

"Buckle Up and Hold On Tight"

Ian Pollard, 2017-18 NBA XPLOR Resident in Hiram-Mantua, OH
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Another door opens while another door closes.

Several paths grow brighter while others grow dimmer.

A leap a faith, ready, and willing.

Listen to my story.



My name is Ian Pollard and I'm from Southern California. My home town is Redlands, which is in the Inland Empire. (General direction: 2 hours from San Diego, and roughly an hour and a half from Los Angeles). I graduated from Point Loma Nazarene University with a Bachelors of Arts in Cross Disciplinary Studies with a concentration in mathematics... It's basically an education degree. My current path has been and still is to be a middle school math teacher.

"What?"

"Really?"

"You're a brave one."

I'm sure at least one or all three of these ideas has managed to make their way into your head by now. You heard correctly... Yes, really... And yes, I'm super brave. I have always enjoyed working with youth from middle school to high school age groups. I deeply believe that middle school math is where students have the most trouble. I want to build the bridge that helps push students to success. I would like to fill in that gap of the foundation of mathematics to help the students in their development of learning in their later years.

I'm very active in youth ministry back home through my church, but also on a regional level. I'm a huge nerd and love playing video games with my close friends all over the country. Lastly, I'm family oriented and have the best family and support system anyone can have. I couldn't have made it this far without my family and closest friends.

What is XPLOR? Some of you may be asking what exactly the XPLOR program is.

XPLOR was created by the National Benevolent Association, a "...10 month, congregationally-hosted residency program designed for 21 to 30 year olds looking to explore lives of care and service – giving them the opportunity to unleash their own potential, while positively impacting their community." (<https://www.nbacaes.org/xplor>)

The XPLOR program has finally found a way to reach me and grab a hold of me. I have accepted and been placed in Hiram-Mantua, Ohio (which by the way is a super small town, it's called a township/village).

I have begun the process of trying to figure out how to answer the hard question that we all ask ourselves: "Why are you here? No really, why are you here?"

It's only been about a month and I have yet to figure it out yet and that's okay. I have 10 months to figure it out. A perfect quote that comes to mind is from a character in Terry Goodkind's book *Wizard's First Rule*, "Nothing is ever easy!"

My journey begins now. It begins with many new experiences ahead with laughter, pain, excitement, and joy. But beyond all that, this new opened door and bright path ahead of me will allow myself to really think and answer the question of why I'm here. So, buckle up and hold on tight because we're about go full speed on the road ahead.

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 nbacaes.org/xplor.**