

2014-2015 NBA XPLOR Residents

June 24, 2014



We are pleased to announce and introduce you to the 2014-2015 NBA XPLOR Residents.

Jonathan Cahill (First Christian Church Pekin, Illinois)



My hometown is Pekin, Illinois, where I am a member of First Christian Church Pekin. I recently graduated from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia where I majored in history and minored in French. As an XPLOR participant I hope to learn about and grow in my faith through study, discussion, and reflection.

I am excited about the opportunity to engage with others in a simple living community learning to live with less than I have now and valuing what I have more.

In addition, I am looking forward to having a chance to read some of the books that have been recommended to me and to catching up on some movies that I am told are "must sees."

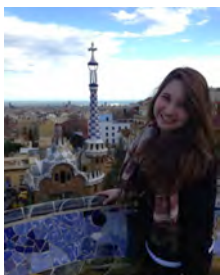
In my spare time I enjoy relaxing with friends and reading a good book. I also like to hike and spend time outdoors appreciating God's creation.

Matthew Capestro (Table of Grace, Jefferson City, Missouri)



I am most excited about this XPLOR opportunity to really be part of my faith. I'm excited not to just have faith, but also live it. My goals in participating with XPLOR is to grow both in my faith practices and of living my faith. Of the four cornerstones of XPLOR, spiritual discernment about my future vocation strikes most closely with me. I am very interested in opening myself up to God and gaining a better understanding of my relationship with my faith. I'm definitely a nerd about piano and love getting people to sing hymns with me. I am happy to help people step out of their comfort zone with music. I also really enjoy being in nature spending a lot of my time with friends playing games or watching movies. The one special item that I will definitely be bringing with me during this residency is a small keyboard. It would be very difficult for me to part with music for any length of time!

Catherine DeMoss (First Christian Church Hopkinsville, Kentucky)



I am 21 and just graduated from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, in May with a bachelor of arts in Psychology and a minor in Educational Studies. I grew up in Hopkinsville, a medium-sized town in Western Kentucky, and have found family throughout the community particularly in attending and actively participating in First Christian Church of Hopkinsville. My involvement here and my attendance at camp every

summer have led me to want to pursue a career in ministry. Additionally, after being an intern at Dress for Success in Lexington this year, I have found a love for nonprofit work and hope to find a way to pair these two passions into a career. I believe that XPLOer will help me find a way to do this.

I am definitely nervous about going across the country away from all of the people I love, yet I look forward to the challenge and to expressing my passion for service with XPLOer's "Hands on Service" cornerstone. In what little spare time I have, I like to spend time with my friends and have made a conscious effort to stay active particularly with my newly acquired bike which I hope to bring with me.

Shemeka Ferrell (First Church of the Living God, Danville, Virginia)



In my spare time I enjoy reading, writing poetry, singing, being outdoors, spending time with my family and so much more. I always strive to be active and healthy while maintaining a good connection with my family. I am such a nerd about technical theatre, especially lighting. I would love to create a theatre program that teaches youth from the community about theatre lights and lighting technicians. Since I first got involved with theatre, my passion and love for lights has blossomed.

My friends may think I'm crazy, but one thing that excites me about participating in the XPLOer project is that I will be experiencing a new culture and a new environment. I am getting the chance to experience and learn more about simple living in the community and spiritual discernment. I also get to strengthen my leadership skills and community service development while volunteering with a service site. This program encompasses so many aspects of life that I try to incorporate in my everyday living. Of the four cornerstones of XPLOer, I'm especially

interested in the corner stone of spiritual discernment on vocation because I have always wanted to know the purpose for which my soul was made and I can do this through spiritual disciplines. I can discern this purpose with God and with the help and guidance of this program.

I am very nervous about being so far away from my family. I also have to start over in a new environment, try to make new friendships and relationships while settling in and becoming comfortable within my new surroundings. I am excited to meet new people and have new experiences. One of my goals in the XPLORE Project is to be open to new ideas and to maintain a positive attitude and outlook for the entirety of the program. I will make a conscious effort to step outside of my comfort zone to be more social, inviting and welcoming new experiences and people into my life.

Kim Guy (Central Christian Church, Lexington, Kentucky)



My hometown is Chico, California. By this August, I will have completed a bachelor of arts in Writing Rhetoric and Communication from Transylvania University. I am actively involved and hold membership at Central Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky. My professional interests include expressive therapy, elementary education, and chaplaincy. I also have a passion for poetry!

