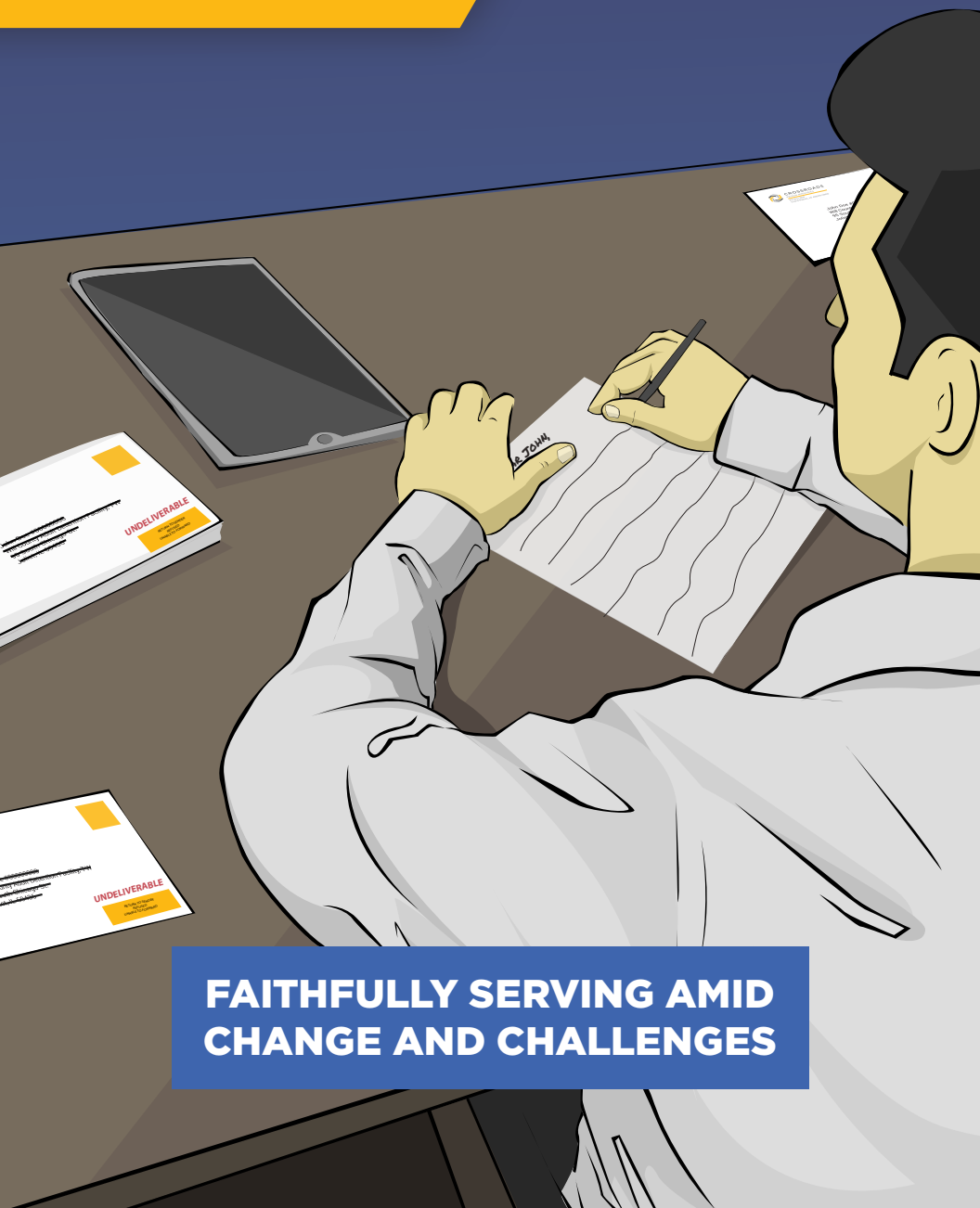


# IMPACT REPORT

2022-2023



CROSSROADS  
PRISON MINISTRIES



**FAITHFULLY SERVING AMID  
CHANGE AND CHALLENGES**

# A message from our **President**

Dear friend,

As I reflect on our ministry's work over the past year, I am reminded of the unwavering faithfulness of God and our ministry's commitment to never giving up on anyone. Our persistent efforts to connect with men and women behind bars have been ingrained in our organization's character since the beginning. I am reminded of the work of Crossroads' founder, Tom de Vries, who, almost four decades ago, developed a mail-based Bible study program to stay in contact with his students even after their transfer or release from the local county jail. What started as an innovative solution born out of necessity led to the

