



THE MESSENGER

Your update from Crossroad Child & Family Services

Teach Them How to Say Goodbye

As a (somewhat) normal adult with average coping skills, my anxiety and fear have been at an all-time high! While I am excited for my new adventure, I've been thinking about how hard it is to say goodbye.

This makes me reflect on our children. They can spend anywhere from one month to a few years at Crossroad. For some of our kids, we become a second home to them. This is a good thing! We want them to feel safe, to have structure and to develop the skills they need to have a healthy future. In our minds they are excited to leave, and will go to their (potentially new) homes and utilize all the skills they learned with us. What could go wrong?

However, this may not be the case. I've seen how excited they get! "I'm leaving and I'm never coming back!" They have so much excitement for their adventures, meeting new peers, participating more in the community, and being in a home environment. Unfortunately, we see many cases where our kids sabotage discharge before they are home, or when they are home. Initially, I'm confused. Why would they do that? While going through the process of my change, I am starting to understand theirs better.

No matter how excited they seem, they must be terrified. "What if this is not the right place for me to go? What if this family that seems nice, but is just like other adults who have let me

By Marissa Sauer
Former Director of Children's Services*

down? What if my parent relapses or hurts me again? What if I can't use my skills at home? What if the kids bully me at school for being gone a year? What if I end up right where I started and everyone at Crossroad is disappointed in me?" Those fears feel overwhelming in my adult mind. I can't imagine how high their anxiety must be.



*Marissa Sauer served in various roles at Crossroad from 2013 to 2021. She remains one of our contract therapists.

So what can we do? Children can't (and shouldn't) stay with us forever. Crossroad is uniquely positioned to only be a [short] stop in their lives; a place of safety with people who care for them, noting the trauma they endured. We are meant to someday be a memory for them that they can turn to now and then. They may forget our names or faces, but will always remember what we did and how they deserve to be treated. This is our mission.

It is important to remember that they probably have several "what ifs" swirling in their minds.

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Continued from “Teach Them How to Say Goodbye”

It's good to normalize them and note that it is ok to have doubts and to be worried over any life change; that they can't control their families, peers or this new situation they are in. However, we need to tell them that they have the skills to handle whatever comes their way. Remind them of their coping skills and adults who will be there for them. They can call their DCS case manager if mom is acting funny again. They can talk to their CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) if things are not going well at school. Or they can talk to their outpatient therapist about how things have changed since they have been gone.

Change is normal and can be a good thing. But because it seems scary, it can be labeled as bad by our children and potentially rebelled against (sabotaging behaviors). Remind them to take a deep breath. To remember how they have grown and that we are rooting for them to succeed. Even if they slip up and don't always make the right choice, there are people who care about them and will never expect them to be perfect.

Crossroad's children and people have left a mark on my heart. I appreciate all the lessons and people who have made an impact on me. Going forward I will remember to take a deep breath, and remember that change (while scary) can be good.

This article was originally written by Marissa for Crossroad's monthly staff newsletter, Crossroad Matters. We are grateful to Marissa for sharing her thoughts and expertise on coping with saying goodbye.

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Our Mission

Crossroad creates promising futures for children in difficult circumstances by providing therapy, education, and family support services.

Community Services

Crossroad has a legacy of doing whatever it takes to provide promising futures for children. Many of you have supported Crossroad since you were children yourselves. You may remember collecting Christmas gifts to send to our children or volunteering in person. For over 137 years, Crossroad has remained dedicated to serving the ever-changing needs of the community. Often times, this dedication requires our staff to be flexible and creative. Did you know that in addition to our residential therapeutic programs we serve hundreds of families each year in our community?



Our Community Based Wraparound Services Program staff meet with families at least twice a week and sometimes more often, as needed. Our goal is to support families in tangible, concrete ways to provide stability and hope. Each family we serve is unique which means that one size does not fit all. Our dedicated staff take the time to learn the needs and create a personalized plan for success. In some cases, families are supported for years, with our average length of involvement being one year.

With your on-going and generous support, families are healed and children are given the opportunity to realize their future dreams. The impact of your partnership extends far beyond our physical home here in Fort Wayne. Your choice to give, is changing communities which in turn, changes the world.

