

2015 Annual Report

Crossroads for Women: A Local Solution to a National Need

Written by Heather Hawkins

OUR MISSION

is to provide comprehensive, integrated services to support women working to break the cycle of homelessness and incarceration and achieve healthy, stable and self-sufficient lives in the community for themselves and their children.



Breaking Cycles. Building Lives.

Crossroads for Women 805 Tijeras Ave. NW Albuquerque, NM 87102 (505) 242-1010

www.crossroadsabq.org

Renowned feminist scholar and civil rights activist, Audre Lorde once said "There is no such thing as a single issue struggle because we do not lead single issue lives." This is particularly true for the women served by Crossroads for Women. Recent shifts in the public dialog at the national level related to mental health, prison reform, substance abuse, and homelessness are leading to innovative and effective approaches that have the potential to address these issues. However, many of these conversations still fail to recognize how deeply interconnected these issues are. According



to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, individuals who have experienced homelessness often cycle between homelessness, hospitals, jails and other institutional care and they frequently have a complex medical problem coupled with a serious mental illness. While this population may appear small and isolated, it is not. According to a study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, approximately three-quarters of women in prison or jail are dealing with a mental health issue. Most of those women have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder, and as many as 17% were homeless at least once in the year before their arrest. This research suggests that a truly effective response to prison reform, mental health, homelessness or substance abuse must take into account how these issues work together to shape women's lives.

While the national conversations are a step in the right direction, it will be imperative not to overlook local solutions. Since 1997, Crossroads for Women has worked in the space where homelessness, incarceration, mental health, and substance abuse intersect. We have provided innovative and effective services, while participating in systems change to address the myriad of challenges facing women working to break cycles of incarceration and homelessness. Case management services assist women in obtaining mental health and medical care, childcare, public benefits, and other necessary resources, family specialists work with women and their families to support building healthy relationships, while vocational services provide support for job and educational readiness. A robust day program brings the women we serve together as a community where they work collaboratively to develop the skills they need to accomplish their individual goals. Crossroads' unique service model is just as complex and multifaceted as the lives of the women we serve.

The service model used in the Crossroads programs is successful. Nationally, 68% of formerly incarcerated individuals are re-arrested on a new charge within three years of release. In contrast, less than 20% of the women who have completed Crossroads or Maya's Place have been re-arrested on new charges. In 2015, our efforts earned Crossroads for Women partnerships and contracts with the New Mexico Department of Corrections and the County of Bernalillo. With these new contracts, and with the support of our many individual, business and civic partners, Crossroads for Women has been able to double the number of women we serve.

Break Cycles. Build Lives. Lend your voice, time, energy, resources and make a powerful difference in the lives of women and children at Crossroads TODAY!

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Finding Connection and Community at Crossroads

Written by Natalie Flores



My name is Natalie Flores and I am 41 years old. I am a mother to my 6 children. I grew up in Albuquerque and have lived here all of my life. I was raised around a lot of drug use; my mom always used drugs. I was a lonely, only child.

My father was involved in the Santa Fe prison riots and, after getting released from prison, he overdosed on heroin and died. Shortly after his death, at age 5, I was diagnosed with a cancerous tumor the size of a cantaloupe on my left kidney. I went through 2 years of chemotherapy and radiation. It was a hard, scary time in my life. Because of her own issues, my mom really wasn't someone I could count on for emotional support. She just wasn't able to handle it.

I got pregnant my senior year of high school and ended up dropping out one semester before graduation. I had no choice but to make my own way as my mom was against interracial relationships. I didn't care because I wanted the love of a family. Looking back I see that I've spent my entire life craving connection.

In my thirties, I got into a relationship with an emotionally abusive man. I was desperate for affection no matter where it came from. And, I was so afraid of losing my connection with him that I began committing crimes to support his drug habit. I had two more children whom I eventually lost when I was sentenced to prison in 1998.

While in prison I tried meth for the first time and loved it. Shortly after I got released, I met the father of my two youngest children. Our relationship, while not abusive, was not without its difficulties. One night we got into an argument and the neighbors called the police. The police called CYFD and, because of racial discrimination, they took our children.

Once again, my family was broken up and we were all traumatized by the separation. I'd visit my kids in their foster home and I would leave feeling like I wasn't able to breathe. I fell into a horrible depression, characterized by deep loneliness and a feeling of impossible hopelessness. Once again, I began committing petty crimes, this time to support my own habit and to pay for hotel rooms. For 18 months I was on the streets, cycling in and out of jail.

On my final probation violation I was sentenced to a year at the Metropolitan Detention Center. During that time I finally got clean and my children were reunited with their dad. I was released to a 6 month program. I got my kids back on visitation and eventually we moved into the program's family room. But, when I finished, we had nowhere to go. We were living in my car and occasionally staying in hotel rooms when I was accepted into Crossroads for Women.

Right off the bat, Crossroads helped us with our own apartment. Moving in was surreal. I remember I was shaking so badly I couldn't even get the key in the lock. My Case Manager had to open it for me. Now, I have this big, beautiful home. It's our safe haven. We feel secure.

What I love about Crossroads is that they don't give up on you. I know that I am supported no matter what. They love me and my children. Also, my Case Manager is a godsend! She has been totally understanding during times of complete overwhelm. Every day she checks on me and asks, "is there anything I can do for you."

