



National Benevolent Association

**XPLOR**

FAITH, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

## Eula Cuts My Hair

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in Golden Gate/Bay Area, CA



Tonight, I let my roommate Eula cut my hair. I'm not sure how the situation came about exactly. The most reasonable explanation that I can think of is that someone slipped some weird pill in my lunch or that great uncle Jim's insanity that skips a generation finally caught up with me. Regardless, in the car, I heard myself complaining about not wanting to pay for, nor wanting to go and find, someone to cut my hair. I heard Eula joking that she would cut it; I heard my other roommate Mel laughing; and I heard myself agreeing and saying we'd do it when we got home.

We got home, and I wet my hair and sat myself down in a chair in our living room, which also serves as both Mel's bedroom and dining room and Eula's study hall. I asked Eula if we should put down newspapers, and she said, "Nah, we'll vacuum." Good enough for me. I asked if she wanted to pull part of my hair up so she could cut the bottom part before the top. She said, "Nah, I got this." Good enough for me.

Eula pulled a piece of hair towards her, looked at it and raised the scissors, started to cut, then stopped, and said, "I need a beer." I went and got her one, and we continued, both giggling raucously. Mel retreated to the porch, telling me over her shoulder that she was the Nostradamus of my shame, that I would regret this, and that she, Mel, would not be here to witness it. I was sure that Mel was right and planned to look up a Super Cuts when Eula was done.

Shocking to everyone involved, Mel was wrong, and my hair cut was not disastrous. We vacuumed up the hair on the floor, I still looked like a regular human, and I had saved \$10 and got to have a laugh and build some community with the people with whom I live.

I live in Oakland, a city in the midst of trying to explain and identify the exact sources and reasons that community happens. While I will never be able to understand, nor fully explain, the beautiful, crazy, passionate community that is Oakland, I do understand that community happens when space is made for it to happen. In Oakland, this means that the communities that have been in place for decades must be given the space to have a say in the place that they built.

For the community of our NBA XPLOR apartment, it means giving each other chances to show up and chances to build common experiences. It's vaguely concerning to have the person cutting your hair laughing so hard they have to stop, but it's a lot more of a bonding experience than trying to explain why you don't have a boyfriend to the hairdresser that's only half-faking to care. I don't encourage you to let your roommate cut your hair, but I do encourage you to make stories together.

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*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 at [nbacares.org/xplor](http://nbacares.org/xplor).***