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Mark Russell for Crossway Community Saturday, February 18, 1995



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Mark Russell
for
CROSSWAY COMMUNITY
Saturday, February 18, 1995

For More Information...

about Crossway Community's innovative Child Development Services, Work-Family Resources and Seminars, Family Activities, Service Learning Opportunities, and/or the Family Leadership Program, please contact:

Crossway Community
3015 Upton Drive
Kensington MD 20895
ph: (301) 929-2505
fax: (301) 949-4741

To join a growing number of "Friends of Crossway Community," please send us the form below -- we'll be pleased to keep you posted on program developments and activities. From all of our families to yours, THANK YOU for your interest and support.

___ Yes, I'd like to be a "Friend of Crossway Community," by supporting its principles and programs and receiving news of its development.

Name: _____

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Crossway Community, Inc. is designated a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization. All contributions are gratefully acknowledged by the organization, and tax deductible.

Crossway Community

from family to family...



Crossway Community is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is:

to create a family-oriented environment that promotes more effective ways of living in an interactive community where learning can happen...

Crossway Community:
An Innovative Approach to
Family Support and Education

Since its doors opened in a renovated elementary school in 1990, Crossway Community has been committed to creating a positive learning environment for parents and children -- and to supporting families as they meet the challenge of balancing their responsibilities at work and at home.

Crossway Community works in partnership with families who bring a diverse range of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to seminars, activities, and service learning efforts. All Crossway programs are shaped by a set of simple, but essential principles:

- * Children develop in the context of family.
- * Families develop in the context of community, and are the foundation of a healthy society.
- * Parents have primary responsibility for their children's development and well-being.
- * Most families are doing their best with the resources they possess at a given time.
- * The focus of quality family support is on building family strengths and protective factors in preventive, culturally competent ways.
- * Successful family support services are delivered in an environment of physical and emotional safety -- a place where participants feel welcome to learn, share, and work together.

Comprehensive Services
at Crossway Community

Since Crossway provides comprehensive family support and education services, families can choose to enroll in any or all of its three program centers. Crossway recognizes that at various times, families may need different levels of support, and may wish to make different kinds of contributions as participants. For example, Crossway's "Family Leadership Program" can "structure success" for low-income, single parent families who are committed to making positive changes in their lives.

The support of corporations, foundations, community groups, and individuals who share Crossway's principles makes possible the delivery of quality services and the development of a model for replication in other communities. With a focus on health and wellness, career development, child/family development, and economic literacy, Crossway delivers service through three Centers:

- The Child Development Center
 - o Full-day, quality care
 - o Summer peace camp
- Work-Family Resource Center
 - o Seminars
 - o Resource Library
- Community Center
 - o Community Collaboration
 - o Family Activities

***"Tell me and I forget,
teach me and I may remember,
Involve me and I learn..."***

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Noontime Nuptial for Sarah Guinan and Robert Nixon

Sarah Thorsby Guinan, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Edward Guinan of Washington, D.C., was married at noon last Saturday, October 29th, to Robert Henry Nixon, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert H.A. Nixon of Rosemont, Pennsylvania and New York City. The Reverend Joseph Lacey, SJ, performed the Roman Catholic nuptial Mass at Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown. A reception followed at Halcyon House.

The bride, who is an alumna of Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School and George Mason University, recently left her position as talent representative for Cellar Door Productions. She is now the director of Marsh Hill Productions, a company specializing in documentary and dramatic films highlighting humankind's relationship with the natural world.

Her mother, Kathleen, founded Rachel's Womens Center, and with her husband, Zacchaeus Kitchen. Mrs. Guinan is also executive director of Crossway Community. The father of the bride is founder of the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV), is founding national secretary of Pax Christi USA, is author of the District of Columbia Statehood Initiative, and is currently director of Wellspring. Mr. Guinan is also an author of numerous books and articles on peace and non-violence.

The bridegroom is executive director of the Earth Conservation Corps., a grassroots effort that teaches life skills to inner city and Native American youth while they restore degraded habitats. He is currently working on a project to reclaim the Anacostia River. Mr. Nixon has directed over fifty films on endangered species and tribal peoples for which he received five Emmy awards and an Academy award nomination. He was also co-producer of the feature film, "Gorillas in the Mist."

The groom's mother, Agnes, who was first woman writer inducted into the Television Academy Hall of Fame, is creator of the Capital Cities/ABC daytime serials, "One Life to Live," "All My Children" and "Loving." Mr. Nixon, the groom's father and best man in the wedding, is president of Dramatic Creations and for twenty years has bred and raced thoroughbred horses.

Following a honeymoon trip to Italy, the Nixons will reside in Washington, D.C.

