



**Services to help refuel along life's  
journey through Christian caring &  
mentoring, resourcing, & referral**

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## **First Annual Report**

Crossroads of Crawford County will provide assistance to families and individuals as they journey through life, helping them find hope and purpose in their challenging circumstances.

**Vision:** We all encounter hard times in our lives. We are created to help one another, and Christians are called to be an action form of love, a reflection of the love Jesus had in dying for us. Our vision is to strengthen the communities of Crawford County through walking with persons of any age experiencing challenging times, offering Christian resources, professional referral, volunteer assistance, and Christian mentoring.

**Our History:** Crossroads was designed with the input and creativity of multiple laypeople and professionals, most from Crawford County. Even with diverse professional focus areas, it was unanimously realized that unique needs spanned citizens of all ages and incomes. To become a true center for family life issues, it was apparent our scope should encompass the whole life journey, from pregnancy through the elderly population. It was also recognized that oftentimes, people struggle with where to turn with their family issues for a variety of reasons—economical, social, religious, and emotional barriers.

After a Board of Directors was selected who shared passion for doing something as Christians to help in personal situations, and a first meeting in August, Crossroads was incorporated in late October 2015. As bylaws developed and our mission was affirmed by families and individuals seeking a variety of help, Crossroads continued in the process and filed application with the IRS to be approved as a 501(c)3 organization, which allows donors to deduct contributions and to receive tax deductible bequests and gifts.

*A safe starting place*

*An encouraging middle place*

*A healthy ending place*

## September 2015-September 2016: Here is how we helped

Over 51 families or individuals have utilized Crossroads' services in nearly the past year. Since most have multiple issues, and some return for new issues or follow up, it is difficult to accurately count. Because of the small scope of the community we serve, we have withheld some detail to be sensitive to families of some specific situations.

### **Pregnancy Resource Center:**

- 2 decision-making couples; 2 for loss after pregnancy; and one with pregnancy health concerns

### **Single Parent Support:**

- In 11 of the 50 families, single parenthood was a factor in the family's situation, even if they did not present with that issue.
- 5 called with single parenting stressors specified.

### **Family & Personal Empowerment:**

This area is a huge service area, somewhat of a 'catchall' category. Most families seen presented with more than one problem area.

- 11 referrals were assisted with direct referrals to mental health clinicians and/or medical doctors.
- Behavioral management was a factor in 8 of the families
- Marital problems were candidly identified in 5 of the families
- Custodial issues were factors in 4 families
- Grief & loss was a common theme in many of these
- Homelessness was the presenting problem in one, and the threat of homelessness was a factor in several
- Mental health and/or emotional wellbeing were factors in about half of the families seen.

### **Adoption Consultation:**

- 7 families presented with post-adoption related needs such as behavior, emotional health concerns, and coaching birth family relationships
- 5 couples who were seeking adoption avenues were consulted with
- 4 families sought support for dealing with emotional challenges of waiting as adoptive prospects and difficult adopting situations or consultation for any fragment of the adoption process.

**Caregiver Support:** While it was not the need they presented with, 16 of the family situations had needs due to caregiver lacking (adequate time, money, availability, etc.) This included 5 families with aging parents and 11 with special needs children.

**Elderly Care:** 5 families were specifically seeking help with aging parent issues, and had caregiver issues tied into their situation.

**Who referred?** Referrals came from a mixture of sources—most were from local professionals, church workers, and Crossroads posters that are hung in the communities. Also common was a referral as a result of talking with a local resource or professional service about Crossroads.

**Other activities Crossroads has worked on:**

- An educational community event about understanding dementia, related things to think ahead about, & caregiver support was hosted in partnership with several churches & organizations.
- A poverty simulation event was hosted at Our Savior Lutheran to help sensitize individuals and professionals who attended to the day to day challenges faced by families who make inadequate income.
- Organization of materials and resources is underway. We have a combination of web-based information, books, work pages, and articles that have been archived. We have resources on parenting, healthy sexuality, Christian living and development, self-care, adoption issues, and much more.
- Materials for common or difficult family situations were identified and are available to anyone who desires. Topics included grief, child body safety, suicide, and nurturing parenting for children with brain-trauma children.
- Process of incorporation, bylaws, and 501(c)3/nonprofit status. We are an incorporated and approved charitable/nonprofit entity.
- Work also included drafting forms, data spreadsheets, and protocol.
- We created community connections and publicized information.



**What did we learn?**

- 1) There is a significant need for creative support to families of special needs children. Constant caretaking demands can quickly drain parents and caretakers of emotional energy. This can have a snowball effect on every other aspect of the family's wellbeing. The marriage can be greatly strained, the finances are depleted, social activities outside of the home are minimal, and the other children can be shortchanged of quality time as a family or with parents. Long term effects of these factors accumulate and become chronic stressors.
- 2) The aging population in Crawford County needs our help, and caregiver issues abound in this area. From friendship to small errands, sharing a meal, or relaying details back to family members outside of the community, there are many things we could quite easily do to improve the quality of life for a senior citizen if our volunteer base were to grow. There are some other helping avenues we are getting further information about as well.
- 3) The overall reason people came to Crossroads first, versus any other local professional first, varied some:
  - They didn't know for sure who/where to go for the issue
  - They felt (correctly or incorrectly) the issue wasn't serious enough to warrant full counseling
  - They wanted a specific type of counselor or doctor (e.g.: male, female, Christian, or field of expertise)
  - They wanted to try other avenues of help first due to financial concerns or restraints
  - They had been to professionals and just hadn't made a good connection with the help, in their opinion.
  - They were encouraged by another professional to start with Crossroads in order to find the best options.

## Where do we go from here?

Our priority is to create supportive resources where the needs exist. Doing this requires **staff** to engage the communities involved, coordinate efforts, and follow through on programming. That translates to needing **funding** for salaries. The budget when Crossroads incorporated last fall was zero, and the bare essentials such as computer, occupancy, phone, internet, professional liability insurance, and professional licensing were all donated, leaving the year-end balance at zero. The process of incorporation and approval for nonprofit/ 501(c)3 status was needed to succeed and started as a result. The 2016 fiscal year will show the same expenses plus more. **Wage** will need to be added to the budget planning for Crossroads to thrive. **Outreach** is key in gaining financial commitment from the individuals, communities, and churches who recognize the mission of Crossroads as vital and who share the passion for improving the quality of community and life in Crawford County.

*God made us what we are.  
In Christ Jesus, God made us  
to do good works, which God  
planned in advance for us to live  
our lives doing.*

*Ephesians 2:10 NCV*

*Community:  
God's answer to despair  
~Rick Warren*

