

# CROSSROADS, INC.

*Assisting formerly incarcerated women achieve independence*

## WANT TO HELP OUT?

### DONATE

#### NON-PERISHABLE FOOD

We accept non-perishable food donations. Examples of items to donate include: canned vegetables, boxed cereal (hot and cold), boxed rice pilaf, rice and pasta, salad dressing, pasta sauce, and salsa. Please bring donations to 1269 Harvard Avenue.

#### DONATE A MEAL

We always welcome individuals or groups who want to donate a one-time or monthly meal.

#### FINANCIAL DONATIONS

We provide housing, food, transportation, clothing and programming to our women at NO COST. Your donation helps us to provide these services!

### A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

One year ago, I joined Crossroads as the new executive director. Over that year we have had 27 women come to Crossroads. Our doors have been open to formerly incarcerated women since 1974 and next year we will celebrate our 50th anniversary! Crossroads is a leader in reentry programming. We were the first program in California to accept women who were serving life sentences. Women who come to Crossroads are treated like they are family. We have always been a small program and that is our strength.

50 years ago when farmers Pete and Carol Bekendam started Crossroads it is hard to imagine that they saw a world where our services would still be needed. Unfortunately, not only is Crossroads 50 years old but mass incarceration also began 50 years ago. While we are proud of our legacy of supporting women, we believe in criminal justice reform and that 50 years of mass incarceration in the United States needs to end.

We still need your help to continue to support Crossroads women at no cost. Please consider giving Crossroads a donation today or on Giving Tuesday. We would also ask you to be a part of advocacy efforts to support people in the criminal justice system. You can learn more about current policy issues at: <https://www.lareentry.org/policy-and-advocacy-2023/>

We are grateful for your support for Crossroads women. We also appreciate you being involved in the larger issues around incarceration!

*-Larissa*

#### DONATE BY MAIL

CROSSROADS, INC.  
P.O. BOX 15  
CLAREMONT, CA 91711

#### SCAN TO DONATE



# ANNUAL ALUMNI BBQ

In August, Crossroads held its annual Alumni BBQ. Current Crossroads residents, alumni, staff, board of directors, and community members gathered together at the Harvard house to celebrate alumni and to enjoy Jackie White's (program director) delicious homecooked BBQ and macaroni. Jackie also was the emcee for the event! Executive Director, Larissa Matzek, welcomed attendees and thanked everyone for being a part of the Crossroads community. Crossroads alumni took turns speaking about their lives since graduating from Crossroads. They shared success stories of having meaningful employment, their own cars, the freedom to move to other states, their own homes and apartments, and relationships with family and friends. Alumni received yellow roses for their accomplishments and all those who graduated from parole were also recognized. Be sure to attend our annual BBQ in August 2025! Also, don't forget to check our website and your email regarding other upcoming events.



# INSIDE CROSSROADS: A RESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

## **How did you end up coming to Crossroads?**

I did not know where I was going to go after prison. It was my first time getting in serious trouble and after my initial stages of being angry, I found out I could get time off for good behavior. When I was going to be released, I had no place to go. I would have been homeless. My friend and I started calling around to find a residential program. We hadn't found anything and I was getting nervous but when I went to sign my parole conditions, I found out I was going to Crossroads!

## **What happened after you were released?**

I drove to Crossroads with a friend and when I got to Claremont I was amazed at how it was. We arrived at the Harvard House and I could smell dinner being cooked and was like "Oh my god!" I figured it was like prison and I would need to buy my own food. I didn't know that we had dinner as a family every night! Everyone was so welcoming when I got here. I met the other residents and Miss Jackie (Crossroads' program director). One funny story about my early days at Crossroads, I went into Miss Jackie's office and I told her I was ready to go and get a car. I thought I had everything planned out! Jackie and I sat down and she explained to me that it wasn't the time for me to buy a car. She talked to me about the program and about all of these steps I need to take. She explained the process of how we do things at Crossroads. She also asked me if I had read the handbook, which I hadn't! She said if someone wants to get a car that was something we do in last 6 weeks and not in the few first weeks!



**Kiana W.**

## **Can you talk about an important relationship that you have had while at Crossroads?**

The most important relationship I have had at Crossroads is with Jackie. I consider her to be a mentor. She always has really good advice. When Jackie gives me a suggestion or direction, I think to myself "I trust her judgement. She is only saying these things to help me and she's never been wrong!"