CROSSWAY COMMUNITY

*family
to
family*

CROSSWAY COMMUNITY is working...

"to create a family-oriented environment that promotes more effective ways of living in an interactive community where learning can happen"

Goals for 1994-1995 include providing families in our community with:

- Increased opportunities for education/training, & access to work-family resources --
- Increased opportunities for responsible and reciprocal community participation --
- Increased opportunities for family-focused child development services --

**** Working in partnership with families in a community-based education setting ****

**** Inviting participants to contribute in positive ways to community life ****

**** Promoting creative collaboration with other family support and education providers ****

*For Work/Family, Community, and Volunteer Center Services , please call 929-2505.
For Child Development Services, please call 942-3247.*

*" Tell me, and I forget,
Teach me, and I may remember,
Involve me, and I learn... "*
--Benjamin Franklin

CROSSWAY'S PRINCIPLES

At the heart of Crossway's work is the belief that family support is achieved in partnership with families, through the educational processes of empowerment and community participation. The following principles guide all Crossway efforts:

- * Children develop in the context of family.
- * Families develop in the context of community, and are the foundation of a healthy society.
- * Parents have primary responsibility for their children's development and well-being.
- * Most families are doing their best with the resources they possess at a given time -- respectful, reciprocal support can enable them to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively, and to make positive changes in their lives.
- * The focus of quality family support is on building family strengths and protective factors in preventive, culturally competent ways.
- * Successful family support services are delivered in an environment of physical and emotional safety -- a place where participants feel welcome to learn, share, and work together.
- * Collaboration amongst family support providers is critical to the community development process, and to the outcomes which families can achieve.

THE HISTORY

Crossway's comprehensive approach to family support and community development was created as the result of several years of focus group research, a process through which parents were "deputized" as the experts on their families. The program evolved in collaboration with several county agencies and organizations with a shared interest and complementary capacities in family empowerment and community building.

From the outset, Crossway was conceived as an educational program and a place of safety and exchange. The original impetus was to create an environment where families would learn that they had strengths which mattered and could be drawn upon. This proposition continues to energize the families who come to Crossway.

Since its doors opened in 1990, Crossway has steadily shored up its resources in three major areas -- The Work Family Resource Center, The Child Development Center, and the Community Center -- in order to provide an array of services for which a clear need was demonstrated across socioeconomic levels. In this way, Crossway emerged as a desirable point of access for a diverse constituency. At seminars on health and wellness, playing together in the afterschool program, or working together on a family social event, families began to bridge the long worn divides of class and culture at Crossway. By maintaining a commitment to comprehensive, community-based, family-focused programs, Crossway established itself as an important player in the kind of social integration that leads to healthier family functioning and a stronger community fabric.

The "Family Leadership" program was the first dimension of family support to be developed. For 44 low-income, single parent families, this was a redefinition of transitional housing -- a total residential experience in which the families moved out of social isolation and into a process of accumulating "social capital," the skills, knowledge, and confidence to make positive changes in their lives. Crossway was, and is, a vehicle for transformation to interdependency, stability, and hope.

Supporting its commitment to an environment in which literacy, safety, and aesthetics are valued, Crossway has worked consistently to expand its curriculum as well as its physical site, a renovated, once-abandoned school building on three acres of landscaped grounds. Collaborations at the federal, state, and county level made the rehabilitation possible, so that Crossway Community now features a 44 unit apartment complex, a beautifully designed child development center with capacity for 100 children, a playground maintained by the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission, a resource center with a computer cluster and research library, a multi-purpose room, and a community meeting room. In terms of its human resources, the Crossway staff has grown to embrace a wide range of professional and personal talent, and the volunteer pool has blossomed to provide hundreds of community members with service learning experiences.

Through the support of many corporate, foundation, civic, church, and individual partners, Crossway is able to enhance its organizational capacity, and to reach increasing numbers of families in the metropolitan DC area. Crossway stands to emerge as a model for successful innovations in family and community empowerment.

THE WORK-FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Personal/Professional Goal Setting

Family Leadership and Community Education participants define a set of personal, social, educational and career goals, creating a "learning agreement" to begin the process of planning for positive change. Discussion groups, facilitated by program staff and visiting collaborators, provide regular opportunities to gain competence in decision-making, problem-solving, resource-sharing, and balancing work and family responsibilities. Participants work toward greater awareness of their strengths, skills, interests, and relationship contexts, while developing an action plan for the attainment of personal goals.

Family Development

A progression of educational seminars address issues in parenting and family life, including childcare, education, limit-setting, nutrition, health and well-being. In addition, child development consultants work closely with parents and children to help families create more effective strategies for communicating and supporting each other. Through an emphasis on building resources, skills, and relationships within families and the community, protective factors are increased and families can become their own best advocates.

