

WAYPOINTS The Road Ahead from the Executive Director's Desk

Esther Mellinger Stief

Crossroads welcomed 43 first year scholars this summer, the largest number ever. We are 157 scholars proud, the most Crossroads has ever supported. With 12 Crossroads staff and 15 board members, we are a diverse, strong team united in our mission to open up college and career pathways for our scholars.

For the past three years, fall has marked the achievement of new benchmarks for Crossroads; each year has boasted a larger incoming class, a higher number of scholars, an increase in programs and services. This incremental and consistent growth is not by accident. Crossroads is an organization committed to expanding its impact in meaningful ways while at the same time ensuring we are able to deliver on our promises to our scholars and their families. By increasing the number of scholars we serve, engaging in collaborative partnerships to increase access to college pathways for Pittsburgh's youth, and working closely with Extra Mile and partner high schools to promote academic achievement, Crossroads is weaving a network of support for scholars and their families.

But there is still much work to be done. The Covid-19 pandemic and the disruption it caused shone a spotlight on the vast inequities in educational access. Many young people spent a year in a virtual learning environment, college matriculation and persistence rates dropped precipitously nation-wide, and demand for counseling and mental health services skyrocketed. Certainly, the guidance and programs Crossroads offers provided ways to navigate this educational crisis so that our scholars remained poised for long term success. While their peers were at home in virtual classes, our scholars had access to in person learning environments; while many high school graduates opted not to go on to college, 97% of Crossroads scholars matriculated. Crossroads scholars spent their summer engaged in enrichment activities, college level classes and professional internship placements. They are resilient, curious and brave in the face of unprecedented challenges.

Crossroads, too, remains passionate and resolute in our mission to create a world where all students have access to the educational opportunities and support necessary to achieve their dreams. This year is a year of exploration and imagination as Crossroads begins a strategic planning process that will chart the organization's course for the next five years. We will dream big, because the need is big. And we will think long term and inclusively, so that the impact extends far beyond the pandemic's aftermath. And next fall, I hope to once again share with you the new benchmarks we've achieved and the pathways we've created for more young people to access their college and career goals.



Esther spends time with Crossroads families at fall dinner.

CLASS OF 2021 BY THE NUMBERS

43 INCOMING FRESHMAN
Largest class!

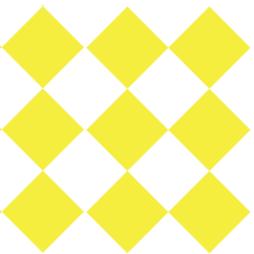
13 SUMMER INTERNSHIPS
Completed

32 IN-PERSON SUMMER PROGRAMS

157

CROSSROADS SCHOLARS
back to school this fall

HELP POTENTIAL FIND ITS PATH



Crossroads scholars had a great summer and are ready for the new school year. We are excited to watch them grow academically and personally, accomplishing their goals each step along the way. We want **YOU** to be part of that journey! Supporting our scholars paves a pathway for college and career success. **To learn more on how you can make an impact, contact Landis Erwin at lerwin@crfdn.org or 412-661-9422.**



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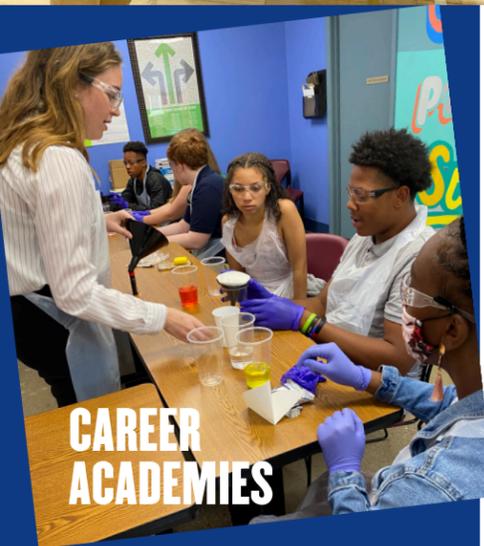
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Summer Programs



GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

CHRISTINA KENNEY, NCC, LPC

Christina joined Crossroads in 2020 as the Extra Mile Transition Coordinator, a collaborative position between Crossroads and its long-time partner, Extra Mile Foundation. As a counselor for 7th and 8th grade students within the Extra Mile schools, Christina helps students and potential Crossroads scholars learn decision-making skills, access resources, and complete their high school applications. For those Extra Mile students who transition on to Crossroads, Christina becomes an important support during the summer prior to freshman year.

All incoming Crossroads scholars attend Academic Enrichment Courses in writing and algebra in preparation for high school academic requirements. Christina worked closely with a small group of scholars, developing a three-day workshop where scholars learned extensive writing skills and MLA formatting that they will use in high school. In addition, Christina supported the high school transitions of our scholars through the Connecting with Crossroads program where she led sessions and activities.

Sister Sandy Kiefer, the Director of Academics at Crossroads, said that Christina's work directly impacted students at Central Catholic High School by helping students with their high school essays and writing assignments. "Christina was able to motivate these young men to succeed in the fall," Sandy said. "She also provided them with invaluable tools to assist them with their writing assignments during their freshman year."

Christina has high hopes for her work during this academic year. "I want to be even more creative in presenting resources, connecting scholars to what they are interested in and seeing that their families have necessary resources from partnering organizations and services," she said.

"Being at Crossroads allows me to have new experiences and grow as a person," Christina said. "I get to watch these students learn about one another and become friends, network with current scholars and alumni, and then build relationships with Crossroads staff."

Christina counsels our 7th and 8th grade students within the Extra Mile schools. She attends all events for Crossroads and is seen here at the 2021 Senior Celebration event at the Calland Center.

"I want to be even more creative in presenting resources..."



BRIDGING THE GAP FOR SCHOLAR SUCCESS

NINA HOYT **Crossroads Counselor at Seton LaSalle, Bishop Canevin & OLSH**

What drew you to Crossroads? I had always wanted to work for a College Prep program, I just had never had the opportunity. I was an AmeriCorps member last year, and Crossroads was the organization where I had wanted to be placed. I liked the fact that Crossroads was bridging the gap for students who have barriers to access a quality Catholic education, but with a holistic approach.

How was your experience as an AmeriCORPS member at Crossroads? I loved my experience as an AmeriCorps tutor! Some students would come to meet with me and clearly be struggling with class, but it was encouraging to be able to offer one on one tutoring and to see subjects really click with them. I realized that Crossroads has a really special group of students, and I was very excited to come on board as a staff member.

What are you looking forward to this year as a Crossroads counselor? As a tutor last year, my main focus was helping students with their classes. As a counselor, I also am able to focus on personal wellness and prepare them for college. I really enjoy coming alongside students in those areas.

Fun Facts! I love the outdoors. On the weekends you can find me hiking or camping with my friends. I am also determined to try every coffee shop in Pittsburgh. My most recent hobbies are going to the gym and playing volleyball with my friends.



INTERNSHIPS



GOLF OUTING 2021

The 2021 Crossroads Cup Charity Golf Outing was held in September at Cranberry Highlands Golf Course in Cranberry, PA. Crossroads hosted over 100 golfers with 47 being women, and raised \$27,000 in profit for our scholars! A huge thank you goes to our sponsors: Wilson Group, Babst Calland Attorneys at Law, UPMC Health Plan, Gecko Robotics, PNC Bank, Northwest Bank, NextTier Bank, Seton LaSalle Catholic High School, Pittsburgh Orthodontic Group, Bob and Tricia Hammel, Matthew and Sharon Stalder, Jack and Cathy Frischkorn, Elm Investments, WPXI-TV and Links Brewing.

