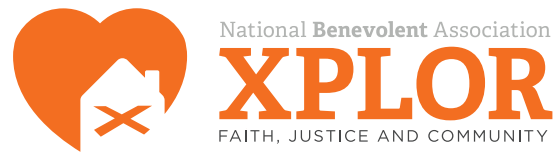


Making Someone's Day, Making a Difference
Lydia Dettwyler, 2015-16 NBA XPLOR Resident
in Tucson-Marana, AZ



I am doing my NBA XPLOR internship at Interfaith Community Services (ICS) in Tucson, AZ. It is such a great nonprofit. Tucson has so many nonprofits, and there is this great community of volunteers here—mostly older, retired people who live here because they decided they wanted warmer weather over snowy or rainy winters. I am starting to meet the “snow bird” volunteers, people who live half the year in one state and the other half, winter, here in Tucson. Getting here at the end of August, I can tell why they wanted to miss the summers here!

At ICS, I have been helping with caregiving services in the transportation department, assisting the person in charge. There are many seniors here who can't drive, who don't have family nearby who can help, and home-bound seniors—all of whom just need some help. If they need a ride somewhere, like to a doctor appointment or to go shopping, they call in and give the details of where they need to go and what time. Then we try our best to match them up with volunteers who are willing to drive them.

I enjoy getting to work with the regular volunteers. I am finally remembering names! There is one volunteer I have really bonded with. Her first language is not English, and computers are newer to her. She has the biggest language barrier for the volunteers whom I work with, but she also tries so hard and has a big heart to help others. Some of the recipients have a hard time understanding her, and she has a hard time understanding some. She wants to be there so badly; she is the first to answer the phone and tries very hard to help them understand her. Then, a call will come in, and all of a sudden you hear her speaking in perfect Spanish. I know the recipient also appreciates being able to say everything in their native tongue.

It is great to get to help people who want to continue living independently but just need a little help. Many times I am not necessarily the person answering the phone and helping find rides. I am a person people can ask questions. I am helping the person in charge to do things that she doesn't have as much time to manage, like the daily van that picks people up to go shopping or delivers monthly food boxes from the food bank.

It is a very rewarding internship. There are discouraging times, like when I talk to a grumpy, confused recipient or I can't find a ride for someone. However, when you do find a ride for someone and you call to tell them, they are so very thankful. I have also been the driver a few times now and have one person whom I drive weekly. He is always very happy when I pick him up and also very chatty. A lot of the people really enjoy the conversation and are very thankful for the help. They enjoy getting to keep their independence, but many are lonely without much or any family around, and it is huge to them to feel and know that someone cares. I love my internship because I know that I am making someone's day—and hopefully making a difference in someone's life.

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.**