



Reflections from Spokane

Tristan Cole, 2019-20 NBA XPLOR Resident in Spokane, WA

It's been nearly three months since I first came to the city of Spokane, Washington and it's a very surreal feeling. It's hard for me to believe it's already been this long when the time I've spent here seems so short. I also look back and I can't believe how quickly this all came together. Truth be told, if someone told me back in July of this year that roughly a month and half after I first learned about XPLOR I would be in Spokane, I wouldn't have believed them.

Coming to Spokane was a major transition for me. This is the first time that I've ever lived this far from home. When I was in college at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, I only lived about a half hour away from home. Now there's a 27-hour gap between where I live and my home in Rogers, Arkansas. Also, it's a very different world here. The arterial streets here have taken some major getting used to. The weather here seems crazy to me as there was a literal snowfall in September, and the sun now sinks completely below the horizon by 4:30 p.m. every evening.

Despite some of the difficulties I faced with the transition of coming here to the city of Spokane, I can say with complete confidence that coming here was one of the best decisions I've ever made. For one thing, the natural beauty that surrounds this city is enough to take anyone's breath away. Also, I've enjoyed exploring some of the local areas including the gorgeous city of Coeur d'Alene and the beautiful lake that surrounds it. I have also been enjoying my internship placement here in Spokane. I've been working at several places run by the organization [Transitions](#) which include the [New Leaf Bakery & Café](#), along with the [Women's Hearth](#). At the bakery and café, I help with the job training programs that are offered at those locations, and at the Hearth I've been helping the staff run things behind the scenes by organizing donations and assisting with their weekly food bank.





Along with all the experiences I've had here in Spokane, another thing that makes me so glad I came here is looking back and seeing just how much in this short three months I've grown in faith and as a person. For one thing, my time here so far has taught me the true power of gratitude and how much being grateful for every little thing you have can elevate your life. Also, I've learned how much exuding positivity can brighten not only my life, but the lives of others around me. It's been such a life changing experience to see some of the individuals I've been working with and learning from their example of always showing love and positivity. Also, I've grown in faith on my Sabbath time on Fridays by learning about the origins of the Bible and learning about the interesting processes of exegesis and eisegesis and understanding the books of the Bible in a different set of contexts.

When I first moved here, I wasn't sure, but I can say with certainty now that me learning about XPLOR and coming here was a God moment. This move has allowed me to grow in so many ways, and this is only the beginning. I still have another seven months before the program ends and I look forward to seeing what God and this program have in store for me later down the road.

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.](http://nbacares.org/xplor)