

Hello from the West Coast

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Hello from the West Coast,

We are currently living into the snow forecast that has piled onto our Spokane landscape; hoping for some nice 40-degree weather this month. I never thought I would be so happy to see green grass.

Oh, how the months have flown by! Just a few months ago I was embarking on the journey west, which is surreal because I am an east-coaster, born and raised. Living on a different coast has been exciting. I feel like my Western U.S History is finally not subpar.

The program so far has been a huge learning curve; teaching me how to run from base to base while on a simple budget. Living in intentional community has taught me new methods of cooking, viewing work, and self-care. Rachel has

taught me improvisation skills when cooking, substituting this for that to still make an incredible meal. Nathaniel has taught me that organizing work is essential for building up our own communities and Colby has taught me that self-care is important in your time off of work. Intentional community has required compromise about timing, purchases, and activities. I think the 3-day drive really helped push us deeper into intentional community before we began living with one another.

Some life skill moments thus far include: driving across the country with three strangers only then to have to live with them, living on a simple budget in a state with high gas, grocery and sales tax, and searching out free events as if they were chocolate. Those are just a few things to name.

P.S. Elsa has put a spell on our community with a snow curse, hence the sign in the picture below: "It's all Elsa"



The credit for our job placements cannot go to Elsa, however. The team in Spokane did a wonderful job of matching us with the right internships for us. My job has been a great match with my personality and skill set. I would say that I have #jobgoals. Fair Housing has been enlightening work; there's been semi casework and semi nonprofit development with projects that have challenged me. Housing work is multi-faceted; the work changes as each clients' needs are different. The work has made me aware of how policy is integral to effect change in the community. My work building is called the "community building". The building includes other nonprofits from within the city. Some organizers, some environmental, and some creative arts. I get exposed to new issues, solutions, and rad people on a daily basis.

Talk about really awesome people: my coworker teaches at an adult ESL program at night. The class she teaches has people from all over the world. I attend class each Thursday night which has easily made it my favorite day of the week. In class we play a game called fishbowl, which is a word guessing game. The students have responded well to learning new words and exchanging stories. Getting to interact with people from all different places and cultures has been a delight. I am really grateful to engage with others from the community and simply build relationships in the midst of learning.

I am learning how church as community is one of the greatest benefits of being part of a church. Church has always been a part of my life. It is pretty spectacular to get to share the unique bond that church community envelopes. Every Sunday after the service, the church engages in coffee hour. Members rotate bringing cookies and providing coffee. It is a time to check in and chat. The church is on the older side of the age scale, which has been a pure joy getting to develop intergenerational relationships. I have some "besties" as I like to call them. I am not only learning about relationships within the church, but also about the church's relationship with the community. Currently, I am researching church land use and housing solutions. Apparently, there is a plethora of church land and a need of housing and the two may be a match.

Our house has developed “gregfeast” as a great match for our spiritual companion time. Each Friday morning, the house shares a meal with Rev. Greg Skinner, our spiritual companion. We often have eggs, a protein, and the most essential ingredient, coffee. We talk about our work, personal highs and lows, and often rant about the current status of the United States. The conversation combines together spiritual questions with vocational application.



As for my individual vocational match, the search is still on for that answer. One of my co-workers happens to spread daily wisdom that I call “shandom” (her name is Shannon). With many discussions about discernment and calling, I have often mulled over the question “what do I want to do?”. With no diagnosable title, I struggle to figure out my “job path”. In typical Shannon fashion, she invited me to rephrase the question- instead of asking what I want to do, how about asking “who do I want to become?” This left me with little words but more thoughts. Throughout public education and college, I was interrogating myself to answer the question “what do I want to do?”, but I am realizing that who I want to be” is the first step. Although I have not been bitten by the discernment bug, I feel more relief as I know

more about who I want to become. I hope this gives a little picture of my experience in the NBA XPLOR program so far.

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.**