mail-based correspondence system that is still the core of our ministry. Over the years, we have had the privilege of serving thousands of men and women through the mail with high-quality Bible studies and letters of encouragement.

Our relentless pursuit of those on the margins of society reflects God's never-ending pursuit of our hearts with His perfect love. As you will see in the pages of this report, we steadfastly continue to serve nearly 30,000 students by mail in the United States each year, and we are again being called to innovate. The imposition of mail restrictions in many correctional facilities aimed at preventing the introduction of illegal drugs has challenged our ability to





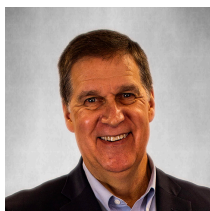
## CROSSROADS

PRISON MINISTRIES

enroll new students. Respecting the challenges correctional facilities are facing, we are working closely with correctional leaders to find ways to reach our students. We are pleased to share the progress we have made in reengaging students affected by mail restrictions. We also share our steps toward acquiring new students through innovative approaches.

As always, the ministry's foundation remains strong, thanks to you. Your support allows us to address challenges head-on and positions Crossroads for continued growth in the years to come.

In Christ,



Joe Pryor  
President & CEO

## WHAT'S INSIDE:

Look inside for an overview of our program activity from the past year and our financial picture.



### STUDENT PROGRAMMING



### VOLUNTEER SERVICES



### FINANCES

## Christ-centered relationships change everything.

Crossroads connects people in prisons with mentors from churches to develop Christ-centered relationships as they study God's Word together.

# Pouring Hope into Prisons

## Students in the United States



- **28,823 students** enrolled and completed at least one Crossroads lesson.
- We sent 147,387 lessons to students, and students completed 112,418 lessons.
- 18,638 students completed at least one course.



We sent **12,292 Bibles** to people in prison, providing the truth and hope of the Gospel.



**1,784 facilities** housed at least one Crossroads student.

- 911 state prisons
- 136 federal correctional facilities
- 599 jails
- 138 other facilities

## New Program for Jails

In late April, Crossroads launched a jail-specific study packet that allows students to complete a shortened version of our first course, *Who Are You?* In the first three months of the program, Crossroads sent the packet to **1,630 men and women in jail**.

## Postage Costs



Crossroads is entirely free for students, including the postage-paid envelopes to return their completed lessons to our office.

Cost of postage for all student lessons and correspondence: **\$434,637**

# Domestically and Abroad

## International Programming



Crossroads works with partners in 25 extension centers that run programs in 29 countries.

- 9,500 students participated in the program.
- 2,541 mentors studied the Word with students.
- 59,481 lessons were sent to extension centers.
- 1,228 Bibles were sent to extension centers.

## While Serving Time, Motor Home Thief Becomes a Servant of God

The following is an excerpt of a letter from Ronald M.

*I was, for most of my life, a liar and a thief, and I was proud of it. I thought I knew God, but I didn't. I believed He was some kind of spiritual ATM. You only called on Him in times of trouble. . . . In my later life, I was a serial motor home thief. I was prosecuted in federal court for stealing three motor homes. . . .*

*While in jail, I started reading the Bible. . . . I had a hard time understanding what God was saying to me in the Bible. . . . Crossroads Bible studies really opened up the Bible for me. It taught me how to study the Bible and made every message clear and simple to learn,*

*even when the message was complex. After years of study, I now know that God loves me. He wants the best for me. He forgives me for my past sins.*

*I am sixty-four years old. I received a thirty-two-year prison sentence. So, I will probably spend my life in here (my physical life). But I would rather be here with God in my life than in the world without God. I thank you for all the studies you've sent and continue to send.*

*Your Brother in Christ Jesus,*

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ron", written in dark ink on lined paper.

