CROSSROADS C5 LEADERS
CLASS OF 2017 GRADUATION

On Sunday, April 30, 55 high school seniors celebrated everything they have accomplished over the past five years in a special C5 Leaders graduation ceremony held at Faneuil Hall. We were thrilled to welcome Chief of Education for the City of Boston Turahn Dorsey who delivered the commencement address and congratulated this class for their many accomplishments and inspired them to go out and continue changing the world. “You’ve reached a defining point – perhaps the end of your time with Crossroads, but certainly not the end of your journey,” said Mr. Dorsey.

Seventy percent of the graduating class will be first-generation scholars, and some are pursuing different dreams. We know that each one of them will accomplish great things, and it is with heavy yet proud hearts that we watch them reach for bigger stages to shine on.

THANK YOU

As summer approaches it is time for us to get our three camps – Camp Wing, Camp Mitton, and Camp Lapham – ready for another amazing summer. While we have a superb maintenance staff, our camps are large and we need support to get them cleaned up and ready to go after long winters.

In order to do that, we enlist the help of generous volunteers. Thanks to the committed and inspiring volunteers from Dexter Southfield, the American Student Association, Liberty Mutual, EMD Serono through Boston Cares and Cisco we were able to open our three sites.

The work done is invaluable in giving the young people we serve the best experience possible. Coming to camp allows our youth the opportunity to leave their environments, build healthy relationships and just be kids. Getting the sites ready is imperative to giving them that opportunity. We cannot thank our volunteers enough for their time and hard work.

change a life.
change everything.

2017 Medallions for Change Service Trip

Every year, the C5 Leaders senior class has the opportunity to plan their very own alternative Spring Break, the C5 Medallions for Change Service Trip. They choose a community outside New England, plan their service and fundraise as a class to reach their goal. This year, the seniors raised over $2,400 and decided to volunteer with various organizations throughout Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While there, they served the Boys and Girls Club of Philadelphia, Aid for Friends, Lutheran Settlement Homeless Shelter, JRAid, Little Sisters of the Poor, Awbury Arboretum, Cradles to Crayons, Food Trust and an optional visit to the Eastern Penitentiary to learn about Mural Arts Philadelphia and engage in a panel about art and prison reform.

Before their trip, the teens didn’t know what to expect, but Philly was a place they quickly grew to admire. Everyone took something away from the trip. “I learned how much a small bit of service can be appreciated. The two four-hour service experiences each day were always met with overwhelming appreciation. I learned how much work is still left to be done,” said Kelsie Drown.

“I learned that with the right group of people around you, you’re able to accomplish anything,” said LaVahl Bennett.

On their way home, the teens were beginning to realize that their C5 journey was coming to an end. They reminisced about the experiences that changed their lives, talked about meeting each other and building the relationships they have today and reflected on the week they had just spent together. “It is important for young people to have this experience because it puts everything you have learned to the test,” said Geanna Landrum, a class of 2017 graduate. “You are humbled and have the chance to see what you’re made of and witness your own shine.”
MEET LISA BOWER
Sr. Community Action Coordinator & Camp Lapham Director
Lisa has been with Crossroads for the past 15 years. She started as a camp counselor and is now a beloved full-time staffer. Lisa is about to embark on another new position here: Camp Director at Camp Lapham.

The position isn’t new, but the location is. Lisa has been directing the program at Camp Mitton, but is now making the leap to Camp Lapham, where we provide summer programming for the first three classes of the C5 Leaders.

Throughout the school year, Lisa works closely with the teens to build and deliver our community action curriculum. Her new role allows her concentrated one-on-one time with the teens to further provide mentorship.

The Class of 2017 is near and dear to Lisa’s heart. “There is a sweetness to this class that I have maybe never seen in another class. If someone is crying, they go to them. If someone speaks, they listen. They want to talk about real things and are okay if the conversation is tough or emotional. I know that they have pushed me as a staff member to be more in touch with my own feelings and experiences.”

Part of her school-year position involves guiding the teens as they plan and execute their Service Trip. This year, one moment that stood out to her was witnessing one of the participants, Jovan, transform from class clown to compassionate and caring young man. He met an independent and sharp woman at Little Sisters for the Poor (a nursing home for the poor) named Sarah. Sarah and Jovan connected in an unexpected way — discussing life, looking at old family photos and learning from each other, ending their interaction with a kiss on the cheek. The experience may only have lasted a few hours, but the impact will last Jovan a lifetime; it serves as a reminder of why we do what we do.

We are so excited to see Lisa in her new role, and cannot wait to see all she accomplishes at Lapham!

SUMMER CAMP MATTERS
While a great opportunity for young people to have fun, summer camp also offers so much more than that. Recent reports from the White House and the Pew Research Center show that young people from under-resourced environments are less likely than their more affluent peers to seek education beyond high school and more likely to be unemployed as adults. One of the main causes is that many do not have consistent positive mentors at home or school. Current research shows that consistent, healthy mental and physical engagement during the summer puts students ahead in their academic progress during the preceding fall, but access to optional summer learning opportunities remains limited for those who cannot afford to pay.

Crossroads Camps offer all youth the opportunity to gain valuable social, emotional and physical learning that improves both critical thinking and optimism about the future. At Crossroads we never turn any camper away due to inability to pay. Many participants return summer after summer, with half of them enrolled in our school-year programs.

One summer at overnight camp is the required foundation for enrollment in Crossroads’ multi-year, year-round leadership programming, because camp is where the seeds of our special brand of family-like youth support are planted. Campers at Crossroads build important bonds with both adult mentors and peers that may support them for 10+ years.

9TH ANNUAL CROSSROADS URBAN CAMPFIRE
Crossroads recently celebrated our 9th Annual Urban Campfire. Since the inaugural event in 2009, Crossroads has raised over $3.5 million through this event, which has received a match thanks to our longstanding partnership with the Rodman Ride for Kids. This year, with 50+ event sponsors, 250+ guests and countless donors and supporters not in attendance, we were able to raise over $500,000. All funds raised from this event directly impact the lives of the more than 1,000 under-resourced Massachusetts youth we serve.

During the event, Crossroads awarded the first ever Crossroads Change Everything Award to First Lady of Massachusetts Lauren Baker. Crossroads honored her for all the work she does on behalf of the young people of Massachusetts. The award is given to those individuals who have shown dedication, diligence and commitment in helping young people to be more and do more than they ever thought possible.

The speaking program also featured Crossroads C5 Leaders Class of 2017 Graduate Justin Fournier. Justin joined Crossroads in eighth grade and has spent five years as a part of the program while enduring constant change and transition in the faster care system. Forced to adjust to new families and environments all too frequently, Justin battled feelings of loneliness, rejection and abandonment, causing him to isolate himself.

Once Justin became part of the Crossroads Family, however, his life changed. Everything changed. Justin was finally able to find consistency with Crossroads. “Even when I moved from home to home, I knew I would see the same faces at Crossroads,” Justin said. He continued, “The big personalities made me laugh, the conversations broke down my walls.”

Justin is just one of over 1,000 examples of inspiring young people dealing with adult responsibilities at a young age. Their success is a direct reflection of the generous and steadfast support of our Crossroads Family.