

The Struggle Is Real: Work Sites

Lauren Frato, 2016-17 NBA XPLOR Resident in Tucson-Marana, AZ

In the previous entry to “The Struggle is Real” series, we heard from the Hiram-Mantua NBA XPLOR house on how they deal with not enough time. In the next entry below, you will hear from one of the Tucson Residents about how she handles her individual struggles related to her work site. Don’t forget to join in the conversation! Here is second-year NBA XPLOR Resident Lauren Frato with her struggle as a Marana Community Food Bank Intern.



Imperfection does not define me.

One thing I have really struggled with in my second year of the NBA XPLOR program is coming to the realization that it’s okay if I make mistakes at my work site.

During my first year in XPLOR, I worked at an after-school program. This job was right in my element because it was with children. I am super comfortable with children, and I felt like I knew what I was doing at the after-school program. I decided in my second year of XPLOR that I wanted to get experience in other types of work; I wanted to learn other skills. NBA XPLOR placed me at the food bank. Working at the food bank has pushed me way out of my comfort zone. It has challenged me in many ways. I can recall one situation at work, where I didn’t handle time management very well.

I was supposed to be working on a project, and instead I was out in the warehouse helping sort food. Because of my decision to do that, someone else on staff ended up doing the task I was supposed to do. I went home that day feeling completely incapable of working at the food bank. Later that day I learned my lesson. I was not incapable, and I had to just move on. I had to keep doing my job, and everything was alright. I have had so many moments where I thought I was a complete failure because I didn’t do something exactly right or because I wasn’t sure how to fulfill the task.

Here’s the lesson that I am slowly learning: I will never be perfect at anything, especially at my job. I am going to make mistakes, and I am going to mess up, but it does not mean I am a failure. It doesn’t mean that I can’t do the job, because I can do anything I put my mind to. I am finding that we all are constantly learning in life, and the best part is that I get to learn with staff who have been so supportive of me. The staff at the food bank want to help me succeed in the future.

Because of that support, I am able to leave the food bank knowing I will make mistakes and I won't get it perfect all the time, but I am also more confident in my ability. That is okay, as long as I do my very best and get back into it, even when I mess up.

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.