

# NEWSLINES <sup>OF</sup> Hope

## A Sanctuary of Shelter

The definition of sanctuary is a place where one can find peace.

For the past few months, the pews of the former St. Thomas church building at Cross-Lines were once again filled with people seeking warmth and hope and finding it in the former sanctuary space.

In January, Cross-Lines opened a daytime Warming Center for those experiencing homelessness

in Wyandotte County. From early January through the end of March, the space provided a safe, warm and welcoming



**Individuals experiencing homelessness found a refuge from the bitter cold in the Warming Center that opened in January in the old sanctuary space of the Cross-Lines church building.**

space for more than 150 people experiencing homelessness, providing a crucial safety net to the Kansas City, KS community.

As the temperatures were dropping to dangerous, deadly lows, many places that people had typically been able to go for warmth like libraries and community centers were closed to the public due to the pandemic. Cross-Lines decided to be responsive to the needs of the community by opening the Warming Center.

**--Continued on page 2**

## Cross-Lines Plans Rad 80's Themed Fundraiser

Cross-Lines is stoked to announce that we will be hosting Hope for the Future at 5:30 pm. on Thursday, September 30th at the Boulevard Drive-In in Kansas City, KS. This totally tubular 80's themed event will replace our normal formal fall Gala this year.

The socially-distanced fundraiser will include the live and silent auctions that are a favorite part of our annual Gala. Like last year, bidding will be done on your mobile device. Viewers can also tune in to the program from home virtually, though we hope you will be

able to join us in person and chill with your friends and family.

Cars will be spaced ten feet apart, allowing guests to safely enjoy the program on the big screen from your vehicle or your lawnchair. Following a short program, guests will see the 1985 classic, Back to the Future, in 4k, outdoors on the big screen, 80's style.

A killer array of delicious, diverse cuisines will be provided by multiple local food trucks and another truck will supply local craft beers on tap and wine as part of your ticket price.

Entertainment will include 80's music and several other special surprises you, your family and friends will enjoy. There are several unique sponsorship opportunities for this event, so if you or your business are interested in showing your support for the community, contact Kelley Carpenter, Director of Development at [kelley@cross-lines.org](mailto:kelley@cross-lines.org) or 913-281-3388, ext. 239.

For the latest details about the event, stay tuned to our website, your inbox and our social media.

We totally hope to see you there!

### NEWS & NOTES

Get all the latest updates on a wide variety of topics at Cross-Lines

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Find out about volunteer opportunities and meet our Community Engagement Manager

### BOARD CHANGES

Say thank you to three longtime Board members and welcome our new Board Chair

# A Sanctuary of Shelter

--Continued from page 1

"The symbolism of this being a former church sanctuary is not lost on us," said Rob Santel, Director of Housing Solutions at Cross-Lines. "To know that this place is being a refuge from the weather elements is very powerful and some of our guests have shared that they find a sense of solitude, safety and security knowing that they are in this space."

Nick Allen, Outreach Case Manager at Cross-Lines, saw first-hand the devastating impact the record cold temperatures had on those who were living on the streets. Several clients suffered serious frostbite.

"We have people in here right now who have lost limbs out there in their camps," Nick said. "There were no other resources for them in Wyandotte County to stay warm and survive."

Cross-Lines hopes to keep the space open in severe weather conditions in the future, particularly in the winter months. Stay tuned to our newsletter and website for the latest updates about our programs and services.

In addition to opening the Warming Center, Cross-Lines spearheaded a partnership between multiple organizations to provide an Extreme Weather Overnight Shelter for people to spend the night indoors when temperatures dropped below 20 degrees. It was the only shelter available to those experiencing homelessness in Wyandotte County.

Cross-Lines worked with other organizations, including the KC Dream Center, who offered their space, and Care Beyond the Boulevard, another nonprofit agency that Cross-Lines partners with to serve those experiencing homelessness. Cross-Lines also worked with local government officials from the Unified Government to navigate the many regulations and rules so that the shelter could open on Christmas Eve on December 24th.

"It was a Christmas miracle," Santel said. "Lives were saved. We found a lot of people on the streets who didn't know there was a place to seek shelter in Wyandotte County. The coolest part was that it was really a collaboration of faith communities, community leaders and homeless service providers."

Santel used a borrowed van to drive guests from the Warming Center at Cross-Lines to the Shelter space. He also drove around to camp sites and abandoned buildings in Wyandotte County to pick up individuals who were experiencing homelessness and extremely vulnerable due to the record low temperatures.

