



National Benevolent Association

XPLOR

FAITH, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

A Letter to Next Year's XPLOR Residents (Especially the One Who Will Be Doing My Job)

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There's a lot you will see and hear and want to fix, but you have to accept that you can't fix it all. No matter how much you want to take home particular children so they can be happier or have more attention, food, etc., you can only provide as much help/attention/food as you have resources for.

Remember to take care of yourself, too, because this work can be very draining, psychologically as well as physically. Focus on the positive aspects as much as possible, because there will come a point where it all seems like there's just too much to do and you're shouting into a void, but you have to celebrate the smaller victories, like having a student hug you with excitement when they figure out how to add double digits, or getting a middle-schooler to respond with multiple syllables.

Be aware of your housemates: their needs, preferences, and feelings. Check in with them. Be supportive of them and their decisions. Consider that their internships, church life, and/or stress levels may be different from your own. Let them know you're there for them if they need it.

Make sure you make connections besides your housemates. This may take the form of developing a church family where you're staying/working. It could be through a local group you take part in, or just by striking up a conversation with the girl behind you in line at the coffee shop every Friday.

Take some time for yourself. Don't forget to do something at least once a day, not because it physically nourishes you or because it is your responsibility, but because you want to do so. Eat that Ben & Jerry's ice cream. Color that Harry Potter coloring sheet. Dance like crazy to Sara Bareilles' newest song. Do you.

There's a quote floating around Tumblr from user tiavision that is particularly apt for XPLOR Residents, I think: "You all have a little bit of 'I want to save the world' in you, and I think that's why you're here." Hold on to that. You are here to do your part to change the world. What could be better than that?

*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.***