

Welcoming the 2017-18 NBA XPLOR Residents!



National Benevolent Association

XPLOR
FAITH, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

Tucson-Marana, AZ

Ingrid Cedeno



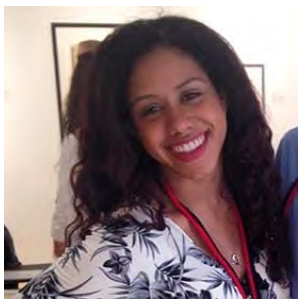
My name is Ingrid, and I am a full-time and active member at my church, Fe, Esperanza, y Amor—Faith, Hope, and Love (Disciples of Christ) in San Diego, CA. I am a former children’s and youth ministry leader. Working with the children at my church encouraged me to pursue a career in working with children. I have been working for the YMCA as a PRYDE Assistant Supervisor at an elementary school. I love working with a variety of cultures and individuals and all coming together as one. I’m also a member of a nonprofit organization called War on Hunger, where we go out to the streets of LA and share love with people experiencing homelessness. I plan on continuing to work to better my community and fighting for justice for people in need.

Savanna Phillips



Savanna is a lifetime member of the Disciples denomination and a founding member of her home church, New Disciples of Cedar Rapids, IA. She has worked with the youth in her congregation and assists with teaching during her church’s Wednesday night kids program. She was an avid volleyball player in high school as well and is an extremely talented clarinet player. She enjoys cooking, writing, reading, and playing with her dogs. Savanna is reserved when you first meet her but quickly warms to new people and will be your most dedicated friend.

Angelica Santiago Gonzalez



Angelica offers a unique blend of church experience, as she describes herself as a “church hopper”: from Roman Catholic, to Baptist, Pentecostal, and nondenominational congregations, she has experienced a little of all. In May, she graduated from Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, VA, with a sociology degree. At LC, she served as an RA and VP of the Student Government Association. A former military child, she has experienced a glimpse of the life of a nomad. She hopes to become a child advocate and eventually work with child abuse prevention policies. She loves writing, superheroes, and watching too much Netflix. She desires to someday be her own hero.

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Golden Gate, CA

Sandy Barnard



Sandy enters XPLOR after graduating in May from Grinnell College in Grinnell, IA, with a double major in theater and linguistics. Sandy is a lefty community organizer and artist from Chicago, where their home church is Augustana Lutheran Church in the Hyde Park neighborhood. They have acted or directed in eight shows in their time at Grinnell College, along with working on local electoral campaigns. In their free time, they write, cook, do stand-up comedy, and work on learning new languages; Sandy is already fluent in Arabic and Spanish.

Claire Cooley



Claire grew up in Albuquerque, NM, as a member of Monte Vista Christian Church, but moved to Eureka College in Eureka, IL, where she graduated in May, majoring in history and political science. While there, she served as both Student Body President and Vice President and participated in numerous mission trips, including Ecuador, Ghana, Togo, and Romania. She has worked at the Barrett Foundation supporting homeless women and children in their time of need. She enjoys camping, exploring the outdoors, cooking, and reading.

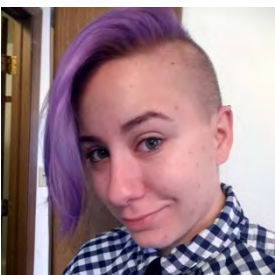
Tia-Lynn Rounsoville



Tia-Lynn is a junior at Missouri State University and is double majoring in communication and psychology, but is taking a break to be part of NBA XPLOR. Tia doesn't have an official church home but found their church family and XPLOR freshmen year during a free Starbucks event sponsored by a friendly ecumenical campus ministry by the name of Ekklesia. Tia has a passion for serving the community; finding and reciting random facts from Google; singing; discussing spirituality, faith, and other deep topics; and making food for people at God-awful times of the night. Their employment thus far and volunteer experiences have all been for nonprofits and community-based organizations. They hope to one day be

a program director and create opportunities for young adults. When they are not residing at school in Springfield, MO, Tia lives with their mother and six-year-old daughter in St. Louis.

Tj Thompson



Tj's home church is National Avenue Christian Church in Springfield, MO, where they have served as the Justice Coordinator for three years. While at Missouri State University, Tj pursues a Bachelor of Arts in religious studies and a minor in philosophy. In 2014, they were a summer Disciples Home Mission Intern in Moore, OK. Tj also spends some hours each week at RareBreed Safe Place, the local youth drop-in center for street-dependent youth. They enjoy writing poetry and rock climbing. Tj has a passion for working towards justice with marginalized individuals and groups, such as LGBT people and the Black Lives Matter Movement.

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St. Louis, MO

Nathan Berry



Nathan's home church is Galileo Christian Church in Mansfield, TX, where she serves as the Co-President of the Missional Logistics Team. Nathan graduated in May with a degree in music composition with honors from Texas Christian University, and is an accomplished cellist and composer, having won an award for her film-scoring work, collaborated with musicians across the country, and performed at the Gay Christian Network Conference, the OPEN Conference, and the Wild Goose Festival. She is passionate about intersectional justice, and her journey in coming to identify as genderqueer has been an invaluable learning experience. In her spare time, Nathan loves being with friends, discussing her favorite TV shows, and enjoying margaritas.

Paige Bobbitt



Paige's home church is Saint Andrew Christian Church in Dublin, OH, a suburb outside of Columbus. She is a senior at The Ohio State University studying speech and hearing science with minors in disability studies and human development and family sciences. Her involvement in Alpha Phi Omega, a service fraternity, has led her to many volunteering jobs. Among them were two week-long trips to New Orleans, working with the United Saints Recovery Project and completing many assignments, including working in community gardens and rebuilding houses. Paige loves to cook, paint, take pictures, craft, and watch medical and crime shows.

