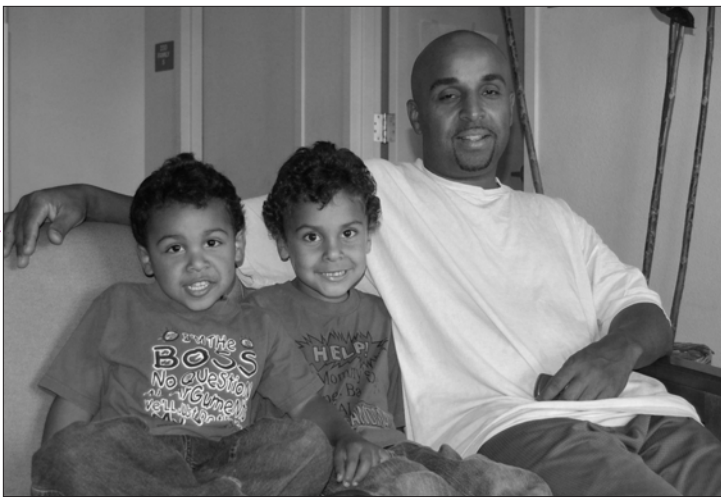


East Oakland Community Project Newsline

Fall 2008

In Their Own Words: *Residents Talk About Crossroads*



Kim Parrish, EOCP's program director, sees the harshness of homelessness every day. As part of EOCP's leadership team for more than 17 years, she also sees hope at Crossroads as she and her staff offer care in a supportive home for homeless people—"those of us who are down on our luck," as she described. Kim knows the huge difference that being in Crossroads is making in people's lives. "In a clean, warm environment," she said, "you have the opportunity to think and heal. You have the motivation to act, and it is self-empowering." This article shares the stories of three of Crossroads residents (for privacy, names are changed).

Father and sons regaining stability

William Burger arrived at Crossroads with Samuel and Thomas in July. A strong bond ties the three together as William looks for a per-

manent home for his family. In the meantime, the boys love it here. Their unit in a private wing created just for families opens into a large "living room" with a television set and roomy couch to snuggle together. But it's the play yard right outside that constantly calls to the boys. Every chance they get, Sam and Tommy are climbing the big yellow "School Bus" or rolling around on their tricycle. But William looks forward to the day when he can settle his family in their home: "Waitin' to get that call that there's a home for us," he said. He is grateful to have his children with him at Crossroads. "If you want help, it's there for you to take when it's offered," he declared, affirming the importance of choosing help in order to help oneself. As a single father, William is making the right choices to help his family grow and take advantage of the services at Crossroads.

Finding a family at Crossroads

Karen Jones moved with EOCP from the former facility to Crossroads in January, so she can describe the comparison between the two. She was astonished when she arrived at Crossroads, saying, "It's so much warmer, the atmosphere is a whole lot better." The healthy environment has inspired a whole new attitude that permeates the place. Indeed, Karen talks about the "family" she has found here, made up of her fellow residents and the caring staff. "I've gotten to know everyone. They're so lovable, and they all love me." She has also become an important part of the life at Crossroads, adding to the comfort of the other residents by joining the kitchen crew. Karen is an avid baker who makes desserts for the evening meals ("cakes, pies, sweet potato treats..."). "It's great here at Crossroads," she smiled. "They treat you like you're family, and I feel like

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Healing in a Green Home

The dream of building Crossroads always included hopes of green design. Now that the dream is realized, we see that a green facility truly makes a difference in the lives of people moving out of homelessness. When EOCP moved into Crossroads at the beginning of the year, a sense of health and healing permeated the air. Indeed, the opening of Crossroads—heralded by the *New York Times* in its January 28, 2008 article “A Shelter Is Built Green, to Heal Inside and Out”—was newsworthy because it is the first green multi-service homeless facility in the country.

Guided by Green Building in Alameda County, part of StopWaste. Org, Crossroads’ planning, design, and construction followed a



sustainability checklist that included enhancements to help people stabilize and motivate them to move forward.

Sustainable features include 186 photovoltaic solar panels on the roof that will generate a proposed 48,500 kilowatt hours each year. The solar panels guarantee a cleaner, more cost effective energy generation to defray the high utility costs of operating a large residential facility.

Furnishings such as desks and bureaus are made from pressed wheat,

which, unlike wood from trees, is a replenishable material.

For the health of our residents, the air is kept temperate with ceiling fans, super insulated walls, and a state-of-the-art hydronic heating system. All finish materials were selected for their lack of odor and toxic chemicals.

High frequency fluorescent lighting attends to the well-being of residents with mental health issues by preventing irritation and headaches. Eco-friendly ceilings, flooring, countertops, and wall paint, and natural ventilation with operable windows thwart mold and mildew that can cause health problems for people with respiratory illnesses.

Wendy Jackson, EOCP’s executive director, explained that all the green strategies support EOCP’s goal to create healthier living spaces. “There’s a larger issue than just sheltering people,” she said. “Crossroads provides a healthy environment that cares for the total well-being of our residents as they continue on their paths away from homelessness.”



In Their Own Words

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family.” But with a family of her own, Karen has her heart set on finding a house so that her son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren can visit. “Sometimes I feel like I don’t want to go, but I’ve got to leave one day. This is not permanent.”

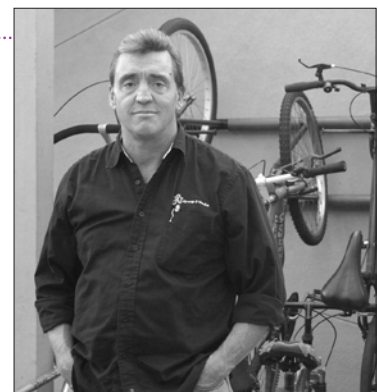
Appreciating Crossroads’ services

Joseph Clark had never resided in a homeless shelter. Coming to Crossroads in September, he finds it a new experience and looks at the situation with clear objectivity. “Crossroads is a Cadillac,” he stated, based on stories he’d heard about EOCP’s former facility and other homeless shelters. Joseph feels the staff is courteous and

devoted and he expressed admiration for the job they have taken on to assist 135 residents. “They work hard to make Crossroads a stabilizing platform for us to grow from. They have huge hurdles to maintain the facility let alone to continue the ongoing push to raise money to pay for all the things it takes to house so many people.” Joseph also volunteers, teaching computer lessons twice an evening to his fellow residents. “If I’m going to get back on my own,” he explained about his computer tutoring, “Crossroads

“In a clean, warm environment, you have the opportunity to think and heal. You have the motivation to act, and it is self-empowering.”

Kim Parrish, EOCP’s program director



is here to help me. I appreciate this place enough to want to give something back.” According to Joseph, Crossroads is here for all those who have a desire to help themselves.

*EOCP gratefully
acknowledges our
supporters and donors*

May 2007 to November 2008

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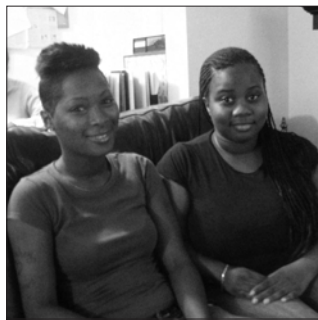
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[Helping Homeless People Transition to Well-being]



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