

Change and Commitment

Paige Bobbitt, 2017-18 NBA XPLOR Resident in St. Louis, MO



A series of times, these two terrifying words have interacted with my NBA XPLOR experience.

Columbus, Ohio was safety. I was born and raised there. In Columbus, I attended my first day of preschool and my last day of college. My family, friends, and a vast majority of my acquaintances live there. Everything I have ever known has been Columbus. It would have been easy to stay there, to

not commit to XPLOR, but I knew I needed a change.

Last spring, I received a covenant from the XPLOR program. Before receiving this packet, I was sure I was going to be completing the program. Upon receiving a list of expectations, I was not so certain. Would I be able to comply with all of the guidelines? After being on my own for 4 years, this sounded like too much structure, maybe it wasn't for me. During this decision-making process, tears were shed, a magnitude of naps were taken, and countless phone calls were made. It took me weeks of contemplation before I finally sent back in the signed covenant. Committing to change is not easy or pretty.

During the summer, I was matched with an organization that on the surface seemed to be the perfect fit for me. About a month before I was set to leave for St. Louis, I was informed that my internship fell through and I was being relocated to another site. I was devastated. After another meltdown and series of naps and phone calls, I thought I had come to the decision to withdraw from the program. I had already fully mentally committed myself to this site, and now I was being asked to change? This seemed like too many unknowns and I wasn't sure I was ready for all of it, but something made me decide to stay committed to the program. Faith rewarded me with an excellent internship. I was placed with iFM Community Medicine a little late in the process, but it was completely worth the wait. I could not be happier with my placement, it truly is a match made in heaven. It's hard to keep commitments when plans change, but change is often for the better.

On my drive to St. Louis in August, I was already planning my first trip home. I was so focused on what was 400 miles east of me that I was forgetting to process and take in what

was occurring around me. In this program, you are sent into communities that are making a commitment to you, and you need to reciprocate that commitment. Each of these sites is ripe for change, and you are committing your time and efforts to assist them. One of my favorite quotes is, "Be where your feet are." I try to remind myself of this when my mind starts to wander back home. Home will still be there when you finish the program after 10 months. Be present in the moment and commit yourself to change in the community you are serving.

One of my biggest fears before starting this program was that I was going to be different when I came home. I was terrified that committing myself to the cornerstones of this program would change me. I was afraid that by agreeing to live within the constraints of the program I would lose part of myself. A little less than half way done and it's safe to say I am different. I have committed myself to simple living and changed my financial patterns. I have deepened my commitment to serving the community around me and changed my understanding of justice work. I have committed my time to a cause bigger than myself and I have changed my life.

Commit to changing your commitments and this program will change you for the better.

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.**