Of the four cornerstones of the XPLORE Project, I'm especially interested in the cornerstone spiritual vocational discernment because I am still unsure of what God is calling me to do. As I prepare for this ten-month residency, I will definitely be bringing my cut of the net from the 2014 Women's HCAC conference tournament championship game because managing basketball has and forever will hold a special place in my heart. On campus, I served four years as a basketball manager for the men's and women's teams. I may not be able to manage anymore but it will remind me where I have come from and what I have overcome.

I have done a little competing with the Speech and Debate team as well as participated in religious programming on campus. My church leadership includes teaching Sunday school classes, mission trips, being a member of the college group at Central Christian Church, attending General Assembly as a representative of my college, and countless vocation bible schools. I also served as a Disciples Home Mission (DHM) intern at Kansas Christian Home in Newton, Kansas, last summer.

Beth Harding (Heart of the Rockies Christian Church, Fort Collins, Colorado)

I am originally from Fort Collins, Colorado, but I've lived in Fort Worth, Texas, for the past four years attending Texas Christian University (TCU). During my time at TCU, I was involved with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ's) student organization, Disciples on Campus and held many different leadership positions. I helped plan social and weekly events and was part of the Community Care Team, which is a group of members that promote the overall well being of our student members. I was also involved in the young adult programming at Ridglea Christian Church and in my sorority, Gamma Phi Beta.

While I was in Fort Collins, I attended Heart of the Rockies Christian Church and I'm still a member there. I also became a student member at Ridglea Christian Church in Fort Worth. Some things I like to do in my spare time are hang out with my friends, go to the pool, and catch up on my favorite TV shows. Something that I nerd out about is Spongebob Squarepants! I've probably seen every episode (except the new ones) and I can quote many lines from the show. I majored in Psychology and Child Development at TCU, and I hope to work with children in need in some aspect. One of the XPLOR four cornerstones that stuck out to me was spiritual discernment on vocation. While at TCU, I studied Psychology and Child Development and know that I want to work with children in need, but I don't exactly know in what aspect I would want to work in. During my time at XPLOR I hope to get closer to making this decision through the help of the community and spiritual discernment.

Blaine Kuss (Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis, Indiana)

I graduated from DePauw University in 2013 with a degree in musical arts. Music is definitely a passion of mine, but I am also a huge nerd when it comes to the National Basketball Association (you know, that other NBA). Go Memphis, grit and grind!

Team allegiances aside, in addition to my tuba, I will also be bringing my movies. We cannot expect residents to get through ten months without watching Frodo carry the One Ring through Mordor at least once after all.

One aspect of the XPLOR project that both excites and makes me nervous is how intentional the program is about discerning vocational goals—or at least clarifying them—for residents. I feel as

though I have been wandering, trudging, and struggling through this past year physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Strengthening my connection to God through prayer, conversation, and purposeful action will go a long way to figuring out where I turn next. Filled with humility, excitement, nervousness, and hopefulness, yet an empty vessel for God to fill with God's patient, welcoming grace. I enter what promises to be a transformative ten months.

Gillie Martin (Seventh Street Christian Church, Richmond, Virginia)



I will be graduating from Lynchburg College in Virginia in May with a degree in Vocal Music Performance! I am a native of Richmond, Virginia, and I have lived around this area my whole life. I am very excited to have the opportunity to travel out of the south.

I grew up in Seventh Street Christian Church in Richmond. My hope is to receive a graduate degree in Counseling, and my plans are to pursue this once I complete the XPLOR program. I am interested in community service and helping those who cannot help themselves. This summer, I am directing an arts camp at Craig Springs Camp in Virginia. I have done many things, but I have never strayed far from the church.

My lifelong dream is to change someone else's life and to allow someone to change my life. I must say that I have a weakness for the Dave Matthews Pandora station. In my spare time, I am frequently volunteering or having fun with my Kappa Delta Sorority sisters. I am one of five girls and thoroughly enjoy being around groups of people. I am definitely an extrovert! One thing that will really challenge me during this year is the simple living aspect. I am a southern girl who loves her monograms and Jack Rogers. I am super excited to bring a piece of the south to St. Louis! I have a weakness for puppies, like a serious weakness. I will not leave home without a framed picture of my dog. My dream is to own a basset hound puppy with a red collar (oddly specific, I know). My other dream is to be Beyonce, but who doesn't want to be Bey? I am just so thankful for this opportunity and to be able to share it with y'all!

