

# Crossroads GPS

guidance, preparation & success

volume 12 no. 1 | fall 2023

## NEW STAFF FOCUSED ON ALUMNI SUCCESS



Abednego Maloya's path hasn't always been obvious, direct, or easy to follow. It began in his parents' home country of Malawi in East Africa, then wound its way through the Beltzhoover neighborhood of Pittsburgh. When he found himself at a crossroads in high school, it was quite literally the Crossroads Foundation that pointed the way forward.

Now he helps college students find their own paths through college and into the job market. He also helps guide his youngest brother Duncan, 16, a Crossroads scholar at Central Catholic.

"For me, it all comes back to the phrase, 'Where potential finds its path,' explains Maloya. "With my own journey, Crossroads was there every step of the way -- to challenge, lead, direct and guide me. They helped me understand that I wasn't just in high school just for the sake of being there -- it was truly paving the way for my future. They helped me find my path and literally changed the trajectory of my academic career."

Maloya says he was a "B and C" student, and kept receiving assessments like that classic diagnosis of academic apathy: "doesn't apply himself enough." That began to change when he started working with Crossroads and attending Seton LaSalle Catholic High School. Doing the minimum was not an acceptable option.

"Sister Sandy (Crossroads' Academic Advisor) doesn't play!" says Maloya. "Any homework assignments that I was having trouble with, she always stepped in to make sure that I received the tutoring and the help I needed so that I could be on grade level -- and then do much better than that. When I saw that my work was improving, it gave me more motivation to work even harder. Crossroads challenged me by helping me get into honors classes, as if to say, 'We bumped up the challenge a little bit, because we know you're capable of meeting it.'"

Getting into a college -- the right one, where you are set up to succeed -- is clearly a big part of Crossroads' mission. They helped Maloya gain admission to Andrews University in rural Michigan.

"I'm the first person in my family to attend college here in the States," says Maloya. "So, none of us really knew what we were doing. Crossroads was there to really walk us through the entire process: SAT prep, scholarships, the admissions process. I remember my mom calling many times with very simple questions -- but none of them were silly questions. We just needed to know how it worked. My parents were very proud to have their son going to college."

(Cont. on page 2)

### CROSSROADS BY THE NUMBERS

**720** ALUMNI SINCE 1992

**160** SCHOLAR FAMILIES

participate in our program annually

**7 out of 10** SCHOLARS are the first in their family to earn a college degree

Scholars from **20** SCHOOL DISTRICTS & **60** NEIGHBORHOODS



(Cont. from page 1)

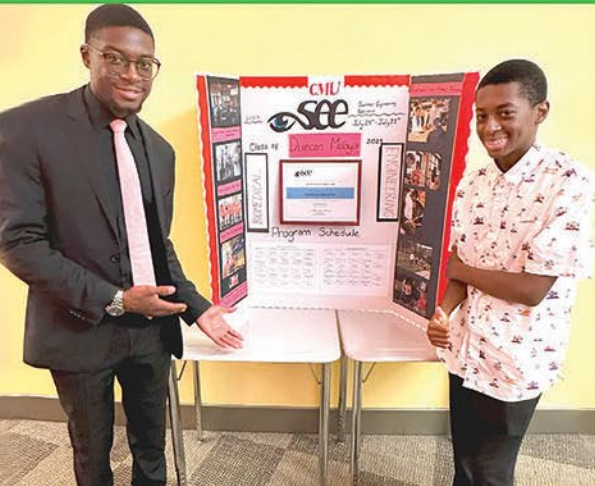
But once he got to Andrews University, “it was a different beast,” recalls Maloya. Some of the skills acquired via Crossroads in high school helped a lot, like study habits and time management. Others, he had to manage on his own.

Now, he has a chance to help other Crossroads scholars navigate their college years and even help them enter the workforce afterwards. His position, Alumni Success Coach, is new. But Maloya says he has seen firsthand how much it’s needed.

“Based on my personal experience, after Crossroads – where I had all this help – I felt (in college) like I was left out to dry,” he says. “So, now it’s a completely new experience for Crossroads scholars to always have someone to guide them through college – and that person will likely be me.”

College is a dramatic change in young people’s lives, especially if their family has no experience with it. Maloya helps arrange resources and opportunities for Crossroads scholars, from internships to mentoring, networking and finding job opportunities. He is excited to help others find their way through it all.

“I don’t even think twice about giving back to the community that poured so much into me,” says Maloya. “And I have discovered – in some of my conversations with the alumni community – that some of them would like to be more engaged, but they just don’t know how. So, I definitely would like to help foster more of that community.”



