but I will also take time for me. I believe taking time for yourself is so important, and so fulfilling. I have now worked in two non-profit organizations, and I will tell you it's hard not wanting to do it all, even when you're feeling so tired and drained. So many times it has gotten to the point where either one of my housemates or someone from church or work will come to me and say, "Lauren, have some you-time; go and rest."

In those moments, I have to take a deep breath and just step back. I have to let someone take over. I am learning I can't do it all. It's why we have community around us, so we don't have to do it alone.

So, if you're like me and it's hard to take that time for yourself, remember, if you truly want to help others, you have to take that time so that you can better others, and better the lives of others.

*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.***