

NBA at GA: "My Voice Had Meaning"

Melissa Peralez, Incoming 2017-18 NBA XPLOR Resident in Hiram-Mantua, OH



My experience at the 2017 General Assembly was overwhelming, in a good way. I experienced many things, such as fighting for justice firsthand. On my first official day at the assembly, I was given the privilege of being a parade marshal for the Disciples Rally for Family Justice, and may I say that it was very exciting and invigorating. I felt like my voice had meaning with the chants that we said: "No hate / no fear / refugees are welcomed here!"

I was honored to hear the Rev. Dr. William Barber for the first time at the rally. His powerful voice and speech were so inspiring that I walked several blocks to hear him preach at a local church on Sunday, and there I learned that "we must stand our ground; bowing down is not an option." No matter what obstacle gets in our way, we can't let that get us down.



We also had an event for young adults that was an amazing thing for me. It helped me talk about things that I haven't been able to talk to anyone about before that—people who actually understand me and don't judge me or think that I'm just being a whiny young adult who doesn't have enough life experience to know what I am talking about. All in all, I loved my experience at General Assembly, and I would love to experience it again soon.

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.**