## **How long were you in the Crossroads program and what happened after?**

I stayed for the 6-month program and then moved to the San Francisco house and lived there for three months. After that I moved into my own apartment. I got into a relationship and I lost focus on myself. I moved in with my partner but it wasn't going well. I also wasn't feeling well physically and my health started to decline. I have lupus and was not taking care of my health. **(continued on bottom of page 4)**

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Crossroads is a comprehensive program. Our monthly schedule helps the women plan their week and also be able to work. Working is essential for our women as they transition to independence. Most women come to Crossroads with only \$200 of gate money. Our program schedule allows women to have employment and save 75% of what they earn.

We work with both outside organizations and also utilize staff to provide groups for the women. Currently, Angelique Bellerose, senior operations manager, is teaching "Computer and Technology Skills." For women incarcerated for many years technology has rapidly changed. It can be challenging to even learn how to use a cell phone, set up an email account or apply for a job. This class addresses this and more. For women who are looking to learn more advanced skills, Angelique has offered coursework on Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

Executive Director, Larissa Matzek teaches a weekly course on the 12 steps. Crossroads is an alcohol and other drug free (AOD) program. In this class the women get a chance to learn about the 12 steps. They also use a workbook to examine their history with substance use and learn how to make choices based on their recovery. This class is part of our alcohol and drug education which also includes AA or NA meetings. Crossroads women also get recovery and mental health support from their individual counseling sessions at the Clinebell Institute.



## **Resident Spotlight** (Continued from page 3)

### **How long were you in the Crossroads program and what happened after?**

Things got really unmanageable for me and I called Jackie. Jackie asked me what I thought I needed. She thought the best way to help me would be for me to consider coming back to Crossroads. I have been here since August 3rd and it has been wonderful! It has been an adjustment but I have been able to focus on myself again and get my health issues back on track.

### **What would you say to someone who is thinking of coming to Crossroads?**

Just come and try it. You lose nothing by trying. The people at Crossroads will guide you through the steps of putting your life back together. For every step you take it gives you the confidence to do more great things for yourself. This program is like being part of a family. One other program I had tried made me feel like I was still incarcerated. It is not like that here. Not every day is easy but with support and new coping skills you can live a fulfilling life!

# CROSSROADS UPDATES

## CARE FIRST COMMUNITY INVESTMENT (CFCI)

Crossroads, Inc. was honored to participate in LA County's Justice Care and Opportunities Department CFCI Grant Luncheon. Crossroads was awarded a CFCI grant for "Reentry Programming for Women." CFCI's transformative three-year grant makes it possible for us to continue to support women who are formerly incarcerated. This grant funding is also a commitment from the County to make more funds available to smaller nonprofit organizations like Crossroads.



## RECOGNIZING OUR SUPPORTERS

We are thrilled to be awarded a first grant from **The Ontario Community Foundation**. This generous grant supports: case management, individual counseling, and job-training for our women. We are also grateful to **The Green Foundation** for a generous grant for general operating support. A big thank you to the **United Way of Greater Los Angeles** for a generous Shelter Improvement grant. These funds will help us upgrade our homes. Crossroads also thanks the **City of Claremont, Human Services Department** for the generous Community-Based Organization grant. These funds allow us to purchase bus passes for the women while they are in our program.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Giving Tuesday–November 28, 2023**

**Speaker Series–Winter 2024**

**50th Anniversary Celebration June 6, 2024**

Join us at Padua Hills Theater!

## IN THE NEWS

In California people who are incarcerated can spend weeks, months or even years in isolation without any meaningful human contact or rehabilitation.

Assemblymember Chris Holden is trying to change that. The Pasadena Democrat introduced [Assembly Bill 280](#) this year to limit "segregated confinement"— also known as "solitary confinement." Generally, that means locking people in cells for 22 or more hours per day.

The legislation aims to make state prisons and county jails more humane by restricting isolated confinement to 15 consecutive days, or 45 total days in a six-month span.

Governor Newsom hasn't indicated whether he would sign this year's legislation, but recently said he is still working with the Legislature and CDCR to "land on an agreement" for segregated confinement in prisons.

Send your support letter here: [AB 280 \(Holden\) Template Letter of Support \(docx\)](#).