# WAYPOINTS

## The Road Ahead from the Executive Director’s Desk



Esther Mellinger Stief, Executive Director

For the first time in its 35-year history, Crossroads is undergoing an independent third-party program evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the services the organization provides its scholars. As Crossroads grows and realigns its services, we hope to concentrate resources on our crucial, high impact programs.

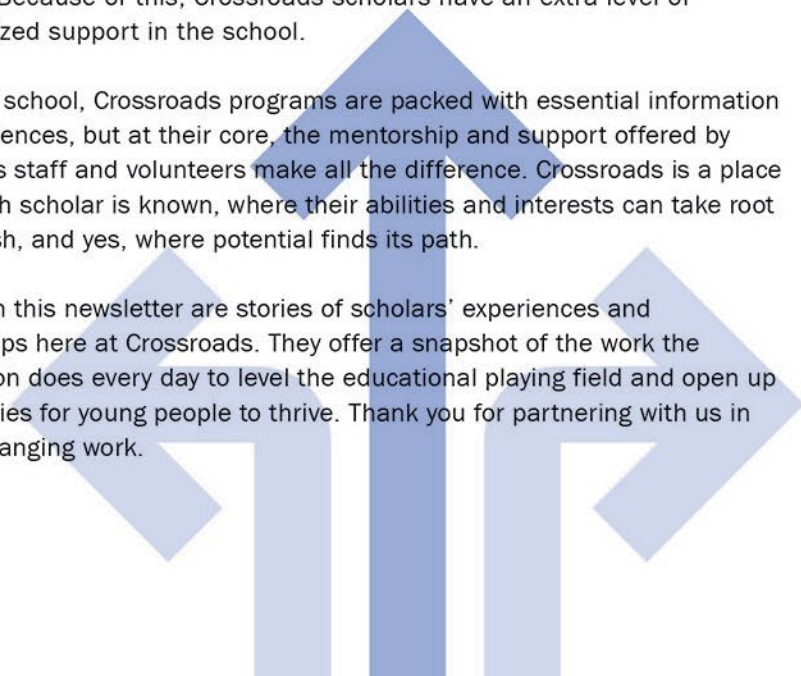
Over the past several years, we have observed a changing higher education landscape and altered expectations around college and career preparedness. Crossroads exists to provide students with the highest quality educational and career opportunities to ensure their long-term success, and in order to fulfill this mission, the organization must adapt and adjust to meet the evolving needs of our students. The program evaluation results will help us do so.

While we await the official findings, I’ll share what I expect will surface in the results: the relationships between the Crossroads scholars and their Crossroads counselors and program staff are key to the long-term achievement of our young people. Crossroads’ program model is unique in the partnerships we have with host schools which allows counselors to be present in the schools and regularly check in on scholars’ academic and personal progress. Because of this, Crossroads scholars have an extra level of individualized support in the school.



Outside of school, Crossroads programs are packed with essential information and experiences, but at their core, the mentorship and support offered by Crossroads staff and volunteers make all the difference. Crossroads is a place where each scholar is known, where their abilities and interests can take root and flourish, and yes, where potential finds its path.

Included in this newsletter are stories of scholars’ experiences and relationships here at Crossroads. They offer a snapshot of the work the organization does every day to level the educational playing field and open up opportunities for young people to thrive. Thank you for partnering with us in this life-changing work.



# 2022~2023

# Crossroads

# IMPACT REPORT

## Crossroads Impact in the scholars' own words

*In education, it's essential to crunch the numbers and analyze the data tracking student progress. But it's also always worth pausing to hear from the students themselves...*

**An incoming 9th grade scholar** "To me, being a Crossroads scholar is taking responsibility to do something good with your life, and making a positive impact on the world with your actions. I have gotten basically a 'do-over' and a second chance to do something good. If I chose the other route, I don't know what I would be doing with my life right now. Thank you."

**A Class of 2023 Senior** "As a scholar, I was able to grow along with everyone else in my class. It feels like I'm part of a community. It means a lot to have been given this opportunity to be a part of this organization, and I'm really grateful for this experience."

**A Class of 2023 Senior** "Being a Crossroads scholar has been one of the best times of my life. It has allowed me to go to Central Catholic and put my life on track for success. It has opened my eyes to new ideas and helped me come out of my shell."

**A Class of 2023 Senior** "Being a scholar means that I have and always will have someone in my corner that will be there whenever I fall. They also put me in the position to succeed, so I am thankful."



