

Crossroads GPS

guidance, preparation & success

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PEER MENTORING MAKES A DIFFERENCE FOR SCHOLARS



Eric Cutler (left) is currently mentoring Marcus Jones

In 2018, Crossroads established the Peer Mentoring Program, partnering with LEAD scholars to better transition our incoming freshmen into high school. The program fosters relationships with students across grades to improve connections within Crossroads and increase scholars' ability to identify and access local resources. LEAD scholars are juniors and seniors in Crossroads who plan and implement social activities and service projects. This program allows these upperclassmen to also develop leadership skills so they can grow as role models for other students.

Each mentoring meeting allows our new scholars to communicate with someone as challenges arise during their first year as a high school student. All mentors and mentees participate in trainings through the Mentoring Partnership and

meet at least twice per month. This year, Crossroads has almost 40 freshmen being mentored!

Eric Cutler, a junior at Central Catholic High School, is currently mentoring Marcus Jones, a fellow Central student in 9th grade. Both students described themselves as quieter and more reserved, but said the peer mentoring program has helped push them to step outside their comfort zones. Eric said that when he first joined Crossroads as a freshman and was provided a mentor, he was very nervous. "I didn't spend much time with my mentor at first because I wasn't super social," he said. "Being a mentor now, though, has given me the opportunity to meet people like Marcus and stay in touch with others in our group."

Marcus said this program and spending time with someone like Eric has enhanced his productivity as a student and given him someone to look up to. "I look up to Eric and I have improved socially in school," he said. "I look forward to working hard so I can be in LEAD and mentor someone else to help them with their own school experience."



Crossroads mentors were featured on KDKA's Kidsburgh in September and photos were displayed during the Magic of Mentoring hosted by The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA.

BY THE NUMBERS

We've graduated over 600 scholars since 1988. Among them...

100% GRADUATE
high school on time

96% ENROLL in
college after
graduation

72% HAVE EARNED
their BA or are still on track
to graduate

75% take High School
HONORS
or AP
courses

70% ACHIEVE an
unweighted
GPA of 3.0
or higher



Holiday Party Fun!



WAYPOINTS The Road Ahead from the Executive Director's Desk

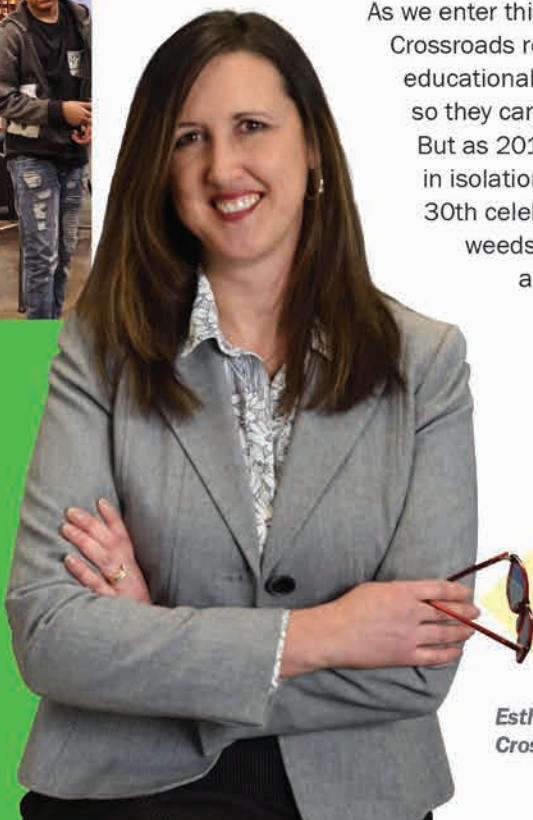
Welcome to a new year and a new decade, a time filled with resolutions and aspirations for the months to come. It is also a time of reflection, as we pause to remember the twelve months that came before, the successes and surprises, the questions and disappointments, the times we wish would have lasted forever and the ones we'd gladly forget. In these moments of memory and anticipation, we connect with our values, our dreams and fears, and with who and what matters most in our lives.

As an organization striving for impact and excellence, Crossroads too must pause to reconnect with our values, our hopes for the future and the dreams of those with whom we work daily. One such moment took place in late November when I met with Crossroads staff, parents and guardians to share some of my reflections on Crossroads' progress in 2019.

