

Hi everybody!

I hope all is well wherever you are. Things here have been crazy (hence why my update is so late!). Just about all of February was really busy for me. In the beginning of the month, Ali, my direct boss, let Marilyn, our head boss, know that she was leaving her position as the Volunteer Coordinator at the Rescue Mission to become an elementary school teacher. Ali had been the Volunteer Coordinator since August as well as an ex-YAV from two years ago. Marilyn is my supervisor for the YAV program, current Community Development Director and overseer of the Volunteer Department, and ex-Volunteer Coordinator (she was the Volunteer Coordinator for three years before Ali got there, then moved up to Community Development Director). Anyway, this caused a lot of stress on the Volunteer Department since the only ones in it were Marilyn, Ali, and myself. Over the summer, Marilyn and I worked fine together with all of the volunteer groups that came in and other miscellaneous things that had to be done. As the summer wound down and things got progressively slower, Ali got on board and became a part of our team. The three of us split the work that needed to be done and it worked out fine. Some days were a bit slower than others for me because Ali and Marilyn were doing most of the work that had to be done, but overall, I enjoyed my position as the intern and Assistant to the Volunteer Coordinator. I hope this all makes some sort of sense. When Ali told Marilyn she'd be leaving in two weeks, Marilyn proposed an idea to me. She gave me three options. The first was that I would continue to do the same things I had been doing (i.e. the monthly reports, weekly kitchen scheduling, keeping track of the Probation and Department of Corrections hours, and other miscellaneous office tasks) and she would hire another Volunteer Coordinator to take over Ali's position. We both agreed that it would be difficult and stressful to train another boss for me so this option didn't really work out. The next option was for me to become the Volunteer Coordinator (since I've been there for seven months already and basically knew how to do the job) and to hire an Assistant Volunteer Coordinator to work under me doing the tasks I had been doing since June. In this option, the assistant would have the knowledge that he or she would be taking over the Volunteer Coordinator position in August when I leave. The last option was almost the same as the second, but I would stay in Miami for at least another year and my assistant would be just that. After Marilyn and I talked about the last two options being the most feasible out of the three, she gave me the condition that I had to tell her my decision in the next couple of days so that she could advertise the assistant position properly. This was incredibly stressful for me and I came home completely overwhelmed. There was no way I could decide whether I would be staying in Miami past August already. I like the Rescue Mission and what I would be doing as the Volunteer Coordinator would give me more responsibility and leadership ability in the Mission, but I just didn't know. Everyone else's plans for next year were just as shaky as my own and none of us knew what we would be doing come next year let alone whether we wanted to continue living in Miami or not. When I came home, I prayed, talked with my parents, my housemates, Heidi, and Kevin about my predicament. God had obviously put a fork in my path and I had to choose which way to turn. After talking with everyone and praying some more, I went to work the next day and told Marilyn that it didn't really matter whether she knew if I was staying or not yet because we would be hiring an assistant no matter what. She then insisted that it was imperative that she knew

so the assistant would know what he or she was getting into. I told her that if I had to make a definite decision right then, I would have to tell her I would not be staying in Miami past August. There was no way I could make a decision like that in a couple of days and it was not fair to spring that kind of forceful decision on me when August was still six months away. So, making a long story even longer, I have decided I will not be continuing God's work in Miami next year. I have been exploring other options about where He is leading me next.

I applied for the Mission Service Recruitment Internship in Louisville, Kentucky on March 6<sup>th</sup> and am waiting to hear back from them. I would be working for the National Volunteer Office (NVO) for PC(USA) traveling all over the country recruiting more YAVs from colleges, universities, and church groups. Hopefully, I will hear something soon about this position. Another opportunity that has come to me recently is working for a domestic violence shelter for women in northern Virginia. A friend of mine from home let me know that this might be available to me come August because she knows that one of the women who works there now will be moving away then. I have contacted this woman and let her know about my interest and will probably be sending a résumé to them soon. I know that both of these opportunities would be great and I also know that God will show me clearly where I need to be. As soon as I hear from the NVO, I think I'll have a better idea of where God is sending me. Of course, I'll be praying about it and I would like to ask you to pray about it for me as well. It is stressful to not know where you will be or what you will be doing in the next few months, so I ask that you join in prayer with me so that God will reveal what road I should take.

In addition to this huge chunk of my month, I also took a trip with Justin to Virginia for recruiting more volunteers (basically what I would be doing as the Mission Service Recruitment Internship). We visited Sweet Briar, Hampden-Sydney, and Liberty University. I pretty much planned the whole trip and contacted people at each college to set up a day and time to speak with students there. I really enjoyed planning this trip and talking with the people at all three places. I truly believe (based on this trip) that if I get the internship in Louisville that I would enjoy it immensely. It was also good to get to see my parents, visit my home church, see friends at each school, and show Justin what life is like in Virginia. I think he enjoyed it too.

As for other miscellaneous happenings in February, two of my friends here from the Lighthouse, Rocky and Juliet, got engaged; my housemates and I were introduced to a new, more private beach/lagoon to go to on sunny days; and I had a meeting with a lady from a local consulting company about setting up a business plan for my music magazine website.

February really flew by fast and I can't believe March is almost over already. Things have been moving so quickly and I'm sure August will be here before I know it. Even though I've felt fairly stressed out about becoming the Volunteer Coordinator, things are getting much better now that Toya, my assistant, is working with me and I'm excited about my new responsibilities. In a couple of short weeks, I will write you again to tell you more about being the Volunteer Coordinator and how great it has been. Until then, please keep me and the rest of the Miami interns in your prayers as we continue God's work here and figure out things for next year. God bless you!

Love, Christie