

NEWSLINES^{OF} Hope

www.cross-lines.org

Fall 2020

A Season For Thanks

**One river gives
Its journey to the next.**

**We give because someone gave to us.
We give because nobody gave to us.
We give because giving has changed us.
We give because giving could have changed us.
We have been better for it,
We have been wounded by it—
Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet,
Big, though small, diamond in wood-nails.
Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,
But we read this book, anyway, over and again:
Giving is, first and every time, hand to hand,
Mine to yours, yours to mine.**

**You gave me blue and I gave you yellow.
Together we are simple green. You gave me
What you did not have, and I gave you
What I had to give—together, we made
Something greater from the difference.**

—Alberto Rios

During this beautiful fall season and every time of year, we count our blessings and think thankful thoughts of people like YOU!! We are grateful for all you do to help those in need in our community.

This year has been filled with more challenges and greater need than we have seen in our entire history. Cross-Lines could simply not serve the community without YOUR support. Thank YOU!

Client Grateful for Help During Crisis

Survivor. If you had to describe Claudia*, 60, in a single word, that's the one.

Claudia was facing eviction from her apartment and had lost her job during the pandemic when she sought help at Cross-Lines.

Claudia said she was "near suicide and totally terrified" and dealing with a number of health problems when she came to Cross-Lines this spring seeking help. She had volunteered for another nonprofit in better times and knew the good work that Cross-Lines did.

"This is the first time in my life I was in a situation where I couldn't support myself and I needed to ask for help," she said. "As a previous volunteer with another nonprofit, I thought I had a

"I'm feeling so incredibly hopeful," Claudia said. "I'm so grateful and I don't feel alone anymore. It's such a blessing and such a feeling of being cared for – which I haven't felt a lot of in my life."

good idea of the help that Cross-Lines was able to offer...but until I needed help badly enough to ask for it, did I even begin to understand the depths of compassionate care offered here."

Claudia had fallen behind on her rent shortly before the pandemic when the apartment she lived for 13

years, paying \$500 a month rent, was scheduled for demolition. As she searched for new housing, Claudia couldn't find an apartment for less than \$800 a month. It was a real struggle, Things only spiraled when she lost her job.

Cross-Lines has helped Claudia with food and the Housing Stabilization program is helping her get back on her feet and get stabilized.

"The Homelessness Prevention Program at Cross-Lines removed the stress such that I was able to breathe again and truly come up with a long term plan."

Her new landlord has been very supportive of Claudia and her situation

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VIRTUAL GALA A SUCCESS

Fundraiser Held Online Program
and Virtual Auctions

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Former Board Member and
All-Around Volunteer Jim Ens

CHRISTMAS STORE UPDATE

Learn the Latest About the
2020 Christmas Store

Meet Jim Ensz

Jim Ensz remembers sitting in the pews at his home church, Village Presbyterian, as Don Bakely, the dynamic local preacher and first Executive Director at Cross-Lines Community Outreach, spoke to a captivated congregation.

“Don Bakely was a force,” said Jim. “He was one of those people that made you feel that you were a privileged person and you had an obligation to help those who are less fortunate.”

It was Don’s regular visits to Village that inspired Jim and other members of the church to get involved at Cross-Lines in the 1980s and 90s. To this day, Village continues to support Cross-Lines in a variety of ways, from supporting Cross-Lines financially to providing a monthly volunteer group that donates and serves hot lunch from the Cross-Lines Community Kitchen.

“My wife, Vicki, was one of the first ones involved in Village’s participation in the kitchen on a regular basis,” said Jim. “She and I both have been involved with Cross-Lines for years.”

Jim is the senior partner of Ensz & Jester, a litigation firm serving the Kansas City area, and it was his knowledge of law that made him the perfect addition to a major fundraising project for Cross-Lines. From 2013 to 2016, Jim served on the committee for a Capital Campaign to raise funds for a new building on campus and to establish an endowment for Cross-Lines. They met their campaign goal and secured the necessary resources to build the building



that now houses the Food Pantry, Senior Commodities program, and Thrift Store.

During that time, Jim also became a member of the Cross-Lines Board of Directors, continuing to use his attorney background to assist Cross-Lines when legal issues were at the forefront. He served on the board for five years.

“This year, I decided to step down because I was in the process of retiring,” explained Jim. “I didn’t know what I would be doing, but I said I would plan to volunteer more.”

Even after the pandemic hit, Jim stayed true to that promise and has become a regular volunteer at Cross-Lines. He can often be found in the Community Kitchen or the Food Distribution Building, helping with whatever needs to be done that day.

“It has been very interesting in terms of getting to see the variety of people that come in and utilize the services,” said Jim. “I have helped deliver food and supplies to people’s cars and in my interactions with them they really are so grateful for what they are getting. That is encouraging and it makes one feel good about Cross-Lines.”

