

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 going unpaid 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

Pathways Built Together

At Crossroads, meaningful change is built step by step—together. While we always collaborate with a wide network of organizations, here are some of the latest ways we've expanded our impact:

- **End-of-Year Campaign Success** – Thanks to your generosity, our 2024 campaign was our most successful yet, exceeding fundraising goals to sustain our programs in 2025.
- **Community Volunteers** – Invesco and Ware2Go joined us for sack lunch and sandwich builds, while longtime volunteer partners Notre Dame Academy and St. Neumann's Catholic School continued their support in Clyde's Kitchen.
- **Winter Weather Support** – January's snowfall and cold temperatures led to increased efforts to distribute warming center information to ensure safe shelter for those in need. We also provided coats, sweaters, scarves, hand warmers, and other cold-weather gear to help keep individuals warm during the harsh conditions.
- **Point in Time Count** – Crossroads hosted individuals conducting this nationwide count to assess homelessness and guide funding decisions.
- **No Address Movie Premiere Event** – We joined a special event at Regal Theater in Atlantic Station in February to celebrate the premiere of No Address, a film raising awareness about homelessness. Proceeds from its nationwide theater run and Amazon release will be distributed to organizations like Crossroads assisting unhoused populations.
- **Atlanta VA-HCHV Partnership** – We launched a partnership with the Atlanta VA-HCHV (Healthcare for Homeless Veterans) to enhance support for veterans accessing our services.

Annual Sponsors Making a Difference

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

United Way of
Greater Atlanta



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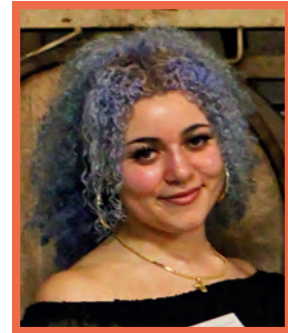
Marc and Carol Gendell



Voices of Crossroads

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**! In this Q&A, she shares insights about her work and what drives her passion for serving our guests.



- Can you share a story or moment from your time as a Case Manager that had a lasting impact on you?- 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.
- The Renewal Project provides guests with essential resources to rebuild their lives. What do you think makes this program so effective, and how has it evolved during your time at Crossroads?- A project/program is only as capable as those operating within it. We help set the foundation that is basic identity through vital documents and we do so leading with compassion. From that foundation, the people we help are able to build upon that, moving closer to empowerment and stability. Our mission never changes, yet our line of work is ever-evolving. I've come to truly know and appreciate the progression of our organization through the people that I work alongside each day. Each person brings their own set of strengths and views that enriches not only how we serve but what we serve. For example, we've been able to widen our scope of resources from this time last year. As our department grows, our connections grow; and opportunities are never too far along from that.
- For those who may not be familiar with the daily work of The Renewal Project, what's something you wish more people knew about the guests we serve and the realities of homelessness?- I feel as though a lot of people think homelessness is so far from the possibility of their reality. In truth, in today's age, the majority of people live check to check and are 1 terrible accident away from bankruptcy. Combine this with a lack of an immediate support system, and now you're where you never thought you'd be. A staggering amount of guests we see are people that recently had their own homes, rented their own apartments and could pay their bills. I've been told countless times from the guests I see, "I got injured and lost my job.", "I got sick and lost my job.", "I didn't have any family to rely on.", etc., and everything that you've worked hard to build crumbles. This fragility is not as uncommon, or as far off as some may think. Sometimes this thought process can hinder one's ability to be empathetic, often shifting blame to the person experiencing the hardship rather than the systems that promote the delicate state that many Americans actually live in. A scary amount of people are just one bad day away from losing just about everything.



Voices of Crossroads Cont.

Walter- A Journey of Transformation

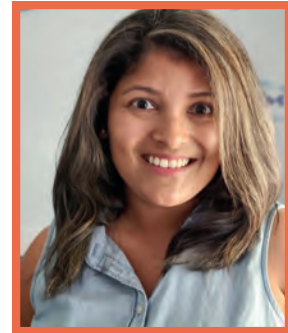
Walter Johns (no relation to Tony) came to **Crossroads** seeking assistance with **obtaining essential documents**. Through **The Renewal Project**, he not only received the support he needed but also found an unexpected opportunity that helped him **secure a job** and turn his life around. In his own words, **Walter** shares his experience and what this journey has meant to him.