This Impact Report shares a snapshot of the programs, scholars, staff and outcomes that are part of the unique Crossroads Foundation model. Crossroads' impact is enabled by generous donors whose gifts contribute to our scholars' tuition, provide programs and resources, and help hire exceptional staff to mentor and guide these young people. This financial support also sends a powerful message to our scholars that there is a community of folks who believe in their potential enough to invest in their success. Thank you for your commitment to Crossroads and its scholars!



# AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS

Thank you to our donors and volunteers for investing in educational opportunities for aspiring young people. Your support truly helps potential find its path! We are excited to share with you some of the amazing achievements of our 159 scholars this past year:

## FALL 2022

Our scholars are thriving in our partner Catholic high schools with an **average 3.29 unweighted GPA**. Over half of our scholars were enrolled in honors or advanced level classes last year.



Throughout the school year, **24 junior and senior scholars** dedicated time as **peer mentors and Crossroads ambassadors** as part of the Crossroads Leadership (LEAD) cohort.

## WINTER 2023

## SPRING 2023

**100% of the class of 2023 graduated from high school on time.**

Over 25% of our graduating seniors accepted **"full ride" scholarships** from their college or university.



Over the summer, 10 rising senior scholars took CCAC courses to **earn college credit**, and over 40 scholars **attended pre-college programs**.

## SUMMER 2023



18 scholars participated in **paid summer internships** with partnering businesses and nonprofit organizations sponsored through Crossroads Internship Program.



## FALL 2023

**100%** of our 2023 graduates are enrolled in post-secondary schools this fall.



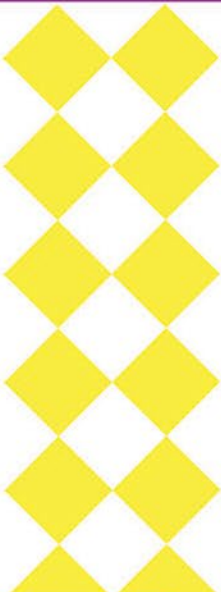
**75%** of scholars received merit scholarships

CASE  
WESTERN  
RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY  
and the



# NEW INITIATIVES

This was also a year of several new initiatives at Crossroads designed to provide quality, comprehensive services to our scholars and families:



**H**igh school is a time of abrupt and intense transitions – suddenly, you’re making decisions with consequences that will affect the rest of your life. Once you’ve finally figured that out, then it’s time for an even more complex problem: college.

Unsurprisingly, kids tend to find this process pretty stressful. Over the past 35 years, Crossroads has learned where the students (and parents) tend to have trouble, and has prepared new programs and staff to make these transitions easier.

**Admissions Counselor** This year, Crossroads added a dedicated Admissions Counselor to guide parents and students through the application process and the transition to 9th grade.

**College Readiness Cohort** Crossroads continues to develop opportunities for our scholars to be ready for the college admissions process. In addition to regular SAT test prep courses, Crossroads has partnered with Pittsburgh Prep to design and implement a College Readiness Cohort pilot program designed to foster academic achievement and build testing and study strategies beginning in 10th grade.

**Senior Exit Interviews** With the completion of high school, every senior and their parent/caregiver takes an exit interview and financial aid analysis with the Crossroads College Counselor. These conversations help every scholar to graduate with a sustainable plan, one that includes information about college costs, financial aid resources and help with transitions so they will succeed in their post-secondary placement.

**Alumni Network** As our scholars move on to college and careers, Crossroads’ new Alumni Success Coach will maintain regular contact with first-year college students and other recent alumni. Crossroads is laying the groundwork for an alumni network, which will provide career connections and social opportunities in the coming years.