The shelter had capacity of 30 per night and served a total of 120 people throughout the winter. When initial start-up funding ran out in January, funds were raised to keep the shelter in operation. The shelter utilized tents to help provide guests with privacy while they slept. An evening meal was provided for guests through a partnership with another nonprofit organization.

Five Cross-Lines staff members were among the part time helpers who kept the shelter running overnight. Cross-Lines staff also provided outreach and case management services to the guests to help them access critical services and housing resources.

The lack of any permanent overnight shelter for those experiencing homelessness in Wyandotte County is a huge issue for the community. Cross-Lines continues to lead efforts working with other homeless service providers in hopes that a permanent solution can be found.

"Hopefully, our community can come up with a way to provide overnight shelter – not just on the coldest of nights," Santel said.

## THREE WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

**Please donate to support our ongoing work.** Consider becoming a monthly donor, either by using our website at [www.cross-lines.org](http://www.cross-lines.org) or filling out and returning the enclosed envelope. Please be sure to include your email address so we can send you a receipt each month.

**Please support our event, Hope For The Future.** The 1980's themed event will be held at 5:30 on Sept. 30 at the Boulevard Drive-In. Read more about the event here in your newsletter or on our website.

**Please volunteer.** If you feel comfortable and are able to volunteer, we could really use your help. We take many precautions to protect our volunteers, clients and staff. Sign up to volunteer on our website.

## **2020 Christmas Store Serves 250 Families**

Though the pandemic made things very different in 2020 for the Christmas Store, hundreds of local families and children had a Merry Christmas thanks to our dedicated supporters.

To keep our clients, staff, and volunteers safe, the usual Christmas Store couldn't operate as it had in the past. But, through the generous support of donors, Cross-Lines still provided a happy holiday to our clients. Approximately 250 families, including 500 children, received gift cards, winter coats, and Christmas food boxes.

THANK YOU to the many supporters who donated to this endeavor. Through this generous outpouring holiday support, Cross-Lines was also able to provide McDonald's gift cards to many of our unsheltered neighbors.

Special thanks to Knox Presbyterian Church, Church of the Resurrection, Stillwell UMC, Rainbow Mennonite Church, Lake Quivira Ministries, Aldersgate UMC, Westley UMC, Indian Heights UMC, and countless other churches, businesses, and individuals that helped make Christmas possible!

The response from our clients was overwhelmingly positive. Here are just two quotes from families who were served:

"This help is so appreciated. We weren't going to have any Christmas this year and now we can. Thank you! My son doesn't have a coat and how he will. I am so happy!"

"It is interesting how things happen. I was praying early this morning and asking for Christmas help. Then, Cross-Lines called me and offered to help. It's a miracle!"

## **Young Professionals Board Seeks Applicants**

Cross-Lines Young Professionals Board is seeking new members to engage a younger generation of supporters for our mission and work.

An online application is available on our website at [www.cross-lines.org](http://www.cross-lines.org) for those who are interested in serving. Anyone in the KC area who considers

themselves a young professional and wants more experience serving the community should apply. There are no specific age or educational requirements.

The Young Professionals Board plans fundraising and networking events, volunteers, and recruits younger volunteers to serve at Cross-Lines.

Please share this opportunity with any young people in your circle who want to make an impact.

## **2021 Plant Sale Canceled**

Due to the pandemic, the Spring Dig Plant Sale fundraiser will not be held in 2021.

If you were hoping to buy a selection of plants for your garden, consider visiting Louisburg Nursery and Greenhouse or Creekside Market. They have graciously supplied the plants for this sale in years past and would be delighted to serve you.

If you still would like to support the work of Cross-Lines this year, please consider a monetary donation in lieu of your plant purchase.

Proceeds from this event go towards our program costs and we need your help to make up that difference in 2021. With your help, we can continue to serve our community members in need during this difficult time.

## **Thrift Store to Remain Closed Making Way for Food Pantry**

The Cross-Lines Thrift Store will remain closed for the foreseeable future.

As the needs in the Food Pantry have more than doubled over the past year, the former Thrift Store space and staff were desperately needed to help distribute food to many people in need in the community. In 2020, the pantry served more than 22,000 individuals.

Stay tuned to our website, your inbox and our social media for the exciting changes that will be happening as the space is transformed and opens in June.