Career Planning and Development

Identifying and moving toward specific career goals is an important part of Crossway's empowerment program. Through the Resource Center, participants research career options, develop effective resume, interview, and writing skills, and form relationships with peer mentors from the community, who represent a wide range of professional paths. Seminars, and workshops are facilitated by a certified career counselor, in collaboration with local employers, colleges, and other career development professionals.

Job Skills Training

Responding to strong participant, community and national interest in accessible, community-based job skills training, Crossway has established an on-site training facility for office skills and word processing, family daycare provision, literacy development and proficiency in math. A growing library of publications and software enhance participants ability to access local job networks and perform successfully in the workplace.

Financial Management

Through an ongoing, interactive seminar series on techniques for personal budgeting, banking, credit use, debt management and savings, Crossway promotes economic literacy -- helping participants to strengthen and acquire the skills they need to become competent financial managers for their families. Crossway also implements a curriculum on taxes, insurance, so as to build an informed citizenry who can understand and contribute meaningfully to public debate on reform of these issues.

THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Child Development Services

Crossway's Child Development Center provides an active learning experience for up to 100 children, ages 2-12. The Center's developmental curriculum is modeled on the successful "High Scope" curriculum. The program emphasizes multicultural awareness, negotiation skills, and a community-oriented outlook. Wrap-around care, a kindergarten complement, and an after-school program for school-age children are provided in an environment that fosters literacy and helps children to develop the strengths within themselves, their families, and each other.

Crossway Camp for Peace

The Child Development Center coordinates a summer peace camp, "The Crossway Camp for Peace" promoting alternatives to violence through Leadership Skills, Conflict Resolution, Cooperative Games, Creative Thinking, Community Building, Appreciation of Cultural Diversity, Peace Studies, Ecology, Swimming, Sports Skills, Music and Drama, Arts, and Field Trips. This year, the camp program is enriched by the presence of the Roundhouse theatre group working on-site and including the children in their progress and performances.

Service Learning

Through its collaboration with Volunteer Maryland, Crossway is able to coordinate a "service learning curriculum" for fifty local high school students who serve as hands-on volunteers in the Child Development Center program. In this way, Crossway extends its reach to the community, creating positive, productive experiences for youth who are interested in contributing their time, talents, and energy. Youth volunteers are recognized for their important efforts, and encouraged to consider community service an integral part of their continuing education.

THE COMMUNITY CENTER

Community Leadership Development

Crossway is committed to a collaborative approach to the creation of a caring community, in which leadership is developed through a network of connected families and local organizations. Crossway's Community center is the place where families join together with other local groups to become integrated and effective community leaders. Community meetings held at Crossway are essential in creating the sense and reality of a shared community to which all members contribute.

Community Service

Underlying all Crossway programs are the principles of respectful exchange and reciprocity--the belief that growth is achieved through dialogue and sharing. A full-time Volunteer Coordinator has established and is implementing a unified training and service learning model at Crossway. Participants work hand in hand, sharing their talents and improving the quality of life in our shared community.

Family Social Activities

Through its Resource Planning Team, Crossway facilitates a program of special events designed for family participation. Joint planning committees of parents, staff, and volunteers make events such as a family "dance-for-all," an arts festival, and a "spring kite fly" possible.

Community Collaboration

Crossway is committed to providing a welcoming environment for other agencies and organizations working to strengthen the community, so the Community Center plays a special role in facilitating collaboration with groups such as the County Recreation Department, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, The Wheaton Network, Working Mothers, and Roundhouse Theatre. By working in collaboration with a wide range of community groups, Crossway contributes to a "continuum of care" and a better integrated array of human services and family resources.



Katherine Frey/Journal

GIVING PEACE A CHANCE

Kensington program teaches children conflict resolution

Crossway Community, an education-based family support program in Kensington, held an arts celebration and barbecue Tuesday with the theme, "Peace in the Family, Peace in Our Community." Children participated by drawing their own peace posters. Katie St. Clair, 4, is the first to draw on the peace mural (above). Mallory Foley, 3, ponders what else to add to her peace poster (left) as 3-year-old Wilson Micens IV hugs Elseth Birman, also 3 (below).

Peacemaking and the arts are regular themes at Crossway. Its Camp for Peace this summer will provide children ages 2 through 12 experience in conflict resolution and multicultural awareness.