Like many nonprofits, Cross-Lines has seen a huge rise in need over the past months and has had to rely on one-of-a-kind volunteers like Jim to be flexible, see where help is needed, and calmly assist those that need it.

“There have been times I have felt that if I hadn’t been there to help, there would be a struggle the next day, said Jim. “It seems like somehow and in some way it always gets done.”

HELP FIGHT HUNGER TODAY:

VOLUNTEER. Sign up on your own or assemble a small group of 3-6 people to help distribute food. Volunteers can help with various tasks in our Food Pantry that include packing boxes of food and assembling toiletry kits. Volunteers can also assist with our Senior Commodities program by assembling boxes of food for low-income seniors. Available shifts primarily on weekday mornings. To sign up or ask a question about volunteering with us, email Christina at christina@cross-lines.org.

ORGANIZE A FOOD DRIVE. We are always accepting food donations to support our Hunger Relief Programs. If you’d like to learn more about hosting a Food Drive or donating food, visit our website for our most urgently needed items and call our main office at 913-281-3388. Donations can be dropped off at our Food Distribution Building, Monday-Friday 9AM-1PM.

Supporters Tune In to Virtual Gala

Just a year ago, many of us could not imagine attending a virtual fundraiser, nor could we predict that the 2020 Hope at Home Virtual Gala would raise nearly \$150,000 for Cross-Lines Community Outreach.

This year, the annual fundraiser was hosted completely online, meaning guests could only access the auction, the program, and the Gift of Giving via their phones and computers. The program was broadcasted online on Sept. 19.

Local musician and entertainer, Jim “Mr. Stinky Feet” Cosgrove, warmly welcomed viewers and performed his popular song, “Let’s Stick Together” to open the program. He was followed by a video showing footage of Cross-Lines during the pandemic, narrated by Executive Director Susila Jones who highlighted the huge increase in need during the past six months and how Cross-Lines has continued to serve families in need. Susila also thanked the many people that helped Cross-Lines remain open during the pandemic.

The feature video gave viewers an inside look at the life of Julia, a Cross-Lines client who lost her job and became homeless during the pandemic before coming to Cross-Lines for help. In the video, she describes the fear of sleeping in her car at night and the joy of receiving genuine care and a home that was like “her castle.” Since the beginning of the pandemic, Cross-Lines has seen a huge increase in the number of individuals, like Julia, needing assistance with food and housing.



From Left, Emcee Jim “Mr. Stinky Feet” Cosgrove, Auctioneer Trisha Brauer and Cross-Lines Executive Director Susila Jones during the Hope at Home Virtual Gala Live Stream event.

The Live and Silent Auction opened online a week before the event so guests had several days to peruse the auction lineup and start making bids. Live Auction packages were highlighted during the program, including two trips to Breckenridge, Colorado, and a unique Private BBQ Dinner for 12 with Live Music. The online bidding format worked well for supporters and participants were able to easily bid and donate online.

The Gift of Giving, a special time to donate to Cross-Lines by level, was represented on screen by a donation thermometer, filling slowly and broadcasting the names of donors as they donated from home.

Although this year’s Gala was not originally what Cross-Lines planned for, nearly all who participated were pleased with the outcome and blown away by the support that ultimately exceeded goals. Without food, venue, and other miscellaneous costs, the event was able to retain much of its revenue and put it directly toward helping families in need.

It was no easy feat changing an annual event from in-person to virtual

and Cross-Lines is deeply grateful for all those who believed in the purpose of the event and supported it along the way. Ten incredible sponsors financially backed the Hope at Home Virtual Gala, led by Presenting Sponsor, NASB (North American Savings Bank) and Knit-Rite at the Mentor Level. Thank you to our other sponsors, including Jean Dorsey Memorial

Fund, Business Coaching Plus, Blue Cross Blue Shield KC, Bartlett & West, Capitol Federal, Kansas Gas Service and Luxury & Imports. For a list of all of our generous auction donors, please see page 4.

Cross-Lines staff also received support from Gala Committee members, the Cross-Lines Board of Directors, and a handful of rock star volunteers that designed the event logo and graphics, filmed hours of important video content, assembled unique auction packages, and served as a “Geek Squad” to help viewers with tech issues and make the new virtual event as easy and accessible as possible.

In all, 115 individuals, couples, or churches donated funding and 87 individuals, couples, businesses, or churches donated auction items to this fundraiser.

Thank you for your support of Cross-Lines and the Hope at Home Virtual Gala, and for providing hope for families that need it now more than ever.

To watch a recording of the Hope at Home Live Stream Program, visit our YouTube Channel.