Cross-Lines partners with Flourish Furnishings to provide used furniture and household items to clients we help with housing. If you are interested in

donating furniture or household items to Flourish Furnishings, visit their website at [www.flourishfurnishings.org](http://www.flourishfurnishings.org).

## **Clothing Closet Needs Donations**

As the weather turns warmer, many of our clients who are experiencing homelessness are in need of lighter, durable clothing.

We are in need of T-shirts, jeans, pants, shorts, shoes, rain gear and jackets. Items should be gently used or new. We are also in need of new women's underwear, men's boxers, backpacks and sleeping bags.

Thanks to a handful of dedicated volunteers including Eliese Holt, Laurie Ritter and Melynda Little, the Clothing Closet is neatly organized and set up for clients to shop for the items they need.

Donations can be delivered to the Cross-Lines main office, located on the ground floor of the church building during our regular office hours, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-noon.

The Clothing Closet is located in the storage building where the old Thrift Store was housed. The Closet will be open to clients experiencing homelessness on Friday mornings.

## **Auction Items Needed for Fall Hope for the Future Fundraiser**

Cross-Lines needs your help to put together a great auction for our Fall Fundraiser, Hope for the Future.

Items are needed for both the Live and Silent Auction. Some of the things that are popular include getaways within a day's drive, handmade one-of-a-kind items, and experiences such as sporting events and outdoor performances.

To see a list of auction item suggestions and ideas, please visit our website at [www.cross-lines.org](http://www.cross-lines.org), and click on the Hope for the Future tab under News and Events.

If you are interested in donating an auction item or if you would like more information about the event, please contact Kelly Gough, Development Associate, at [kelly@cross-lines.org](mailto:kelly@cross-lines.org) or call 913-281-3388.

We appreciate your support!

# We Miss YOU!

Are you interested in volunteering in 2021 at Cross-Lines?

As the vaccination rollout continues across cities, counties, and the country, many individuals are interested in returning to some type of normalcy and that includes volunteering.

We are SO excited to welcome individuals and small groups back into our space.

Although vaccination is not a requirement to volunteer at Cross-Lines, we want you to know we are continuing to follow CDC guidelines related to mitigation of the virus. Clients, volunteers and staff are required to wear masks, wash hands frequently, and not to enter facilities while exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms.

If you are considering volunteering again or know someone who would like to help at Cross-Lines, we want to make sure you have all the information you need to make

an informed decision so you will find information below regarding our most urgent and current volunteer needs.

**Community Kitchen** - Prepare lunch and serve lunch to nearly 200 individuals from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. through our community kitchen to-go window. Dates available at publication time: 4/22, 4/27, 5/3, 5/6, 5/17, 5/19, 5/20

**Senior Commodities** - Work assembly-line style to pack boxes of shelf-stable food for low-income seniors in our community. Sign up on your own or bring a group of three to six people to help!

Times: 9 a.m.-Noon or 1-3 p.m.

**Food Pantry** - Our Food Pantry is busy giving out an assortment of food to families in need. Assist this program by packing boxes of food, putting together toiletry kits, or helping with other assorted tasks.

Times: 9-11 a.m. or 1-3 p.m.

For more information regarding volunteering or accessing our volunteer sign up system reach out to Rachel Russell at [rachel@cross-lines.org](mailto:rachel@cross-lines.org)

## Volunteers Encourage Others to Serve

*"I've been volunteering at Cross-Lines for about 8 years now, about 6 years at the front desk. I feel very safe and comfortable at Cross-Lines. Everyone is wearing masks. The new air purifiers are running in the building and anyone who comes in is adhering to the distance mandate. We have additional masks available if anyone comes in without one, but seldom does that happen."*

*"There is such a need in our community for the assistance Cross-Lines provides that I feel such a strong pull to be there when I can. I also deliver commodities to a group of ladies living at Blackbird. Sarah Kaldenberg in commodities always greets me with her mask on and packs my car quickly. I deliver the boxes to a cart that one of the ladies has outside waiting for me. Once again, Cross-Lines has done so much to make me feel comfortable and safe during these crazy pandemic times. I urge anyone thinking about joining our volunteer ranks for the first time or*

*coming back, do so. You are needed and wanted!"*

**-Ann Hill, Volunteer**

*"I have occasionally volunteered through my church at the Community Kitchen, serving lunches for several years. Last summer, I started volunteering individually in the Food Pantry and Commodities, packing boxes of food. I try to volunteer once every week for three hours, sometimes twice a week.*