# Steps Taken to Overcome Delivery Challenges

## The Problem

In recent years, many correctional facilities started implementing alternative methods for delivering mail to the people under their care. These alternative methods were introduced to address dire staffing shortages and prevent the flow of illicit drugs into facilities through the mail. The new methods involve scanning paper mail into a digital format and delivering it electronically to incarcerated people, who access their mail through kiosks or tablets. Other vendors deliver printed versions of the scanned mail and discard the originals.

With these new systems, we have encountered several obstacles in delivering lessons and mentor letters to our students. **By the end of the 2023 fiscal year, we were unable to deliver lessons to 139 facilities where we serve 1,240 students.**

As an added challenge, we have faced difficulties sending postage-paid envelopes to students. This prevents us from fulfilling our promise of a free service.

Our team at Crossroads has invested significant time into building relationships with wardens, state and federal corrections leaders, and third-party mail-scan companies to ensure every student who wants to participate in our program can do so. We are pleased to report that we are beginning to make progress.



## Regained Mail Access

Crossroads' staff dedicated significant amounts of time to establishing relationships with correctional leaders and mail-scan companies across the United States. The relationships have allowed us to work with them on ways to get lessons to students. Through outreach over the past year, **we have resumed sending lessons to 52 facilities**, the majority of which are in North Carolina. In the final month of the fiscal year, we were preparing for the pending return of students with whom we lost contact in Wisconsin starting in late 2021.

## Digital Access

With the generous support of a grant, Crossroads developed a video version of our introductory course, *Who Are You?* In the three video lessons, formerly incarcerated individuals share their answers to the lessons' questions while Douglas Cupery, Crossroads' church mobilization director, moderates the discussions. As of June 30, the lessons were completed, and our staff was actively seeking a facility to pilot software that enables digital two-way interaction between students and mentors.



*Douglas Cupery, Crossroads' church mobilization director, opens an episode of Doing Time at a recording session in February.*

The same grant also enabled us to create *Doing Time*, a seven-part video series consisting of twenty-minute episodes for people who are not currently Crossroads students. Each episode features a formerly incarcerated individual who provides advice on how to make productive use of time behind bars. Each segment also includes a Scripture reading and a brief message of encouragement from a pastor.

# Longtime Student Uses Prison Experience to Serve as a Mentor

Christopher, a mentor in North Carolina, finds great satisfaction in encouraging his students because he knows the student experience firsthand. He became a Crossroads student in 2013 while serving a seven-month sentence. Now, nearly ten years after his release, he is still a Crossroads student because the encouragement he receives helps him continue to live out his transformation in Christ.

Christopher's transformation motivated him to become a Crossroads mentor as soon as he became eligible in 2018. Crossroads requires all mentors to be released and off probation and parole. We also require students to complete Tier 1 before they can begin mentoring other students.

Christopher's commitment to helping others is rooted in his gratitude for God's unconditional love, which has reshaped his life.

"Because of the journey God has allowed me to travel, I became a mentor with Crossroads . . . to give back to hurting men who are traveling the road I traveled," Christopher shared.

Crossroads has played a significant role in Christopher's



*Christopher, pictured with his wife, Nicole, is a student and a mentor.*

spiritual growth, challenging him to step out of his comfort zone.

"I can't imagine my life without Crossroads," he reflected. "It's become so natural for me to be working on some kind of study lesson daily or weekly, either my own study or another student's. I've treasured the journey with Crossroads as a student and even more as a mentor because I get to pay it forward and let other students know they are not alone in this journey, that there is someone who cares about them and understands the hardship as a student. I also take personal pride in knowing God did not waste His time on me despite all my mistakes, all my pride, and all my foolishness. He's never wavered in His love for me, and He's equipped me to change, grow, learn, and study so I can turn around and help others who are hurting."