A CROSSWAY FAMILY ALBUM

FOR SOME MOTHERS RAISING CHILDREN ON THEIR OWN,
HOME IS A PLACE IN AN OLD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

DEBRA GERMAN pulls a black-and-white picture from the family album, presents it with a wry smile and says something ordinary and, at the same time, incredible. "This is me," she says. It is a photograph of a woman with blackened, half-closed eyes and a deep gash across her face, a sad woman who bears little resemblance to the auburn-haired 31-year-old sitting here in her tidy white blouse and black checked skirt.

"That was one of the times my husband broke my nose," she says. It is an event described in police reports, but she is recounting it now in a quiet, conversational tone from the calm of her apartment at the Crossway Community, an unusual housing program for single-parent families in a converted school in Wheaton. "He also gave me the two black eyes," she says. And then: "He cracked my jaw, and I was so afraid of him I wasn't about to do anything." Roger German, now her ex-husband, says he was "acting in self-defense."

Debra German is the kind of person only lately discovered by Washington's policy makers—a poor single mother. But contrary to the view expressed by Vice President Dan Quayle—that a husband is "the best anti-poverty program of all" for single mothers—marriage didn't solve German's problems. In fact, marriage—to a man she knew from church, had known since junior high—was the beginning of a nightmare that left German and her sons, Brandon and Eric, homeless before they came to Crossway.

Crossway, which opened in mid-1990, is a 44-unit complex in a neighborhood of wooden bungalows with lazy front porches. Its two-year program offers housing, child care and social services under one roof. Families who end up here are desperate. By the time they arrive, most, like German, have exhausted their financial resources, their family support and their friendships, trying to survive another week, another day.

Debra German's story, as reported in police and court documents, is one of physical abuse beginning in 1985, a legal separation in 1989, a 1990 fire in which she lost her home and most of her belongings, and an encounter with her husband later that year that resulted in a grand jury indicting him on



The Germans: Debra and sons Brandon, left, and Eric.

charges of rape, battery and illegally transporting a handgun. He pleaded guilty to the gun charge. In 1991 a jury found him guilty of battery and not guilty of rape. He was put on five years probation.

In January 1991, before the disposition of the case, German was laid off from her job as a clerical worker at a lawn care company. She went on welfare. She also applied for housing assistance, but in Montgomery County, demand so outstrips supply that the wait for a public housing unit or a rent subsidy can be five years. For eight months, she and her sons stayed with church friends. "In a six-month period, the boys went to four different schools," she says.

At last, her counselor at a Bethesda center for abused

persons heard of an opening at Crossway. Any low-income, single-parent family in the Washington area that is homeless or at risk of homelessness is eligible for the program. So far only single mothers have applied. Perhaps that is because by all measures, across every ethnic and racial group, single mothers and their children are the poorest families: 43 percent of mother-only families are living in poverty, compared with 7 percent of two-parent families, according to the National Commission on Children.

Some of the reasons are reflected in the demographics of Crossway's current residents: 45 percent are fleeing abusive spouses who once contributed to their support; 40 percent are unemployed and receiving Aid to Families With Dependent Children; the majority are "working poor," in full-time jobs that pay too much for them to qualify for government assistance, but too little for them to adequately survive; and few are able to collect child support—only one-quarter of single parents ever receive the full amount ordered by the courts because spouses simply can't or won't pay.

Crossway offers these women subsidized housing; assistance in finding and taking advantage of existing social service programs that can help them; an array of family-oriented activities; and licensed, on-site child care for 2- through 12-year-olds—run by eight teachers who all have four-year degrees in education. But the key to Crossway's program, staff members say, is its educational program for single parents, designed to

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MOLLY ROBERTS
TEXT BY AMANDA SPAKE



The Grangers: Carla and son Raymond.

lead them toward economic and emotional self-sufficiency.

"We operate our program very similarly to the system of a college," program director Kerry O'Neill tells applicants. Classes are offered in health, financial planning, decision-making and career development—from résumé writing to dressing for success. Residents set goals, then meet regularly with staff advisers who assess their progress. Leadership classes meet weekly for three or more weeks; residents must complete at least four a year. Seminars on a variety of topics are held at least monthly; residents must attend six a year. Of the monthly potluck supper meetings, 10 are required, as is participation in at least one family activity and an hour of voluntary work in the community each month.

Residents sign a one-year lease. The county provides federal housing vouchers that entitle a family to rent an apartment for only 30 percent of its income. Federal Housing and Urban Development funds, administered by the county, pay Crossway the remainder of the "fair market" rent, which is set by HUD. Rent and utilities are due on the first of the month, and evictions for nonpayment have occurred.

The surprise is how little the Crossway program costs. Its \$616,500 annual budget from public and private funds is a bargain in the eyes of Montgomery County's social service officials. As one put it, "We're looking at getting people back into the mainstream, and the economic value of that is tremendous."

