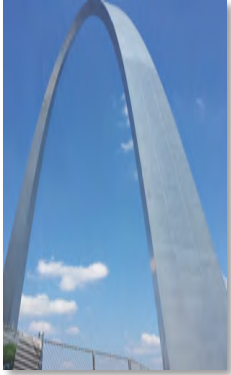


Heading to Hiram

Sarah Dowd, 2015-16 NBA XPLOR Resident in Hiram-Mantua, OH
September 2015

My journey started off with God's blessings. I left on Thursday, August 13, heading to Nashville to visit family. After a few days of hiking, a county fair, and an awesome concert, I said goodbye and thanked them for being the best hosts ever.



I then headed to St. Louis for NBA XPLOR Laboratory. I arrived a couple of hours early to have time to see the Arch. I was by myself, walking around downtown St. Louis. I'm not really use to doing things on my own. I walked to the Arch, went to the top, and felt on top of the world. I knew at that point I would be okay!

Finally, I arrived to my Laboratory week and fell in love with everyone. It's a very diverse group! I learned so much in a week about All Lives Matter, food insecurity, conflict resolution, and money tips for our simple living. It was an amazing week, full of knowledge that I know I can use and share. I created many bonds and got to know St. Louis very well—and then it was time to say goodbye again.

So, my three roommates—Wilber, C.J., and Alanna—and I headed to Hiram-Mantua, Ohio—our new home! We stopped in Indianapolis to visit a Disciples church, Central Christian Church, where we shared with them about NBA XPLOR.

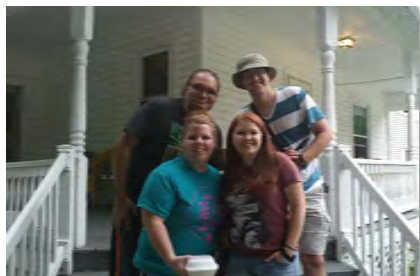


After church, we headed north. With one Starbucks stop, we arrived in Hiram at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, Aug 23. The week began with unpacking and a number of trips to Dollar General, Walmart, and Target to set up our house. We had our first meal as a family of four—vegetable soup—and I tried homemade Indian food for the first time.

Later in the week, the XPLOR Residents all went to each other's work sites to support each other. I attended a town revitalization meeting, which was interesting. We also visited downtown Cleveland and have started meeting people in the neighborhood. Our neighbors even made dinner for us one night—we have been very welcomed!



I'm excited to start my internship at Hiram College this week. We are fully immersing ourselves in the community around us!



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 at nbacares.org/xplor.