*"I think it is very safe to work in the Pantry & Commodities building. Everyone wears a mask. It is a large room with very few people. I prefer to work individually or with just one or two others. The sign-up app makes it easy for me to do that. I have friends who will sign up to work with me. The sign up app makes it easy for them to see when I'm scheduled. I typically sign up on Sunday night for the following week, selecting a day that needs volunteers. Later in the week, I check again and sometimes select a second day for that week."*

**-Jack Podoll, Volunteer**

## Meet Rachel

Please welcome Rachel Russell to the Cross-Lines family! Rachel joined the team as Community Engagement Manager in March. Her primary duties



include the recruitment, placement, and support of our volunteers, as well as maintaining and creating new community partnerships within Wyandotte County and the surrounding area.

Prior to joining our team, Rachel worked at YouthBuild KCK, a program of United Way of Greater KC, as a Case Manager and AmeriCorps Program Coordinator. Rachel is a proud AmeriCorps VISTA Alum sharing a strong passion and dedication to volunteerism and service in both her professional and personal life. Rachel currently serves as a board member for the following organizations: KC Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, Rosedale Development Association, Kansas Enrichment Network, and Kansas PTA. Rachel has also recently declared her intent to run for a seat on the Kansas City Kansas Public School Board in the November General Election.

Rachel has been a Wyandotte County resident since the early 2000's. She graduated from Piper High School in 2007 and attended the University of Kansas & Emporia State for her post-secondary studies in Liberal Arts and Elementary Education. Rachel is a mother of three beautiful children - Kaiya, Halle and Josiah.

When she is away from the office, you can find her cheering on her favorite sports teams, KU men's basketball and the Chiefs, traveling around the country, or enjoying time with friends & family.

Rachel is excited to join the Cross-Lines Team and connect with the Cross-Lines supporters!

Have questions about volunteering? Feel free to contact Rachel via email at [rachel@cross-lines.org](mailto:rachel@cross-lines.org) or on the phone at 913-281-3388, ext 233.

# Three Board Members Reflect on Years of Service

Three longtime Board Members completed their second terms of service in March. Though they won't be on the Board, all three plan to stay very active at Cross-Lines. Please join us in thanking Cindy Moore, Derek White and Lisa Wiens for their many years of service! We spoke with the three recently about their memories over the past few years and how they plan to remain involved with Cross-Lines:

## Cindy Moore, Board Chair

"It was exciting to see the Capital Campaign be so successful and then to see the new building construction! What a joy that was to see that project completed!

"I have enjoyed being involved in the community picnics - stuffing hot dog buns and handing out melty-chocolate chip cookies. Most recently, the way the staff stepped up when the pandemic started to make sure our programs would still be able to serve our clients amazed and inspired me."

Cindy will continue to volunteer and serve as chair of the Strategic Planning Committee as well as staying on the Governance committee.

"I'm sure you'll see me around serving lunch at the kitchen and filling a box or two at the food pantry or commodities stations every once in awhile."

## Derek White

"I think I am most proud of being a part of an organization which has continued to evolve with the ever-changing need of its' clients. From everything from the capital campaign and new building, to new fundraisers and evolving programs to keep up with the need of the community, I have enjoyed being

a part of the organization during this time, all while staying true to the mission of Cross-Lines."

Derek will continue to volunteer and serve on the finance committee.

## Lisa Wiens

"It was extremely rewarding to be a part of our capital campaign - watching the efforts of so many who were involved to make that happen. It provided us the space to serve so many more clients in the KCK community.

"One of the happiest moments is having the opportunity to volunteer in our annual Christmas store. Seeing the expression on the faces of our clients, knowing that because of Cross-Lines they are able to provide a hot meal and presents for their families on Christmas. It is amazing that we were able to serve almost 500 families each year. It truly takes a village of volunteers to make this happen. It has become a volunteer tradition in our family that has now been passed down to the fourth generation of our family."

"I am amazed at the evolution of Cross-Lines from when I began volunteering approximately 10 years ago. We have come so far and I can't wait to see what we do next!"

Lisa plans to continue volunteering and serving on committees including Development & Program Evaluation.

## New Chair Elected



In March, Megan Pierre was elected by the Cross-Lines Board to serve as Chair. Megan and her husband, D.J., live in Kansas City, MO, with their adorable toddler, Jack, and their dog, Lucy. They are

expecting a new baby boy this June.