Two moments stood out this past year as emblematic of all that Crossroads is and all that we hope to be – our 30th Anniversary Cocktails with Crossroads event and our first Community Collaboration. As we commemorated thirty academic years in May, we gathered folks who have been instrumental in Crossroads' success – founders, donors, supporters, alumni, board and staff – in celebration of our ongoing work. The highlight of the evening was hearing stories from alumni, those who embody Crossroads' impact, while bringing together so many different people whose talents, treasure and time made those stories possible.

Another highlight from this past year was Crossroads' first Community Collaboration, when the large and diverse Crossroads family gathered in Homewood to pull weeds, plant flowers and spread mulch in a community lot. In so many ways, this Saturday morning was a picture of what Crossroads aspires to be as we move into a new decade – a vibrant community working together to nurture the growth of our scholars and to open up pathways for success for more young people.

As we enter this new year and new decade together, Crossroads remains focused on its mission to provide educational access and opportunities to young people so they can go on to fulfill their God-instilled potential. But as 2019 has shown us, this is not accomplished in isolation. Whether a long time supporter at the 30th celebration or a scholar's younger sibling pulling weeds, a successful alum sharing their story or a parent selling Crossroads hoodies to start an emergency fund, we collectively make it possible for Crossroads to be the place "where potential finds its path" for aspiring young people. Here's to another wonderful year!



Esther Stief
Crossroads' Executive Director



NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHT



JUSTIN PACINI

Counselor

HOMETOWN Brentwood, PA

HIGH SCHOOL Brentwood High School

COLLEGE St. Vincent College, History and Secondary Education

Duquesne University, Masters in Instructional Technology

PREVIOUS JOBS Social Studies Teacher and Academic Advisor

Why have you chosen the career path you are in today? I feel very strongly education is one of the most effective means to promote social justice.

Why does Crossroads differ from where you've worked before? The biggest difference between Crossroads and other jobs I've held is the buy-in from scholars, parents and staff. Everyone really believes in Crossroads' mission and they will do anything they can to further their education, their life and do what they love.

What are you most excited about for the future of Crossroads? I am excited for kids to come back years down the road after they graduate and be involved. I hope they become mentors and board members down the road, expanding the Crossroads vision and family from the inside.

JENNIFER MONTOYA

Program Coordinator

HOMETOWN Los Alamitos, CA

HIGH SCHOOL Los Alamitos High School

COLLEGE Penn State University - Main Campus, International Politics, Penn State University - Main Campus, Masters in International Affairs

PREVIOUS JOBS Assistant Women's Basketball Coach, Lafayette College in Easton, PA

How does Crossroads differ from where you've worked before? I was a coach, so I'm actually able to take what I learned there and extract the best out of each individual scholar here. We don't ever settle for complacency. We strive to make sure each scholar is getting the most out of our workshops and programs, which is enhancing their experience.

What has Crossroads done to enhance your life? Crossroads has given me another chance of purposefully working towards something every day. It's not about me, it's about the scholars and their future paths. I have recognized the importance of devoting myself so that other people have the opportunities that they may not have always been exposed to.

What are you most excited about for the future of Crossroads? We can help these scholars achieve their personal dreams.



Hayes Design Group, led by Crossroads' long-time friend Kevin Hayes, was awarded a 2019 Corporate Citizenship Award by the Pittsburgh Business Times and chose Crossroads as their nonprofit showcase partner. Crossroads board members and staff and Crossroads intern Tim Green joined Kevin and HDG staff at the awards.





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BUY A HOODIE. HELP A SCHOLAR.

In the fall of 2019, the Parent Leadership Advisory Council (PLAC) requested approval to develop a Family Emergency Fund for Crossroads scholars and their families. Money in this fund will be made available for Crossroads families who are facing unexpected financial crises. PLAC members sold Crossroads hoodies in order to add starting funds to the Emergency Fund account. In addition to this sale, Crossroads is accepting donations specifically for scholars and their families who need emergency aid.

Interested in purchasing a hoodie? Each hoodie is \$40 each, or \$35 each for orders of two or more. All proceeds from these orders go directly into the Family Emergency Fund account.

Wish to simply donate to our families? Every dollar will provide the support they need to continue surviving when they need it most. Any questions, contact Landis Erwin, Development Director, at 724-456-2494 or lerwin@crfdn.org.



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