

NBA XPLOR: The Art of (Re)Discovery

Rev. Bonnie Osei-Frimpong, Director of NBA XPLOR

The Residents set the agenda on their last evening of NBA XPLOR Laboratory, the orientation week for incoming XPLOR Residents and Spiritual Companions. This year, XPLOR Residents decided to visit the City Museum in St. Louis, a genre-bending playplace where adults and children can climb in an ornate, beautiful, *massive*, 10-story den of tunnels, tubes, pipes, and slides—where you lose yourself and find yourself again and again.



The genre-bending nature of City Museum is like the genre-bending experience of XPLOR. The City Museum is a blend of park playground, museum, and adventure game, come to life. Its architectural scale and visionary scope invite a sense of play, adventure, and joy—grafted onto the sweaty-palmed demands of climbing, crawling, and sliding.

NBA XPLOR, too, is genre-bending. It is a time set apart for young adults to experience a “hello-goodbye” from their previous normal—whether that was a dormitory, a parent’s basement, or a job—into a year of deep-rootedness in a new household, congregation, and work experience. The XPLOR year blurs and blends the categories of stranger to family, job to vocation, and question to “quest.”

The XPLOR year connects a diverse cohort of young adults in partnership together with Disciple host congregations, local community engagement sites, Disciple regions, and the NBA, to provide vocational discernment, professional formation, direct community engagement, and intentional living in simple community.

NBA XPLOR allows Residents to interface with communities of critical need, such as adults living with HIV, low-income seniors on their death beds, undocumented workers seeking basic services, and more.

The visionary scope of NBA XPLOR allows Residents to extend the outreach of congregations already invested in their local communities, but who now have the added benefit of curious, committed, and talented young adult volunteers who make that impact more profound. By cultivating hearts for care, in each XPLOR house, host site, and in the neighborhoods and communities in which they serve now and in the future, a new generation of transformative leaders is being shaped.

NBA XPLOR invites a sense of purpose-packed play and discovery during this experience, with serious sweaty-palmed work, tough and true friendships, and hands-on engagement in justice issues. XPLOR Residents will lose themselves, and find themselves, again and again.

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. You can follow this year’s NBA XPLOR journey on Facebook, Twitter, and our online Stories and News. The application for the 2016-17 NBA XPLOR Residency will be available in November 2015.