

## NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT

# Crossroads Hope Academy provides safe environment for boys

## CROSSROADS HOPE ACADEMY

Being a teenager is hard. On a daily basis they're dealing with hormones, bullying, the constant presence of the internet and so much more. They crave independence from their parents though they're developmentally not quite ready for it.

But imagine being a teenager who has not grown up with a loving and nurturing hand to guide them through life and all its lessons. Imagine being a teenager who has been abused and neglected by the very people who are supposed to love you and keep you safe. For a teenager in those situations, "hard" doesn't even begin to cover it.

Crossroads Hope Academy specializes in these cases. As a nonprofit group foster home for teenage boys who have had multiple failed placements in the Florida foster care system — an average of 14 placements prior to their arrival — Crossroads offers boys between 12 and 18 years of age a stable home and a caring family of staff members who love and support them. For many, it is the first stable home they have ever known. According to a Casey Foundation report on placement stability in foster care, "One study, which controlled for children's behaviors at entry into foster care, found that children with multiple placements had between 36 and 63% greater risk of developing behavioral challenges than did children in stable placements. Multiple placements have also been found to lead to delayed permanency

outcomes, academic difficulties, and struggles to develop meaningful attachments."

Less than 50% of foster kids will finish high school on time and only 2% go to college. One in five boys who age out of foster care without being adopted will be incarcerated by the age of 22. One in four will be homeless by the same age. Crossroads pledges to overcome these statistics, "to achieve a stable and enriched learning environment, to provide 'tools' to each boy so they can survive in the world, and to teach each boy what society expects from them and what they should expect from themselves, along with learning to love who they are."

Crossroads Hope Academy's specially trained staff works to retrieve these kids from despair and help them grow and transition into well-adjusted and self-sufficient adults by utilizing collaborative problem solving, an approach that involves working together to solve youth problems instead of focusing solely on youth behaviors. Collaborative problem solving teaches kids the skills they lack and helps them build healthy relationships with the adults in their lives.

While donations are always needed and

## How to help

How to volunteer for or donate to Crossroads Hope Academy:

**Website:** [www.crossroadspg.org](http://www.crossroadspg.org)

**Email:** [John@crossroadspg.org](mailto:John@crossroadspg.org)

**Phone:** 941-575-5790

appreciated, what the boys at Crossroads need more than anything are loving and caring people in their lives ... people to help show them that they matter. Prior to COVID-19, Crossroads Hope Academy had around 60-70 volunteers donating their time every month, playing cards or board games with the boys, throwing a football around or starting up a game of basketball, conducting Bible study, cooking meals on the weekends, helping with small projects around campus. While volunteers have started returning over the past few months, the numbers are a mere fraction of what they once were. If you have time to give, the staff at Crossroads would love to have you out for a tour to see for yourself what kind of difference your time could make in the lives of the boys they serve.

Crossroads Hope Academy is nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation for demonstrating the implementation of best practice standards in the field of human services. For further information, to make a donation, or learn how you can get involved, please visit [www.crossroadspg.org](http://www.crossroadspg.org).

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PHOTO PROVIDED

Some Crossroads youth recently took a kayaking trip down the Peace River.

## Nonprofit Spotlight

New residents are moving to Southwest Florida and looking for ways to help the community. If you want your nonprofit featured in an upcoming Nonprofit Spotlight, email 500 words about what your agency does in the community and how people can volunteer and/or donate. Send the Nonprofit Spotlight to [newstips@yoursun.com](mailto:newstips@yoursun.com). A photo or two can be included in the email as jpgs. Please include the first and last names of those in the photos.