"I think this program has the potential to be applied on a larger

scale," says Kathleen Guinan, Crossway's executive director. Maybe. And maybe its unique approach to poverty among single-parent families seems to be working because the program is small—no one is a "case," everyone is an individual.

The individuals portrayed with their children on these pages together tell the story of Crossway. There is Carla Granger, coping with a troubled child. Charlease Griffin, training for a job. Bonnie Foster, finding a calling after years of hopelessness. Veronica Burton, trying to get the education she gave up when she had her first child. And Amanda Miller, about to go off on her own after completing the program.

And there is Debra German. She was accepted at Crossway in July 1991. In January, she began working full time at the American Automobile Association as a travel counselor, the first job she has ever loved. By August the only public subsidy she was receiving was for her housing, but she's still scrambling for money to meet everyday expenses.

Whether Crossway points the way to a solution for the rest of this country's poor single mothers is not for her to say. But she knows this: The day she and her sons moved in through Crossway's big locked doors, she finally felt safe. "I knew for at least two years we would be together, and we wouldn't have to run anymore."

CARLA GRANGER is a 35-year-old woman living in what was once her fifth grade classroom. "I was just amazed at what they could do with an empty school," she says. "It's neat."

Well, it's neat now, but it certainly wasn't after Pleasant View Elementary closed in 1982. Graffiti covered the bricks, and trash, glass and tires collected in the parking lot. By the mid-'80s the place had become a hangout for underage drinkers and small-time drug dealers. Through creative use of state loans and community block grants, Montgomery County secured \$3.5 million to convert the school, and the nonprofit Crossway Community Inc. met with single parents to develop a program.

Meanwhile, a neighborhood group was fighting the project. Renovation was actually halted several times because of court injunctions, but Crossway survived, costing about the same per



The Griffins: Charlease and daughters Lavelle, center, and Kenyatta.

unit as other subsidized housing. Ironically, Carla Granger's uncle was a leader in the opposition.

"He was concerned about the kind of people who'd be coming in here, and what would happen to housing values," says Granger, who was accepted in July 1991.

She never thought she'd end up in such a place. "At one time in Florida," she says, "I had it all. Brand-new house, cars, everything. But unfortunately, my husband got more and more physically abusive. On Christmas '88, he literally beat me for about 40 minutes in front of my son. So I said, 'You take everything. I'm just taking Raymond and going back to Maryland.'"

She got a court injunction to help protect herself from her husband, who couldn't be reached for comment for this story. Back in Wheaton, she moved in with her mother, and took a job as a shipping clerk in a martial arts supply store, hoping to save for an apartment. But Raymond was having serious emotional problems. When he entered first grade, school officials suggested he be hospitalized, and insisted Granger remove him until they could find an appropriate program for him. She tried home study, but he chased the teachers with knives. Four months later, he finally was placed in a class for "emotionally impaired" children and referred to a therapist.

Still, every day was a struggle. Granger and her mother were having arguments about how to deal with Raymond. Money was tight. "Half my paycheck's going to Raymond's day care. I'm not getting ahead. I'm getting all these phone calls at work—'You need to come pick up your son. He's had to be restrained.'"

That's when she heard that a few blocks away her old school had been transformed into Crossway. "I had two goals coming in here," she says. "Stabilize Raymond's life and get myself a better career."

She stuck to her old schedule for four months, rising at 4:30 to get Raymond to day care and make the 1½-hour bus ride to Germantown to be at work by 8, then repeating the trip in reverse at the end of the day. More than two-thirds of her income was going to day care and transportation alone. Finally, in January, she quit work and went on AFDC. "I wasn't too thrilled about going on welfare, but I convinced myself it was temporary."

She and Raymond began eating dinner together, and she became more involved with his school and his therapy. She took a parenting class on coping with kids with special needs. "I found out that with being able to have more time to spend with him, it's a lot easier to deal with him . . . If I hadn't moved into this place and been able to quit my job, I don't think he would have made as much progress."

As for her uncle who opposed the Crossway project? "Anyone in my family can see how much better Raymond's doing now," she says. "I think Uncle Jack has had an attitude adjustment."

CHARLEASE GRIFFIN came to the Washington area from South Carolina, to escape an abusive boyfriend before he was released from jail. When she got here, she went first to the House of Ruth, a D.C. women's shelter, but there was no room. She was sent to the Community for Creative Non-Violence shelter, and then to the Best Western at 13th and N streets NW, an overflow shelter where she stayed for a time before she learned she had a cousin living in Gaithersburg. The cousin agreed to watch her younger daughter, Lavelle, then 1, while Griffin looked for work. In South Carolina she had been a clerk in a hospital, but here all the jobs required WordPerfect or other computer skills. She applied for AFDC but didn't have the proper papers, which were still in South Carolina. "So I just walked out the door crying and went next door to Wendy's and got me a job."



