

Hi everyone!

Miami is starting to get less humid as the days go by. I know that even though the weather will be beautiful in the coming months, I'm really going to miss the changing colors of fall at home. The good thing about being here is that I finally feel like everything is starting to fall into place for me. My job is going well, I love my housemates, and I'm beginning to feel comfortable living here. I never thought I'd end up in Miami, but I know it's going to be a year that I'll never forget and that will shape me into a much more well-rounded person by the end of next August.

So I guess I should explain to you all about how and why I'm down here. Ok, so this might be a little confusing, but bear with me. I did this process completely backwards from every other intern who I am currently living with. Let me begin by explaining that I am working as an intern through a program run by the Presbyterian Church. The interns involved in this program are called YAV's (or Young Adult Volunteers). If I was to go through the process like everyone else, I would have sent in an application in mid-winter, gone through a discernment event where I would figure out where I felt God was calling me to serve as an intern in the next year, completed my decision, and arrived in my placement on September 1 with the rest of my housemates who were also placed in the same area. After speaking with Richard Aspinwall last December about the Lighthouse and visiting in March, I was certain that Miami was where God wanted me to be. However, I had the idea that God was calling me for a job, not a year-long internship. Richard and his wife, Heidi, had the idea that I wanted to be a part of the Presbyterian YAV program and had already looked into it. So I was completely unaware of any program or paperwork that they thought I was doing. I moved down to Miami on June 12, with the impression that I would work through the summer helping Heidi with the program she is the site coordinator of: DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection). I would be like a camp counselor helping out groups of youth that came to do week-long urban missionary trips through DOOR Miami. The plan (at least in my mind) was to do this through the end of July/beginning of August and then work with Richard and the Lighthouse doing PR. Well, let me say that God had really different plans for me.

I have to say that I knew before I came to Miami, regardless of not knowing about any kind of program, I really felt that God was calling me to be here. I wasn't sure why, but I knew He wanted me here for some reason. Now, I know why. Even though I did the whole YAV process backwards, everything has worked out and the details of the formalities have fallen into place. I have already worked at the Miami Rescue Mission as the Assistant Volunteer Coordinator since June and I know pretty much everything about my job that there is to know (which is good since I have a lot to do!). God has been really good to me and knows that I needed to be down here. I still don't think I have a completely clear picture of what God wants me to do while I'm here, but I think that will come into focus as the year progresses.

My job (I should start calling it a placement) as the Assistant Volunteer Coordinator at the Miami Rescue Mission is great? a bit busy sometimes, but for the most part, I really like it. Ali Rhea, the regular pastor at the Lighthouse services is my new supervisor and we work really well together. Marilyn Brummitt has become her supervisor but also still kind of my boss as well. Since Ali has come to work in the office, I feel like the dynamic of our department has changed, for the good, of course. I really like working with her. A typical day at work for me fluctuates depending on what week of the month it is. In the beginning and ending week of each month, it is always very busy with trying to finalize monthly reports, figuring out total volunteer hours, compiling hours for people who volunteer needing community service hours for U.S. Probation, Department of Corrections, etc. and other odd jobs. I spend a lot of time in correspondence by phone, email, and fax. I talk with a lot of people who are interested in volunteering to help the Mission, either as individuals or with groups. Ali and I have also spent some time traveling to local volunteer fairs to recruit more people. There is always a lot of paperwork and filing to do, reports to run, appointments with volunteers, greeting groups and giving orientations to first-time groups among other things. Some days are slower than others, but I'm pretty busy most of the time. It would take another letter to describe more about the Rescue Mission itself so here is the website to help you understand more about the organization [www.miamirescuemission.com](http://www.miamirescuemission.com). Hopefully, this will give you a better idea of what I am helping to coordinate volunteers for.

Ok, so enough about me. Here is a little bit of information about my house and my other YAV housemates. I live in a house in a section of Miami called Little Havana, where very few people speak English. My six years of Spanish has definitely come in handy here! I have remembered more than I thought I did. Our house is very quirky to say the least. It leaks when it rains, ants frequently invade it, and the dirt never seems to go away no matter how much we clean! I have five housemates: three other girls and two boys. I live in a big bedroom with Megan Burns from North Carolina. Dalia Tovar, a girl from Montreal, Quebec, lives in a single next to our room and Maggie Maclean, a girl from Buffalo, New York lives in a single down the hall. The two boys, Robbie Mida and Justin Jording (from Hungary and Seattle, Washington respectively) share the Florida room as their bedroom. I have attached a picture of the six of us from our recent YAV retreat in Allenspark, Colorado, so you can connect names with faces (Megan is the tall, blonde girl, Dalia is the one making a goofy face on the end, Maggie is wearing the red hat, Robbie is standing next to me, and Justin is wearing the black hat).

I'm trying to keep this email as succinct as possible (and I've already gone overboard as it is), so I may have to wait until the next update to tell you more about my housemates (we're all quirky as well). I hope everyone is doing well at home. I hope you all can rest safely and know that although I kind of moved to Miami on a whim, everything has worked out for the best and I'm very happy here (well, most days at least, when I'm not homesick for Virginia and you all!). God bless you all and please keep me in your prayers. I miss you!!!

Sincerely,

Christie

P.S. All of the Miami YAV's created a Webshots account so you guys can keep up with our craziness! Check it out at <http://community.webshots.com/user/miamiyavs>. I'm putting pictures on it soon!

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