Thank You Gala Auction Donors

Live Auction Item Donors

Bichelmeyer Meats
Bill Magee
Cathy and Terry Matlack
Charlie Fajkus
Chris Hoisington and Hunka Hunka Burnin' Rub
Cross-Lines Board of Directors
Derek & Kelly White
Friends of Cross-Lines
Geoffrey & Jane Ackley
Jane Kurtz
Jon Gossman
Kam Howard
Knit-Rite
Martin City Brewing Company
Matt Shoaf

Silent Auction Item Donors

Alamo Drafthouse Cinema
Aldersgate UMC
American Jazz Museum
AYAM Africa
Bar K
Barbara Isaacson
Bijin Salon and Spa
Bill Magee
Black Hills Aerial Adventures
Boulevard Brewing Company
Boulevard Drive-In
Charlie Hustle
Chicken and Pickle
Chris and Esther Grenz
Cross-Lines Young Professionals Board
Dan and Tandy Gabbert
Don Grimes
Family Tree Nursery
Fiorella's Jack Stack Barbecue
Firebird's Wood Fired Grill
Fritz's Railroad Restaurant
Grand Country Music Hall
Hart Ranch Camping Resort Club
Holiday FX, LLC
Hughes Brothers Theatre
Jazz, A Louisiana Kitchen

Jean Pflumm
Kam Howard
Kansas City Chiefs
Kansas City Royals
Kansas City Zoo
Kathleen McCullough
Keith Jantz
Knit-Rite
Louisburg Cider Mill
Made in KC
Magic House St. Louis Children's Museum
Megan Pierre
Mesner Puppet Theater
Musical Theater Heritage
Nancy Pistole
National WW1 Museum and Memorial
Natural Way Chiropractic
Olberding Family
Paul and Eliese Holt
Q39
Rainbow Mennonite Church
Reptile Gardens
Ricki Dresel
Roseann Mufich Retekis
Rush Mountain Adventure Park
Sav Art
Scout & Cellar
Silver Dollar City
Sprint
Strauss Peyton
Sunflower Hills Golf Course
Swell Wellness
Tara Leighnish
The Good Guys Cleaning & Restoration
The Stitch Maestro
Theatre for Young America
T-Mobile
Tony Temple
True North Hotel Group, Inc.
Uptown Theater
Velvet Crème Popcorn
Waldo Pizza
Ward Parkway Presbyterian Church
Westport Yoga
Wonderscope Children's Museum

Client Grateful for Help During Crisis

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and is working with both Claudia and Cross-Lines on keeping her safely housed.

"I think he saw that Cross-Lines was investing in me and that increased his desire to also invest in me. I'm feeling so incredibly hopeful," Claudia said. "I'm so grateful and I don't feel alone anymore. It's such a blessing and such a feeling of being cared for – which I haven't felt a lot of in my life."

Claudia has maintained a job since she was 14 years old when she worked long hours in her grandparents' laundry.

"I still remember my first paycheck," Claudia said. "It was \$45.45. \$20 went to my mom for room and board, \$20 went in the bank in the hopes of college, and the other \$5 went for food."

Living a life filled with struggle and trauma, Claudia is anxious to heal and get back on her feet. With an helping hand from Cross-Lines, Claudia knows she's been put on the path to stable living.

"I feel like I have been given a way of holding up my head with my landlord. It's given me a short-term respite to allow me to heal from some of this trauma and make a plan for my future," Claudia said during a recent discussion.

"I went from being near suicidal to seeing a clear way to the future," Claudia said.

** Claudia's name was changed to protect her privacy.*

Christmas Store Altered Due to Ongoing Pandemic

Right now, we would normally be gearing up for our annual Christmas Store, signing up Wyandotte County families to shop and volunteers to help make the store a welcoming place for all. Due to COVID-19, we are unable to provide the annual Christmas Store in a way that ensures the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, and clients so we made the incredibly difficult decision to not host the Christmas Store this year.

We know that this has been a meaningful tradition not only for the families that shop each year, but for the churches and volunteers that have been a part of this Christmas tradition since its inception.

Despite the ongoing challenges, Cross-Lines will do everything we can to help parents provide Christmas joy to their families. If you have helped with the Christmas Store in the past, we invite you to consider giving back in a different way this holiday season. Cross-Lines is serving almost twice as many clients as normal and the need for housing and food assistance

only continues to rise. This year, we will be providing Walmart gift cards to families enrolled in our Housing Stabilization program. Families with children who are actively receiving case management will be eligible for Christmas gift cards. Each family will receive a pre-determined amount of gift cards based on the number of children in their home. In addition, during the month of December, we will be providing an extra "holiday" box of food through our Food Pantry.

If you'd like to help provide families with a warm home to celebrate this Christmas season and food on the table to share, consider donating to Cross-Lines online or by mail.

If you would like to volunteer your time this holiday season, please sign up to help pack boxes for low-income seniors or to serve breakfast or lunch in our Community Kitchen. Thank you for supporting Cross-Lines and considering these needs! We are grateful for you and wish you a safe, healthy and wonderful holiday season.