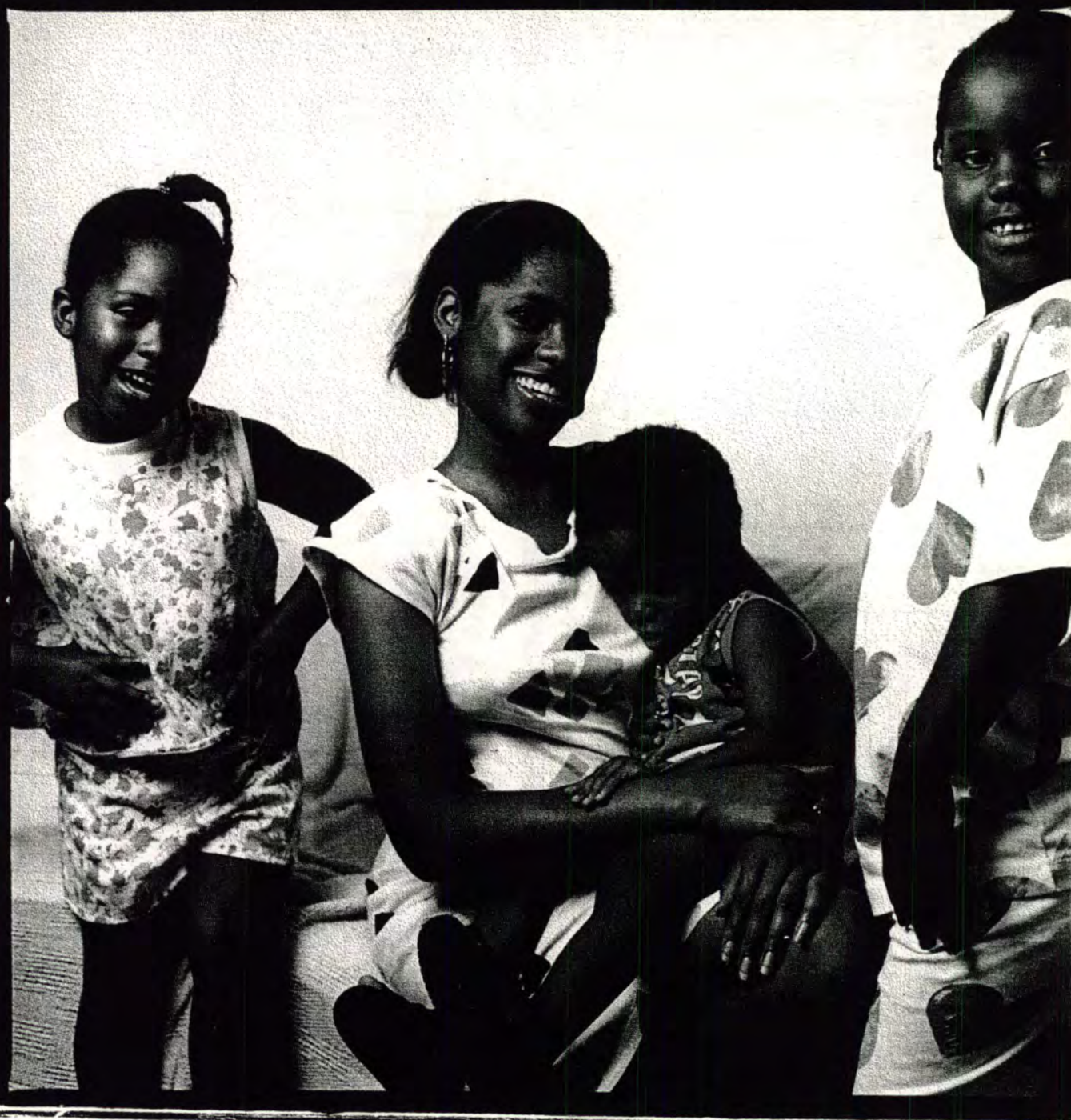
The Fosters: Bonnie and daughter Melanie and sons Monte, left, and Darius.

She continued at Wendy's for nearly a year, but even with help from AFDC, she couldn't feed and clothe Lavelle and her older daughter, Kenyatta, cover child-care costs and manage the \$610-a-month rent. She applied for a federal housing voucher, and was put on the waiting list. "I had to find a place that I could try to halfway make it," Griffin, 30, recalls. A friend told her about the Crossway Community, and she was accepted for a rare opening in March.