COVID Update

As of July 6, the Crossroad Executive Team began to lift COVID protocols on our campus. While we start the process of returning to work in person, our staff will continue to follow social distancing and cleanliness procedures to ensure we are keeping clients and each other safe. This also includes monitoring our own health not just for signs of COVID, but other transmissible viruses or illnesses.

In addition to staff returning to campus, we are excited to also start easing visitor restrictions and limitations on community outings. It has been a difficult year to connect with our supporters and our community, and we are ready to begin that work again with these new protocols.

Thank you to everyone who has showed us grace by working alongside us to stay connected over the last year and a half. Through digital presentations, virtual mission moments, and many other new ways of staying in touch, we appreciate your continued support as we work to re-open our campus!

SEL at Crossroad

On most Friday mornings, you will see and hear groups of students participating in class and doing activities in the gym or outside. On first glance, it might just look like a regular class period. However, this time is devoted to Social Emotional Learning, or SEL.

Social Emotional Learning is defined as “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” The program is utilized to promote students’ self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making skills. SEL helps reduce risks for students, while also helping youth discover skills they can use to build resiliency.

The curriculum is divided into different age groups to best serve the ever-changing population at Crossroad. There are discussion materials, videos, individual workbooks, and interactive activities to allow the kids an even greater level of understanding and participation.

Social Emotional Learning allows youth to build relationships with staff and peers, while better understanding what they can bring to a relationship. It has become a place where staff and students alike can share laughs, knowledge, and experience – while learning something new.



Social Emotional Learning has also created resiliency and perseverance in the kids at Crossroad. They are sharing insight and knowledge, when in all reality, it would be easier for them to keep their heads down. They are engaging in games and activities, which allow them to build confidence in themselves and healthy bonds with peers and staff.

Zoom & Learn

Crossroad welcomes you to register for our upcoming Zoom & Learn on **Wednesday, August 18 at 1:30 p.m.!**

Zoom & Learns are a great way to keep up with the Crossroad kids, learn more about our programs, and get a glimpse of upcoming campus news and events. Whether you are familiar with Crossroad or are new to our community, we look forward to connecting with you!

Visit our website, crossroad-fwch.org, to register!



Honors & Memorials

Honors

Name:

Patrick Houlihan
Alan Shupe
Joy Midman
Cathy Swartz
Mary Golata

In Honor Of:

Randall J. Rider
Randall J. Rider
Randall J. Rider
Randall J. Rider
Randall J. Rider

Please remember Crossroad in your Wills, Bequests, and Planned Gifts.

For more information, contact Mackinzie Sharpe, Gift Planning Director, at 260.484.4153 ext. 2002 or msharpe@crossroad-fwch.org.

Memorials

Name:

Diane Gunn
Donna Nose

Kyle Zanker
Susan Robinson
Johnnie Ousley

In Memory Of:

Grace Schulz
Guadalupe "Lupe"
Sanchez II
Sibyl Bardsley
Sibyl Bardsley
Reitta Bransteter,
Jerome Bollenbacher,
Pat Linn & Janice
Hershberger

Name:

Alice M. Ryter
Carolyn Gehres
Raymond James
St. John's United
Church of Christ Adult
Fellowship
Linda Ziner
Ann Custer
Thomas Ehram

In Memory Of:

Elmer Royer
Marlin Gehres
Marlin Gehres
Harriet (Bragg) David,
Bonita Muffler & Roy
Gilbert
Sibyl Bardsley
Pat Batchelder
Carol Ehram

Back To School In-Kind Needs List

The following school supplies will help our kids succeed this coming school year:

- Crayons (no boxes with built in sharpeners)
- Composite Notebooks (no spiral-bound notebooks)
- Loose Leaf Paper
- Folders

To make a donation of these items to Crossroad, please contact Mackinzie Sharpe, Gift Planning Director, at 260.484.4153 ext. 2002 or at msharpe@crossroad-fwch.org.



Supporting Education at Crossroad

With help from supporters like you, we can make sure that learning is the top priority for our students at Crossroad Academy.

Through the Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) on behalf of Crossroad Academy, you can support our kids as they work to get their education. Donors to the program can also receive a 50% Indiana state tax credit.

For more information about the SGO program, or to donate to the fund, please visit our website at www.crossroad-fwch.org/crossroad-academy-scholarships.

This program is made possible through the Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



www.crossroad-fwch.org

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Child & Family Services

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