When I came to Crossroads my kids and I became part of a family. I value my close relationships with the other ladies in the program. They brought me in and everybody welcomed me. We're here for each other and that's important and beautiful.

Today I am 3 years clean and it feels like an amazing accomplishment. My goal is to raise my kids up to be successful; help them to make good decisions and positive choices. I want my kids to feel loved and be happy.

I don't regret the difficult times in my childhood and adult life. They made me a better, more loving parent to my kids. And now I can say that I know what love feels like. I have the family I've always wanted.

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2015 Program Updates

- In 2015, Crossroads for Women expanded in size and opened two new transitional housing programs:
 - HOPE House, a 9 month to 2 year program supports 12 women as they break the cycle of homelessness and incarceration.
 - CRFW partnered with NM State Corrections to develop The Pavilions-Los Lunas, a transitional housing program that has the capacity to serve up to 30 women as they reintegrate into the community.
 - The Crossroads Supportive Housing program partnered with Bernalillo County to serve an additional 24 women. Total number served by The Crossroads: 54 women (and their children.)
- UNM Occupational Therapy / UNM Health and Sciences Department collaborated with Crossroads for Women's Vocational program to assist in the development of a trauma-informed care approach to vocational curriculum. Working with client vocational interns, Occupational Therapy students created vocational curriculum that is centered on developing stress management, self-regulation and skills for coping that is inclusive of individualized learning styles and personality traits.
- In 2015, after 30 days working with Crossroads for Women, 100% of non-disabled clients were employed, enrolled in vocational and academic programs, or both.
- ◆ The Client Advisory Board became entirely client-led on November 9, 2015, when four passionate and dedicated clients from the Crossroads for Women community began their one year terms as President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Client Advisory Board. The Client Advisory Board meets once a month with the mission to encourage, cultivate, and implement client feedback, and to address and resolve issues at large in the Crossroads for Women community.
- ◆ In 2015, Crossroads for Women implemented a summer program for mothers and children designed to reduce learning loss and provide educational and family building activities, all summer long. 25 children and 8 mothers actively participated in all or some aspects of the program led by a licensed master-level social worker, volunteers and student interns.











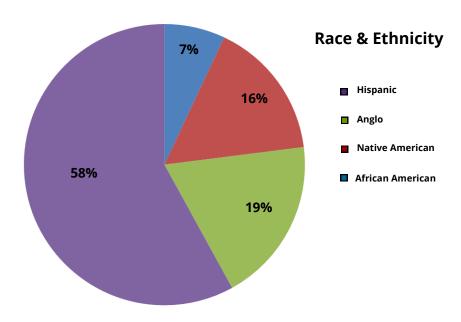
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2015 Demographics

• In 2015, 110 women and 29 children were housed by Crossroads for Women and received supportive services, including intensive case management, vocational support, parenting assistance and psycho-social education via the Crossroads for Women Day Program.

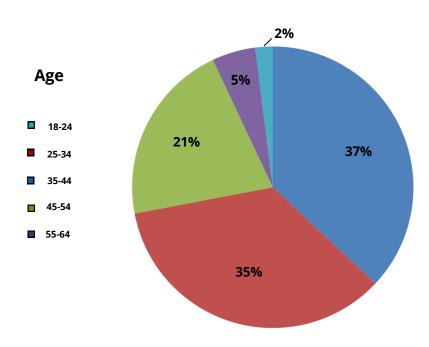
- Over 50 previous housing clients received services through the Aftercare Program. Services included vocational support services, parenting assistance, emergency utility assistance, and more.
- Over 200 women participated in the Crossroads for Women Education groups held at the Metropolitan Detention Center.*

* CRFW staff is unable to collect names of session participants and therefore some duplication exists.









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2015 Financials

Major Funders

Ackerson Family Foundation
Albuquerque Community Foundation
Behavioral Health Services Division
Bernalillo County

Bioneers

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Lannan Foundation

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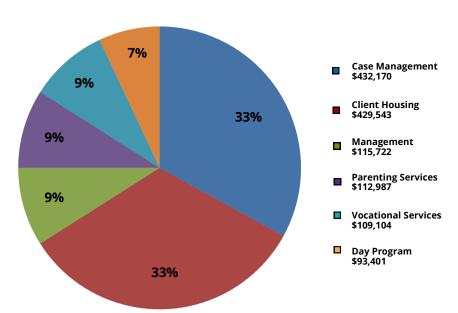
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness

New Mexico Corrections Department

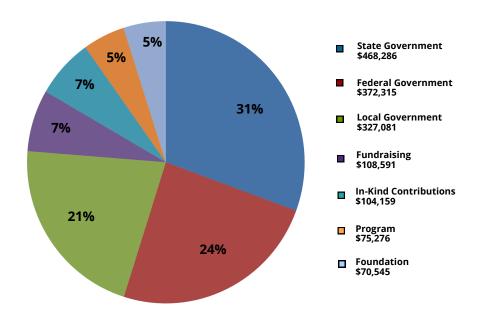
Taos Community Foundation

United Way of Central New Mexico US Probation and Pretrial Office

Expenses \$1,292,928



Revenue \$1,526,251





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