In April, a spot opened up in a class at the Users Information Center, a computer school that works with Project Independence, Maryland's "welfare-to-work" program. Griffin wanted it badly. "I had to go through a series of interviews for this class. She [the project director] wanted to pick who she felt had the

initiative. She didn't want anybody in there that would just drop out." And one thing about Charlease Griffin—she is not a quitter. "I told her I'm a mother and I want to take care of my two kids. I don't want to be sitting around waiting for a check—which is nothing anyway."

She got the spot. Now she's in school all day, learning the Lotus, dBASE and WordPerfect software programs. She says she fought so hard for the class because the school has a good record for placing graduates in clerical and computer programming jobs starting at \$20,000 yearly or above. "I want at least \$25,000 to \$30,000 to start," she says. She recently took an exam for a position with the state, should one become available. "I would love to have a government job," she says.



The Burtons: Veronica and son Johnny and daughters Paula, left, and Erica.

BONNIE FOSTER has a picture of her 11-year-old daughter, Melanie, in an ornate gold frame on an end table in her living room. Pictures of her two sons—Monte, 15, and Darius, 13—hang above another small table where Foster keeps her Bible open to the 30th Psalm, the one that begins: *I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up.* "It soothes me," she says.

Melanie lives with her, but her sons live with their father in the District. This is not the family arrangement Bonnie Foster would have chosen. "But I kind of hit rock bottom," she remembers.

Foster's marriage broke apart when she was five months pregnant with Melanie. For the first time in her life she went on welfare. After Melanie was born, she had some clerical jobs,

worked in the Rockville library and did some baby-sitting, but found it harder and harder to keep a job. "I used to drink myself into oblivion. Sometimes I used to wonder why I would wake up . . . I guess with the three kids and being by myself, I went through a depression type of thing. This went on for years and years, and it got to the point where I had to give my apartment up."

She and Melanie moved in with her mother in a small, one-bedroom apartment, and she asked her ex-husband to take the boys. Still, she points out, "My kids never gave up on me, even though I gave up on myself." And over time, she started to pull herself out of trouble. One day, she saw a story about Crossway in a local paper. "I said to my counselor, 'Where is this

community called Crossway? I think it would work for me.' "

She moved in last summer. Now her boys spend every weekend at Crossway. "They feel like they have a home," she says. And now Foster, at 38 (late, she laments, but better than never) has found a passion: nursing. She has been promoted to a certified geriatric assistant, responsible for nine patients at the Hebrew Home, a nursing facility in Bethesda.

"I just love it," she says. "And they love me. They get mad at me, and they pout. They tell me off sometimes. But like the weekend I'm off or my day off and I come back, they say, 'I missed you. How was your day?' I've tried different jobs, and they just don't make me feel the way nursing does . . . It's something in me."

She recently passed a state exam that qualifies her for a two-year college program through which she can earn a degree as a licensed practical nurse. The Hebrew Home will pay for the classes. "If it takes me, say, three years, I don't care," Foster says, "as long as I get it and can maintain my rent, keep my home up and keep my family together as a unit."

For the first time in years, she's optimistic. "Before, I never gave myself a chance to see that things could be better, life could be good and it's what you make it. It's not always fair, but it's what you make it."

VERONICA BURTON arrived at Crossway in July 1991 with nothing. Crossway helped her locate donated furniture—a sofa, a table and beds for her children, Erica, Paula and Johnny. "I felt like, 'I'm starting. I'm on my way,'" she says. Now the tattered sofa is covered with a white bedspread, and she has a dining table, though no chairs yet. The walls are blank, except for pictures of her and the children, and, on one wall, her high school diploma, proudly framed.

After she graduated, Burton went for a year to the University of the District of Columbia to study nursing. But at 19, she married, had Erica and dropped out, a decision she's always regretted. When she applied to Crossway, she made higher education her goal. She says Crossway has given her the two things she most needed: competent child care and emotional support.

"You see that you are not the only one in a situation and that you can overcome anything that comes to cross you, as long as you put effort into it . . . You just get a sense of support. If another parent won't get off work until 6 p.m., I can pick her child up from day care. Or if I need someone to watch my children—people here usually work together."

She started at UDC again last fall, full time on a grant to aid disadvantaged students.

"It was a very big adjustment going back to school," she says. "I'm still trying to work out a schedule as far as me studying for classes. I try to get the children into bed at a reasonable hour—we're still working on that. Once I've fed and bathed them and they've gone to bed, then I pull my homework out."

When it all starts to seem like too much, Burton looks to the Crossway staff for encouragement. "Some people feel it's being nosy," she says of the bimonthly progress evaluations with O'Neill, the program director. "I don't. They're trying to make sure you're on track. That's why I like the program."

