

Executive Director's Insight

Crossroads Family,

It has certainly been an interesting beginning to 2025. Coming off a year in which **Crossroads** and many other homeless service nonprofits received an **unprecedented number of requests for assistance**, and during which we saw the **national numbers for homelessness reach historic levels**, there was concern over how changing priorities on a national level would impact our work and those we serve. Unfortunately, the news has not been good.

Drastic cuts to staffing and spending freezes at agencies like **HUD** have caused ripple effects that have created chaos for local providers and recipients of federally funded assistance. From **housing vouchers being delayed** to **reporting systems being taken offline** to **technical assistance disappearing**, the results have already been fear, panic and, in some cases, loss of housing. People who depend on these resources and services for survival, especially single moms, are asking us what to do. Organizations who depend on federal funding are wondering if they will be able to pay their staff or even continue to provide services. And now we are seeing proposed federal budgets that **further cut funding for housing programs** at a time when **housing costs continue to increase** and **wages - especially for the lowest income workers - fail to keep up with inflation**.

As if this were not enough, here in **Georgia** service providers continue to advocate for an increase in the **Georgia Housing Voucher Program** budget, which provides supportive housing for chronically unhoused individuals with severe mental illness. Given the state's **\$16 billion** budget surplus, providers believe a **\$20 million** increase to address this crisis is reasonable. We also continue to fight against unnecessary legislation that seeks to criminalize homelessness and punish municipalities that seek to care for their residents.

HB295 provides for property owners and those renting property to be able to demand a **refund of property taxes** if the city or county adopts a policy as a **sanctuary city**, or adopts a policy, pattern, or practice of **failing to enforce criminal laws against those experiencing homelessness** for public camping, loitering, obstructing thoroughfares, panhandling, public intoxication or urination. Not only would this further diminish a community's ability to provide services that prevent or end homelessness, but for municipalities that comply it would **drastically increase the cost of "housing" people in jails!** (There are numerous sources of good information on these issues that I will provide below.)

During tumultuous times, **Crossroads** has always been blessed to have such a strong and faithful group of supporters like each of you. Because of your generosity, we have been able to sustain our services for many years. But **the gap between requests for assistance and our ability to respond is beginning to widen** and will continue should current funding proposals be enacted. With **safety nets removed or reduced**, more families and individuals will fall into homelessness and fewer resources will be available for them. The effects of this will be felt by everyone. **Your giving is more than charity. Now more than ever it is an act of justice.**

We continue to work with partners across the city and region to inform the public about the dangerous consequences of the actions and proposals at the state and federal levels. **Please consider joining your voices with ours** to stand up for those being marginalized.

Peace,
Tony

Please check out the websites below for more information and ways to take action:

partnersforhome.org/advocacy
nlihc.org
endhomelessness.org

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Spring 2025

Voices of Crossroads

At **Crossroads**, people make the difference—from dedicated staff and volunteers to the guests whose resilience inspires us every day. Here are three stories of impact from those who experience our work firsthand.



Alexandria – A Familiar Face with a New Role

Many of you already know **Alexandria Lavender** from her incredible work at **Crossroads**, but we are excited to officially announce her promotion to **The Renewal Project's Program Manager**!

Q- Can you share a story or moment from your time as a Case Manager that had a lasting impact on you?- A-

“Yes! I think about this story often. In 2023, our annual fundraiser was held at a nearby restaurant. One of the servers recognized me and called me out by name. He went on to thank me as several months ago, I had helped him get the documents he needed to apply for the job

at that very restaurant. In my head, I was like, “Whoa! Full circle moment!”. I had often heard of case managers having these moments with guests that they've assisted and would wonder what that moment would feel like to me. It's an indescribable joy; my heart was so full.”

Walter- A Journey of Transformation

Walter Johns (no relation to Tony) came to **Crossroads** seeking assistance with **obtaining essential documents**, and in the process, he found an unexpected opportunity that changed his life.

Q- I heard you got a job with our security team! What message would you share with others who are in a similar situation to where you were before? What advice or encouragement would you give them?- A-

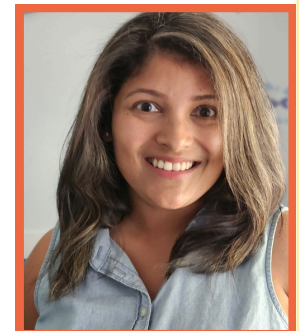
“I encourage others to never give up because there is always a chance in life. I went from having nothing to having a job, a fresh start, and stability. If I had never come to Crossroads for my birth certificate and ID, I would have never met Chief Ryan, and I wouldn't be where I am today. I tell others to take advantage of programs like this because they can truly change your life. I've spent most of my life in and out of trouble, in and out of jail, but now I'm on a different path. I no longer have to look over my shoulder. I'm living honestly, positively, and with purpose. I'm happy with my progress, and my journey continues. I am blessed for the help I've received through Crossroads and through Chief Ryan. Thank you so much. I am Walter Johns, I am 35 years old, and God bless you all.”