- **Can you share a bit about your journey before coming to Crossroads? What led you to seek support from The Renewal Project?**- I came because I was trying to get help with getting my ID birth certificate and a homeless letter and I ran into Chief Ryan which was a security guard at the front door of the crossroad and I spike up a conversation with Chief Ryan and I asked him he was his security he said yes and I asked him was they hiring and chief Ryan replied stepped to the side and I'll talk to you in a few and he told me that he had his own security company and I asked him about a job he said give me your name and your number send me a text and I will give you a call about the job and I text them and that's something my name and told him that this Walter Johns from crossroads and he said okay I got you a few days later he gave me a call and told him he had a job for me and I worked for him one day through training and it went from there and I was hired and I have been working ever since I went from no job to having a job now so now my life has changed and I've been drug-free now for 6 months.
- **What was the process like for you when working with The Renewal Project team? How did we help you and how did the services you received help you move forward?** - Security job has helped me to now continue on with my journey cuz now I can get me a place to stay and get my own car and I can continue my career with Chief Ryan and better myself as I go along actually Chief Ryan gave me a chance in life to enjoy the good life or how I feel too take care of myself and to be applied with his company so now I am very happy.
- **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?** I encourage others to never give up is always a chance in life I went from not having a job to now having a job I was wanting this situation as I came through the program as I seek help through the same crossword program it helped me forward my career as into finding me a job if I was never sit in the direction to come get my birth certificate and my ID I would have never had written in such a good wonderful person as Chief Ryan so I advise everyone else to go to the same program and it would help you and I appreciate crossroad and chief Ryan a whole whole lot cuz I have been in and out of trouble most of my life in and out of jail so I am very happy now in my life to knowing that I can live not knowing have to watch over my back so now I'm doing some honesty and positive so I am very happy with my succeed my journey continue and I am blessed with the help that I have received through crossroads and through Chief Ryan I once again want to say thank you so much I am Walter Johns 35 years old and God bless once again.

Voices of Crossroads Cont.

Freny- A Volunteer Making a Difference

Freny Shah has been a dedicated volunteer at **Crossroads**, bringing her background as a doctor into her work at **The Renewal Project**. As a doctor, her insights into healthcare and social challenges have shaped her approach to serving our guests. In this Q&A, she shares **what motivates her** and the **powerful experiences** she has had along the way.



- **As a doctor, how do you think your background has influenced the way you approach your volunteer work?** My work as a primary care physician for elderly patients on Medicare has taught me a lot about what makes individuals and communities "healthy." For many of my patients, their medical concerns often pale with reality of what it means to be an older adult in America - navigating a high cost of living on a fixed income, deciphering changing insurance plans, and most of all, social isolation. I can't medicate away someone's diabetes or someone's blood pressure if I ignore all the other factors that contribute to their illnesses. It is easy to get overwhelmed; the systems that cause inequities in health care are as convoluted as the ones which contribute to our homeless population. However, we can either focus on all the things we cannot control or take action with what we can do. I take it day by day, meet people where they are at, and if I can make someone's life even a tiny bit better, that's a win.
- **Can you share a meaningful moment or story from your time working with guests at The Renewal Project?** One of my favorite memories in the mailroom was a day when my 8 year old son was off from school and came along with me to volunteer at Crossroads. He kept a running tally of our clients and was a great help in alphabetizing the mail we received. One client who typically appeared morose and withdrawn smiled at my son and exchanged some jokes with him. Children often remind us of our own humanity and can bring out a side that may not be easily seen. Now every time my son has a day off on my volunteer day, he asks to come with me because he has fun and feels empowered that even he can do something meaningful.
- **How has volunteering at Crossroads impacted you personally or changed your perspective on homelessness?** 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.