Ashlyn Reynolds



Ashlyn is from Bedford, IN, where she attends First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She graduated in May from Indiana University with a BFA in photography. Ashlyn is active on her church board and co-leads the youth group. She also volunteers with a trail and bookstore in her hometown. She has held work-study jobs in a counseling center and as a high school tutor. She has skills in Photoshop and InDesign and has been playing the flute for 12 years. Ashlyn loves art and art history, reading, running, and is interested in education and community art programming. She currently works at a health and wellness center, and she works hard at keeping a vegetarian diet, but also tries to be flexible.

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Hiram-Mantua, OH

Melissa Peralez



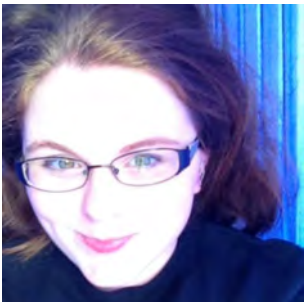
My mother is the pastor of my church, First Christian Church in Raymondville, TX. I am the director of our children's church. I also go to Mexico regularly to do missionary work at a church there. I recently graduated from culinary school. I love to cook and bake, especially for other people; it gives me great joy to see people eat and enjoy my cooking. I hope to one day open my own restaurant for low-income people to pay only what they can afford or to help around the restaurant.

Ian Pollard



Ian's home church is First Christian Church in San Bernardino, CA, but he has currently been attending Vista La Mesa Christian Church in San Diego, CA, while away at college. Ian has made every effort to participate in regional youth ministry; he has been a part of many church camps, directed several winter camps, been a part of the regional camp and conference committee, served on several planning committees for events, and has been an adult leader for the Pacific Southwest Regional Youth Leadership Team. Ian graduated in May from Point Loma Nazarene University in the San Diego, CA, area. His degree is a Bachelor of Arts: cross disciplinary in teacher education with a math concentration. His goal is to become a middle school math teacher. Ian loves to play video games and considers himself a nerd. Ian can binge on television shows in a heartbeat. He loves food and will try any food at least once. Ian likes to snowboard whenever he has the availability to do so. He enjoys playing table-top board games with friends, and Ian is currently writing a fantasy-based book series with his best friend. He is working as a behavioral interventionist with children with autism.

Mary Taylor



Mary's home church is First Christian Church of Smithfield, NC, where she teaches the high school Sunday school class and serves as the youth minister. During the summer, Mary can be found in the mountains of North Carolina, either working on camp staff or volunteering at Christmount, a Disciples of Christ Retreat, Camp, and Conference Center. She is a proud Bulldog of Barton College in Wilson, NC, where she graduated in May having majored in religion and mathematics, and where she discovered her unique talent for interpreting songs into American Sign Language. Mary has a passion for seeking justice for all, but most importantly youth.

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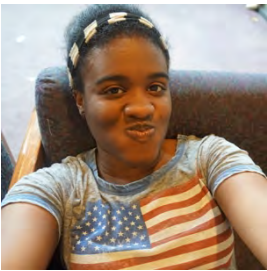
Dallas, TX

Nadine Compton



Nadine is a Filipina-Canadian from Saudi Arabia who is a very active member of Sugarbush Christian Church in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. She attends nearly every Bible Study, potluck, and Dinner Church event (and may have led one herself). She was also instrumental in putting together an interfaith study with the local mosque. Nadine chooses to address social injustice by improving the social media presence and strategies of nonprofit organizations.

Diamond Green



I learned about NBA XPLOR while attending National Avenue Christian Church in Springfield, MO, during my studies at Missouri State University. This will be my second year in XPLOR, so I am taking a break from studies there, where I was majoring in psychology with a minor in law. While at MSU, I became good friends with the Disciples campus minister and was very active in a group called Ekklesia. My home church is El Shaddai Miracle Temple in Chicago. My work experience includes serving as a children's caregiver and student worker/librarian while in college. During my first year in XPLOR, I lived in the Hiram-Mantua house, worked with children at Little Village for my internship, and my host congregation was Hilltop Christian Church in Mantua, OH.

Robert "RJ" Howard



My name is Robert Howard (RJ). I am from Gilbert, AZ, and I recently graduated from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University. I have two home churches: First Christian Church in Scottsdale and Chalice Christian Church in Gilbert. I have worked extensively with the Arizona Regional Youth Program—both as a youth and later as a counselor/sponsor. I haven't decided on the course I want to take for my life, but as of now I am looking into environmental issues or possibly being a teacher. I love to read, sing, eat, play games, make pillow forts (even if it always gets too hot). And did I say eating?

Amethyst Kelly



Amethyst is finishing her senior year at Oklahoma State University where she is earning a degree in biosystems engineering. She attends First Christian Church in Stillwater while at school and just got back from her second mission trip to Jamaica with the church college group. Amethyst loves to read when she is relaxed, cook when she is stressed, and dance when she is awake. She likes to travel so she can see new things and meet new people.

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Landon Wilcox



Landon is new to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); however, he quickly fell in love with the justice work that the church is doing throughout the country. He is a member at First Christian Church in Lynchburg, VA. In May, he graduated from Lynchburg College, where he majored in religious studies. He also led Young Life for two years. After XPLOR, he plans to continue on to graduate school so that he can pursue a career as a university professor. In high school, he was on a club swim team that he later coached. He loves to play music, sing, read, and discuss challenging topics with his friends.

*Now in its fourth year, 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.***