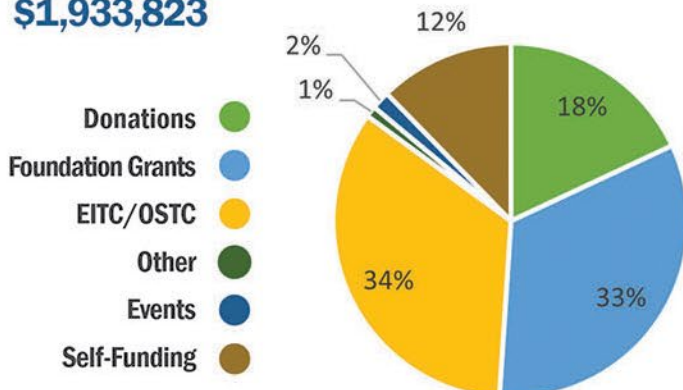


## Crossroads

# 2022-23 FINANCIALS

### OPERATING REVENUE

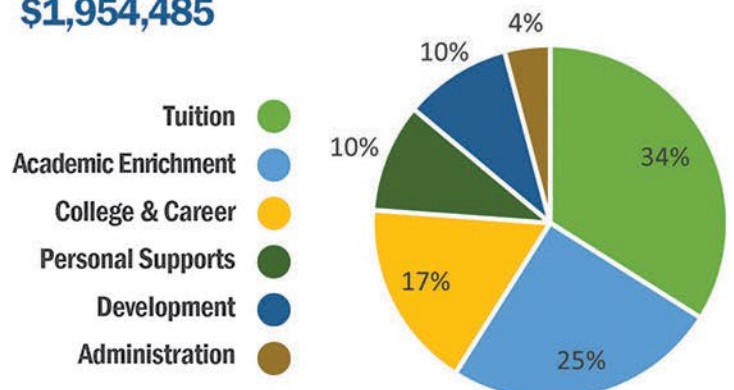
\$1,933,823



(Totals may not be 100% due to rounding.)

### OPERATING EXPENSES

\$1,954,485





# HELP WITH BIG TRANSITIONS WHEN STUDENTS NEED IT MOST



It's no secret that the transition from middle school to high school is a tough one. It's a big step on the path to self-discovery – for students to begin to learn who they are and who they want to be. This is when young adults get to make some of their own decisions about the big things – choosing their own classes, studying for their driver's test, and picking out what they'll wear for homecoming.

At this crucial time, Crossroads counselors begin to build bonds with freshmen scholars to help them adjust to this transition, and offer guidance in making big decisions. Often, this goes beyond just schoolwork.

**DESTINY** in her first year at Oakland Catholic, already had some ideas of where she was headed academically. She's interested in history and politics, and dreams of working in courtrooms

**“I couldn't believe I just knew people already.”**

as a prosecutor one day. But that's still a few years in the future. First, she needed help dealing with the awkwardness of socializing as a shy high school freshman at a new school.

“I couldn't see myself talking to these girls outside of this (Crossroads) program, but now I talk with them every day,” says Destiny. “We would go out for lunch and people would walk in and I would recognize them from Crossroads. I couldn't believe I just knew people already, and we're just hanging out.”

Crossroads scholars start their journeys by taking a few basic steps. First, they hear about the program from a friend, teacher, or family. Then, they start researching it. Finally, they write an essay responding to

**“I like it here.”**

a simple question: “Why do you want to be in Crossroads?” It's always a bit surprising how much thought they put into their answers, but they are thinking deeply about their futures. As one gets to know them, maybe it's not as surprising after all.

For **ALEX** a freshman at Central Catholic, a conversation about basketball sparked interest in taking a different route through high school. Alex was telling Crossroads Lead Counselor Justin Pacini about scoring 93 points (!) in a pickup game, when Pacini suggested putting in practice at Central Catholic's “open gym.” Alex's older sister had joined Crossroads to help with high school, so he already had an idea of what to expect.

“I like it here,” concludes Alex. “Teachers and staff are working to help you. It's kind of like having adults that are on your side.”

## SCHOLARS EXPLORE CAREERS DURING SUMMER PROGRAMS

Sophomore scholars enjoyed hands on experiences in health careers, technology, entrepreneurship and other emerging fields during Crossroads Career Academies. Scholars particularly enjoyed their visit to Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics (pictured at right) where they learned about career pathways in aviation.



The SPICE (Scholars Participating in Career Exploration) program gives rising junior scholars the opportunity to explore their college and career interests. Duncan Maloya (a junior at Central Catholic) attended the Carnegie Mellon University: Summer Engineering Experience. “My SPICE highlight was working on a prototype which solves real-world problems with a group of five people,” recalls Maloya. “Our theme was sports medicine and rehabilitation, so we decided to make a sports sleeve that helps athletes track their biometrics and movement during exercise, so they don't overwork themselves.”



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# WHERE POTENTIAL FINDS ITS PATH.

## Donate Today

Crossroads is serving 160 scholars this year – the most ever! 100% of the Class of 2023 graduated high school on time, and 100% will go on to college/post-secondary education. Your support will pave a direct pathway to college and career success for our Crossroads scholars. We are excited to watch them grow academically and personally – and we invite YOU to become a part of that journey. Learn more about how you can make an impact! Follow us on Instagram and Facebook @crossroadspgh.

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