Megan is an attorney and currently works as a Compliance Consultant for Mosaic Life Care in St. Joseph, Missouri. Prior to joining Mosaic in November 2020, Megan worked for a local legal services nonprofit for nine years, during which she represented over 5,000 individuals who needed an attorney but could not afford to hire one. Because public service is a passion of hers, Megan also volunteers as a board member for the Association for Women Lawyers of Greater Kansas City, and has also served as a foster parent for dogs awaiting adoption at Midwest Animal Resq.

Megan has served on the board of Cross-Lines since the spring 2018, during which time she served on the Strategic Planning, Development, and Personnel committees. As board chair, she will also serve on the Governance and Executive committees. She is excited to see positive changes continue at Cross-Lines.

"My main goal as incoming chair is to expand our diversity and inclusion initiatives, as well as board recruitment and development, so that the board can better support the staff and the mission of Cross-Lines," Megan said. "I believe that the board should reflect the organization and the community that it serves."

"The mission of Cross-Lines is near and dear to my heart. As a defense attorney, I witnessed first-hand the gap in services that a lot of my clients who experienced poverty and homelessness faced, and I love that Cross-Lines provides so many services to bridge that gap. Cross-Lines provides the necessities that so many of our neighbors facing homelessness struggle to find, and that so many of us take for granted in our lives. Our staff do an incredible job caring for and empowering every single individual that walks in our doors, and I like being able to support them in their mission."

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**Shopping Online? Don't forget to use Amazon Smile and select Cross-Lines!**

**Did you know we have a wish list? If you want to donate but don't have time, you can select an item and ship it directly to us!**

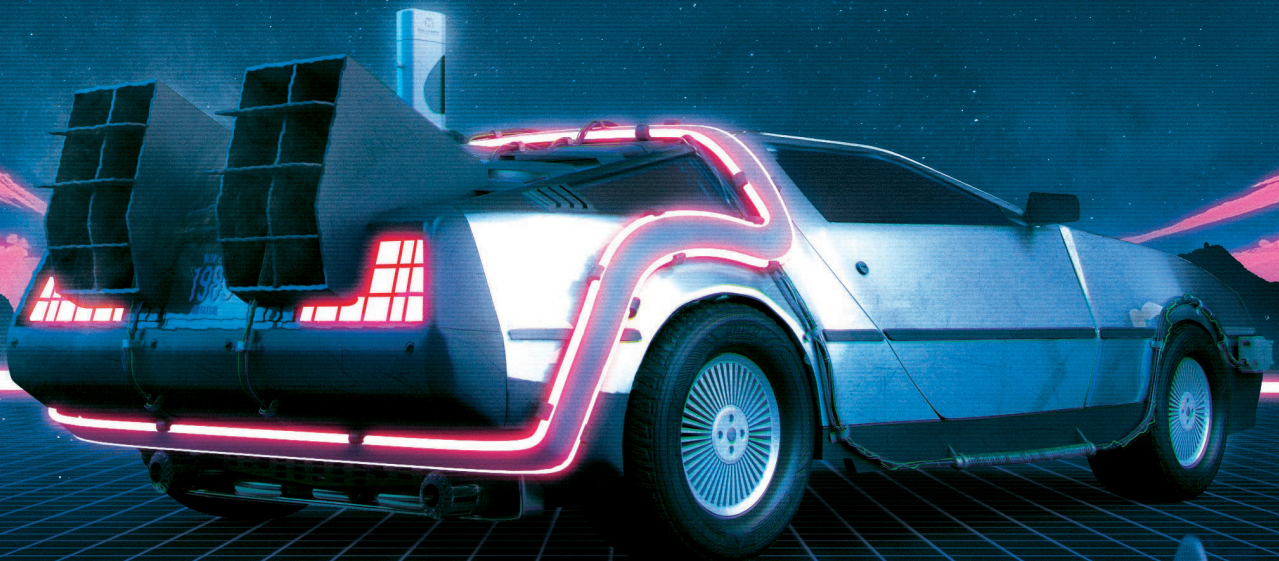
**9-30-21**

**CROSS-LINES PRESENTS**

# **HOPE FOR THE FUTURE**

**A 1980's THEMED SOCIALLY-DISTANCED FUNDRAISER**

**BOULEVARD DRIVE-IN 5:30pm**



**CROSS-LINES**  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH, INC.