NBA: Called to Care for 130 Years

In a church basement in St. Louis, six Disciples women gather to pray. They see neighbors in need, and they want to do something. They are called “to help the helpless – to give a home to the homeless, to provide care for the sick and comfort to the distressed.” Their prayers turn into action. Together, these six women formed what would become the National Benevolent Association, the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). That was 130 years ago!

“We have learned that it does not take large groups of persons to spark a change in the world,” says Jackie Compton Bunch, chair of the NBA Board of Trustees. “It simply takes those who were called to share the light of Christ, those who were called to envision what could be, those who answered their call and served. So, we rejoice as we look back over all these years of service, and with great anticipation we celebrate moving forward, still serving God.”

Explore NBA’s history and share your stories! history.nbcares.org

Thank you for your generous support of the Disciples Mission Fund Easter Offering! Your gifts support general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Through care, service and advocacy for others, general ministries partner with regions and congregations to strengthen the mission of the church.

The NBA receives approximately $240,000 annually from Disciples Mission Fund, supporting collaborative mission work with Disciples health and social service ministries across the life of the church. Find more stories and resources at: nbcares.org/DisciplesMissionFund.
I’m Living Out in L.A…
Eliud Peralez, 2016-17 NBA XPLOR Resident, North Hollywood, CA

“I know the plans I have for you,” says God! I’ve completely put my trust in Him, took an enormous leap of faith, and said “yes” to the call of NBA XPLOR Resident in Southern California. My decision was not about moving to L.A., but moving closer to the call that God has placed in my life. I am as happy as can be about my life-changing decision. I’ve come to realize that I’m just a part of God’s bigger plan for this program.

Alongside my journey in NBA XPLOR are my roommates, who have equally put their trust in God. The best part of God knowing the plans he has for us is that they’re plans to benefit you and not harm you, plans to give you hope in a future. I don’t know what lies ahead, but for now I’m XPLORing the plans God has for me.

More at: nbacares.org/stories-and-news/category/xplor

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Executive Leaders Peer Group Launches
Rev. Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick, Director of Connect Ministries

NBA and Disciples Home Missions (DHM) have called together Disciple-related health and social service ministry executives into a peer group to share, learn, and grow in their ministries and relationships. Over 18 months, the group will meet regularly, through online video conferencing and periodic face-to-face gatherings, to provide an opportunity for leaders to cultivate peer support and encouragement, mutual dialogue, spiritual renewal, and peer-to-peer learning. There will be time for rest and renewal, joyful shared conversation, and group learning with others who truly understand the challenges and gifts of faith-based nonprofits in the current environment.

Members of the 2016-17 Executive Leaders Peer Group cohort:
- Mark Anderson, president and CEO, NBA, St. Louis, MO
- Debbie Dobbins, executive director, Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Jackson, MS
- Mark Palmer, CEO, Woodhaven, Columbia, MO
- Sabrina Porter, president and CEO, Juliette Fowler Communities, Dallas, TX
- Rev. Feliberto Pereira, founder and executive director, Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries, Los Fresnos, TX
- Rev. Elaine Sanford, founder and executive director, HER Faith Ministries, Inc., Memphis, TN
- Don Stump, president and CEO, Christian Church Homes, Oakland, CA
- Rev. Kimberly Weir, chaplain and executive director, Florida Christian Center, Jacksonville, FL

A Time to Protest and a Time to Rest: 
Activist Mental Health and Wellness Strategies
Angela Whitenhill, M.Div., LCSW,
NBA Mental Health Initiative Manager

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; … a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
~Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

[a time to protest, and a time to rest]

As the nation is confronted repeatedly with the ugly reality of inequality and racism, many of us are ignited with righteous indignation and feeling compelled to find out how we can help put an end to the senseless killings. However, others of us are disheartened with discouragement, numbed by pain, and paralyzed by pure exhaustion. This blog is for you.

As activists, we often put ourselves last, focusing on the safety and wellbeing of others. However, when we deliberately expose ourselves to physical danger and social isolation without proper self-care techniques or considering the potential long-term psychological effects, we run the risk of experiencing debilitating burnout, numbing compassion fatigue, and other common psychological defenses created to serve as warning signs for emotional, psychological, and spiritual imbalance.

Read this full article, including psychological risks of activism and a list of ways to respond and maintain balance and wellness, at:
nbacares.org/stories-and-news/time-to-protest-time-to-rest
“Can You See the Jesus in Me?”
Rev. Sharyn Cosby, Executive Director
Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center, an NBA Incubate Initiative Affiliate Ministry

The Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center’s (OFEC) Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Initiative is establishing a productive way to organize our community stakeholders. We also have been able to cause effective changes in areas that have shown to increase DMC—i.e., arrests. Our strategic community stakeholder teams are divided into three taskforces: Law Enforcement and School Personnel Taskforce, System Taskforce, and Community Taskforce.

The impact and change that OFEC can help to effect extends to our own staff team as well. Angelia Cherry, OFEC office assistant, shares this testimony:

My purpose is to serve God, family, church, and the community. I work for OFEC. I give back by serving at the day center, spending time with our seniors on Thursdays for prayer and fellowship. I also hold a Celebrate Recovery program. I serve a summer food program every year. I thank God for saving me and giving me a better life than I had before. Without him, my life is nothing.

At times I sit back and look at my life and say to myself, “If I can help one person, all that I have done wouldn’t be in vain.” I can say that I found love in the right place. Can you see the Jesus in me?

More at: nbacares.org/stories-and-news/can-you-see-the-jesus-in-me
A Story from the National Benevolent Association

Displaced from Comfort
Tim Campbell, 2016-17 NBA XPLOR Resident, North Hollywood, CA

What does it mean to be a displaced human being? Webster’s Dictionary defines displace as “to remove from the usual or proper place,” which I find both fascinating and nervously close to my heart. I am a displaced Canadian in a foreign world.

I must admit there is a side to L.A. (and the U.S., though these things happen back home, too) that I was not prepared for, and that makes me extremely uncomfortable. There is a profound dichotomy between the rich and well off (which I am a part of) and the homeless. There is a disconnect between services provided and those who need them. I cannot live in peace knowing there are very serious problems around me, which I am now wildly more attuned to in the NBA XPLOR program.

I hope I can connect with the proper people and resources to make a difference in North Hollywood and beyond. After all, while I may be displaced from my comfort, there are people who are truly displaced humans - from Mexico, or Syria, or any other number of countries, who were displaced not by choice, and are living in sub-par conditions. I don’t think I can fully describe how much I want to help, the yearning in my being.

A wise woman once said that God will make us comfortable - but only enough so as to be displaced and go make a difference. I am comfortable in this amazing community - now I’m ready to be the difference in the world.

More at: nbacares.org/stories-and-news/displaced-from-comfort