Cara McKinney (Hiram Christian Church, Hiram, Ohio)



I am from Kent, Ohio and am currently a member at Hiram Christian Church in Hiram, Ohio. In May 2014, I graduated from Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and Spanish.

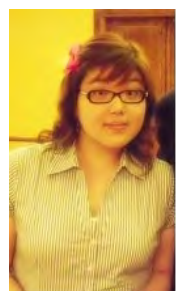
Throughout my life, I've worked hard to define myself with the word "doulos" or servant leader. I've participated in and led many mission trips throughout the country, spent most of my summers at the Ohio church camp,

Camp Christian, and worked to open my eyes to all walks of life by participating in cultural immersion trips and joining a broad spectrum of campus organizations.

My friends may think I'm crazy, but one thing that really excites me about participating in the XPLORE Project is the idea of going somewhere completely new and so far from home (2,371 miles to be exact...) where I know absolutely no one. One goal I have in participating in the XPLORE Project is to discern what direction I want to go in the future; will I go to seminary next? Do I even want to go to seminary? What in the world am I doing with my life?

One special item that I will absolutely bring with me on this ten month residency is a map of the world. I like to keep things in perspective and continue to think about all the places I want to (and will!) visit in the future. These ten months are going to be a whirlwind of an adventure and I'm excited to be a part of such a wonderful new program in the Disciples of Christ community.

Da Soll "Blessing" Song (Joyful Korean Christian Church, Las Vegas, Nevada)



I come from Korea and my parents are pastors in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). My family lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, for their mission and ministry. I love to try new kinds of food and cooking. My favorite activities are watching movies and reading books. Also, when I can, I work with my church community assisting with translation from Korean to English.

One thing that really excites me about participating in the XPLORE Project is the chance to experience new things in life and to work beyond my community in Las Vegas. I'm also excited about what will happen after I finish XPLORE. What are the next plans God has for me? One goal that I have is to discover new talents and interests for myself that will help me to develop my future.

Of the four cornerstones of XPLOr, I'm especially interested in the cornerstone of hands-on service and justice work because these are things that I have not yet experienced with church.

As I prepare for XPLOr, I know I will bring my passion for God and the knowledge that this will be a special experience that will be with me all my life.

Caytie Clark (First Christian Church Rowlett, Texas)



I was born in Wisconsin but my family moved to Rowlett, Texas, when I was three years old. I guess my family knew I was a country girl all along! Shortly after moving here we joined First Christian Church Rowlett (Disciples of Christ) and I have loved growing up in this church! I have held many positions within my congregation and one of our sister churches, such as junior deacon, interim youth director, children's worship leader, and participating in outreach programs. After graduating high school I took classes at a community college with hopes of transferring to a university. I still plan to go back and finish my schooling so that I can work with abused kids or running my own camp. In my spare time I like to hang out with my friends, go to midnight movie premiers, have Netflix marathons, and travel. I am a nerd about superhero movies, my television shows (Glee, Vampire Diaries, and American idol), and my music.

As I prepare for XPLOr, I've never been away from home for more than a few weeks at a time so it will definitely be an exciting adjustment. One goal I have for being in the XPLOr program is to find out who I am and what God is calling me to do. I also look forward to building lasting relationships with the people I meet and interact with through this opportunity.

Rebecca Wells (East Dallas Christian Church, Texas)



I live in Garland, Texas, and am blessed to call East Dallas Christian Church (EDCC) home. Over the last two years, I have served on the EDCC's official board and have chaired the planning committee for Table Worship, which is our contemporary worship and music service. I am currently a student at Eastfield College. My focus has been split between social work and sculpture although I'm not certain where I'm headed professionally.

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to ask the question “what do I want to do?” with my hands, breath, and time for the next ten months.

One of my goals going into XPLORE is to learn more about saying a deep “yes” and not just with words but also with my actions. I seek to choose God, justice, community, and simplicity intentionally...daily, when it is easy and feels good and especially on the days when it is hard. I need and look forward to this.

I don't want to bring much with me to XPLORE, but my yoga mat is definitely a must. Jesus meets me on my mat every morning, rooting me down in His grace and faithfulness. It is my time of adoration and worship. I'm a nerd about trying new things and figuring them out. I discovered woodworking about a year ago. Chances are if I'm not studying, you'll find me covered in sawdust and watercolor at my makeshift studio space!

About NBA XPLORE

The NBA XPLORE Project is a ten 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 at [**www.nbacares.org/xplor**](http://www.nbacares.org/xplor)!