How You Can Help

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

- **Help Pick Up Water from PepsiCo** – (TBD, schedule based on volunteer availability) We need three large vehicles and volunteers to help transport donated water to Crossroads.
- **Volunteer at the Brookhaven Cherry Blossom Festival**- (March 29-30) – Help us engage festival-goers and share Crossroads' mission. We need four volunteers to staff our table.
- **Kitchen Painting Day**- (April 18 – Good Friday, 9:30 AM - Noon) – Help brighten our kitchen with a fresh coat of paint! We need five volunteers to assist.
- **Host a Hygiene Kit or Sack Lunch Build** – You can organize one at Crossroads or at your location to support those in need.
- **Volunteer in the Kitchen or Mailroom** – Individuals can support meal service in Clyde's Kitchen or assist with The Renewal Project's mailroom. We especially need a regular Friday mailroom volunteer.
- **Donate Needed Items – We are in need of:**
 - Bottles of water
 - Coffee
 - Diapers (all sizes)
 - Full-size hygiene items (shampoo, conditioner, body wash, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, disposable razors, shaving cream, combs/brushes, washcloths, chapstick, baby wipes, hand sanitizer)
 - Shelf-stable baby and infant food
 - Lunch meat (chicken and turkey)
 - Stamps and envelopes for community use
 - Inexpensive backpacks
- **Support Through Kroger Community Rewards** – Link your Kroger Plus Card to Crossroads Community Ministries through the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Every time you shop, a percentage of your purchase will be donated to Crossroads at no additional cost to you!
- **Become a Crossroads Cornerstone (Monthly Donor)** – Join our community of recurring donors who provide sustained support to our programs year-round.

Your time and contributions make a direct impact on our guests. Thank you for your continued support!

Did You Know?

A **state ID** or **birth certificate** is required for many essential steps toward stability, including securing **housing**, finding **employment**, opening a **bank account**, and accessing **medical care**. Yet, for individuals experiencing homelessness, obtaining these documents can be a major hurdle. From securing **state IDs** to assisting with **birth certificates** and **transportation** support, The Renewal Project is a critical resource for thousands of individuals on their path to stability and self-sufficiency.



Pathway to Dignity Project Update

We are excited to share that the **Pathway to Dignity Project** is moving forward! Thanks to your generous support, we successfully **met our fundraising goal, completed the design, and finalized the cost analysis.** We are now **awaiting permits** to begin construction. This new entrance will provide 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, due to **new tariffs**, material costs are expected to **increase by at least 15%**. If you would like to help **offset these rising costs**, please consider making a donation here: <https://crossroadscommunityministries.kindful.com/>.

Thank You to Our Supporters

This project would not be possible without the dedication and generosity of our incredible donors. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to: **Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation, Georgia Power Foundation, The Chestnut Family Foundation, ReStart320, Choate Bridges Foundation, Fraser-Parker Foundation, and Other friends of Crossroads!**

Your commitment to **dignity and stability for all** is transforming lives and strengthening our community. Thank you for being part of this vital initiative!

Did you Know?

Providing a **valid mailing address** is one of the most critical services **Crossroads** offers. Without a **stable address**, individuals experiencing homelessness often face barriers to **employment, housing, healthcare, and financial stability.** Our **Renewal Project Mailroom** serves over **1,100** visits every month, helping guests receive **important documents, benefits, and connections to resources** that support their journey toward **stability.**

Welcoming Our New Staff Members

We are thrilled to introduce the newest members of the **Crossroads** team!

- **Brianna Hilton-Issac, Housing Case Manager – Brianna** joined us to support our **Door-to-Door Housing Program**, assisting individuals and families in securing stable housing.
- **Caroline Hurst, Intake Coordinator – Caroline** is now leading intake services at **The Renewal Project**, ensuring guests receive essential identification and documentation assistance.
- **Joshua Hughes, Housing Case Manager – Joshua** is the latest addition to our housing team, helping connect individuals with vital resources and long-term housing solutions.

Please join us in welcoming **Brianna, Caroline, and Joshua** to the **Crossroads** family!



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** Volunteers Engaged In Service
- **Clyde's Kitchen**
 - **8,832** Meals Served
 - **274** Volunteers Engaged In Service
 - **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

Every statistic tells a story of **resilience and the power of community**. These numbers reflect your unwavering **solidarity** with our neighbors in need and your commitment to building **pathways to stability**. While we do as much as we can with the resources we have, it is only a drop in the bucket compared to the immense and growing need. Together, as a **united community**, we can expand our capacity and ensure no one is left behind in their journey toward **stability and dignity**.