Burton, 26, wants to be a doctor. With three small children and on welfare, this will be tough, if not impossible. Would she be closer to self-sufficiency if she lowered her sights, perhaps back to nursing? O'Neill doesn't think so. "I don't have a problem with seemingly unrealistic goals," she says. "If the goal is unrealistic, they have to see it for themselves, and typically, they'll change the goal. Our problem is usually the opposite—no goals."

AMANDA MILLER came to Crossway with mixed feelings. "I thought it looked like a prison," she remembers. At the same time, "it sounded so good, and I just kept saying, 'Oh, God, I'm not going to get this.'" When she did, "I felt like maybe I was worth something after all."

Unlike most of Crossway's residents, Miller, 29, comes from a comfortable, middle-class background. Yet that didn't prevent her from bottoming out. She was using massive amounts of drugs and alcohol by the time she was in junior high. "Pot was my drug of choice—and cocaine. I did a lot of cocaine. I took a lot of barbiturates. I could not live without 'em." By high school graduation, she had become an alcoholic, sleeping all day and spending her nights in bars. After ending up in a hospital detox ward, Miller stopped drinking and doing drugs for nearly two years. Then, at a low point in her marriage, she returned to alcohol.



The Millers: Amanda and son Clifton.

"I went out for about a week and drank," she remembers. "I drank alone, and I went out in my car and would drive to a park and just drink."

She eventually left her husband, taking her son, Clifton, now 3. She moved in with her sister, got a job as a receptionist, went into Alcoholics Anonymous for the second time and was accepted at Crossway.

Now she is one of Crossway's first graduates. She has completed her freshman year at Montgomery College. She wants a career, but isn't certain yet in what.

"What has changed most about me here is my values about life, like responsibility—not wanting to depend on other people anymore," Miller says. "Crossway gave me the opportunity to find that in myself."

The question now is what happens when Amanda Miller and the single mothers like her no longer live in this carefully structured, supportive community.

"I hope to see myself through college," she says. "I see myself possibly married. I see myself possibly having another child, but not stopping my career. I see myself in five years a very, very spiritual person." She stops, makes a little *hmmmm*-ing sound. And then she says the one thing that's behind all the fears for the future of Crossway's residents. It's the one thing that allows for hope too: "I don't know." ■



Crossway Community

A private, non-profit family support and education center,
and
a model program for the nation, based in your community.

Crossway's services include:

SEMINARS:

Health and Wellness
Career Development
Family Development
Economic Literacy

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

Monthly family events
Ongoing recreation and arts programs
Volunteering and service learning

CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

A full range of day programs for children 2-12
Summer Peace Camp
Parent Support and Training Opportunities

Through the FAMILY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM,
Crossway connects low-income, single parent families
with these and other resources,
so they can strengthen themselves to create a better future.

Please support Crossway Community
in supporting families who want to learn.

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DESIGNATE: # 7606**

PLEASE CALL (301) 929-2505 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Crossway Community * 3015 Upton Drive * Kensington, MD 20895





Crossway Community's Child Development Center



welcomes your family...

Our center offers a full range of the highest quality child development services with a top-notch staff, creative curriculum, and a stimulating, supportive learning environment year-round. Includes a summertime "peace camp," regular family activities, and opportunities for parenting education.

Programs and fees are listed below.

Please feel free to call for further information, or to schedule a program tour.

Preschool Programs

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>PER DAY</u>	<u>PER 4 WEEK PERIOD</u>		
		<i>5 days</i>	<i>3 days</i>	<i>2 days</i>
Full Day	\$ 24.85	\$ 497	\$ 298	\$ 199
Half Day	\$ 13.75	\$ 275	\$165	\$ 110

School Age Programs

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>PER DAY</u>	<u>PER 4 WEEK PERIOD</u>		
		<i>5 days</i>	<i>3 days</i>	<i>2 days</i>
After Kindergarten	\$ 20.00	\$ 400	\$ 240	\$ 160
Before & After Kindergarten	\$ 22.45	\$ 449	\$ 269	\$ 179
Before School	\$ 5.00	\$ 100	\$ 60	\$ 40
After School	\$ 12.40	\$ 249	\$ 149	\$ 99
Before and After School	\$ 16.75	\$ 335	\$ 201	\$ 135

A \$200 deposit is required once your child is enrolled for a full-time program

A \$100 deposit is required once your child is enrolled for a part time program

\$ 25 application fee

We look forward to greeting your family at Crossway Community.

Program Coordinator: Sakinah Munir

(301) 942-3247

3015 Upton Drive, Kensington MD 20895