Freny- A Volunteer Making a Difference

Freny Shah, a physician, brings her medical expertise and compassion to her volunteer work at Crossroads.

Q- How has volunteering at Crossroads impacted you personally or changed your perspective on homelessness?- A-

“Before I came to Crossroads, my idea of a homeless person was pretty typical - unhoused, unemployed adults often with mental health and addiction issues. And while those issues are present, it's not the full story - I was surprised to see so many families with kids of all ages living in motels or other temporary housing, many older adults with chronic illnesses, and people of all educational backgrounds actively working or looking for work, but still struggling to make ends meet. We rarely ever know someone's story unless we take the time to build those relationships and see the “homeless” as individuals first and not a trope. Another thing I took for granted is how fundamental a mailing address is to life - getting an ID, establishing a bank account, applying for a job, getting health insurance! Our mailroom is a vital service and I am proud to be a part of the team.”



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



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Pathways Built Together

At **Crossroads**, meaningful change is built step by step—together. Here are some of the latest ways we've expanded our impact:

- **End-of-Year Campaign Success** – Our most successful campaign yet, exceeding fundraising goals to sustain programs in 2025.
- **Community Volunteers** – Invesco and Ware2Go hosted sack lunch and sandwich builds, while longtime partners Notre Dame Academy and St. John Neumann's Catholic School continued their support in Clyde's Kitchen.
- **Winter Weather Support** – We provided warming center information, coats, sweaters, and hand warmers to those in need. Special thanks to St. Luke's Daughters of the King for donating coats and St. Luke's Knitting Ministry for hand-knitted scarves and caps.
- **Point in Time Count** – Hosted volunteers conducting this nationwide survey to assess homelessness and guide funding decisions.
- **No Address Movie Premiere** – We joined a special event celebrating No Address, a film raising awareness about homelessness, with proceeds benefiting organizations like Crossroads.
- **New Partnerships** – We launched partnerships with Atlanta VA-HCHV for veteran support and Someone Cares to bring mobile healthcare and mental health services to our guests.

Annual Sponsors Making a Difference

We are deeply grateful to our annual sponsors who sustain our programs year-round.



Wayne and Lee Harper Vason

United Way of
Greater Atlanta



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Marc and Carol Gendell

Pathway to Dignity Project Update

The **Pathway to Dignity Project** is moving forward! We have met our fundraising goal, completed the design and cost analysis, and are now awaiting permits to begin construction. This new entrance will create a **safer, more welcoming space** for our guests, keeping them out of the elements and ensuring access to hydration and dignity while waiting for services.

However, **new tariffs will increase the material costs by at least 20%**, requiring an additional \$100,000 to complete the project. If you would like to **help offset these rising costs**, please consider making a donation here: <https://crossroadscommunityministries.kindful.com/>.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Spring 2025

How You Can Help

Looking for ways to support **Crossroads**? Here are some immediate needs and volunteer opportunities:

- **PepsiCo Water Pickup (TBD)** – We need three large vehicles and volunteers to transport donated water.
- **Brookhaven Cherry Blossom Festival (March 29-30)** – Help staff our table and engage festival-goers. (4 volunteers needed)
- **Kitchen Painting Day (April 18, 9:30 AM - Noon)** – Help refresh our kitchen! (5 volunteers needed)
- **Hygiene Kit or Sack Lunch Build** – Host a build at Crossroads or your location.
- **Kitchen & Mailroom Volunteers** – Help serve meals in Clyde's Kitchen or assist in The Renewal Project's mailroom. We especially need a regular Friday mailroom volunteer.

Donate Needed Items:

- Bottles of water, coffee, diapers (all sizes), shelf-stable baby & infant food
- Full-size hygiene items (shampoo, conditioner, body wash, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, disposable razors, shaving cream, combs/brushes, washcloths, chapstick, baby wipes, hand sanitizer)
- Lunch meat (chicken & turkey), stamps & envelopes, inexpensive backpacks

Other Ways to Support:

- **Kroger Community Rewards** – Link your Kroger Plus Card to Crossroads so a portion of your purchases benefits our programs.
- **Become a Crossroads Cornerstone (Monthly Donor)** – Provide ongoing support to sustain our mission year-round.
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Your time and contributions directly impact our guests. Thank you for your support!

Numbers with a Story NOV '24- FEB '25

The Renewal Project

- 482 State IDs Provided
- 418 Marta Support Provided
- 591 Birth Certificates Provided
- 4,694 Mailroom Visits
- 167 Volunteer Shifts Filled

Clyde's Kitchen

- 8,832 Meals Served
- 274 Volunteers Shifts Filled
- 2,100.5 lbs Food Saved From The Landfill

Door-to Door Housing

- 81 Households Prevented From Losing Housing
- 55 Households Assisted In Securing Housing
- 145 Adults Assisted
- 30 Veterans Assisted
- 194 Children Assisted
- 2,129 Households Seeking Housing Services