# Volunteer Contributions



## Office Volunteers

When students return completed lessons to our office in Grand Rapids, our office volunteers review every lesson and prepare them to be mailed to mentors. This past fiscal year, the volunteers who provided this mission-critical service gave **12,123 hours** to processing lessons and preparing them to be mailed.



## Mentors

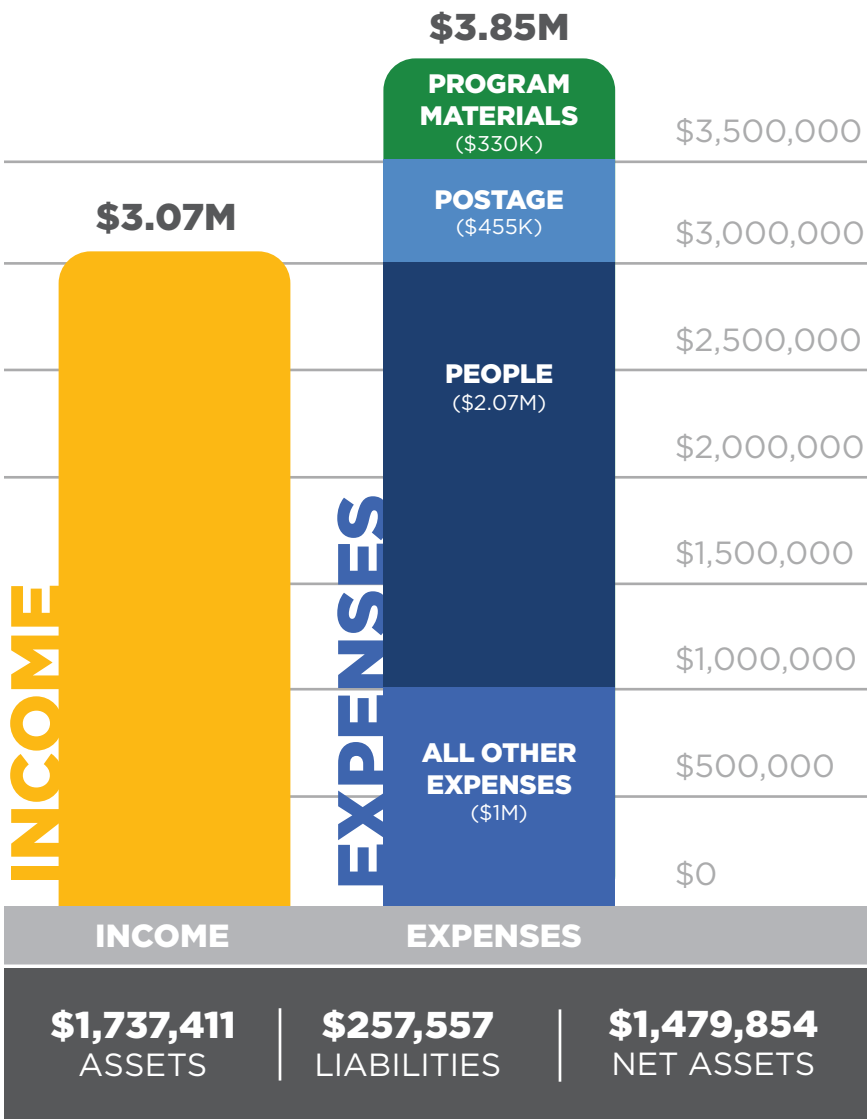
Over the past year, **2,590 mentors** studied God's Word alongside students and encouraged them with personalized letters. Mentors give approximately ninety minutes for every lesson they review, serving an estimated **168,627 hours in the last year**. We are grateful for their commitment to sharing Christ-centered relationships with students.



## Ambassadors

Ambassadors share the message of Crossroads in their communities to recruit new mentors and supporters for the organization. During the past year, **34 ambassadors** worked on behalf of Crossroads to expand the ministry.

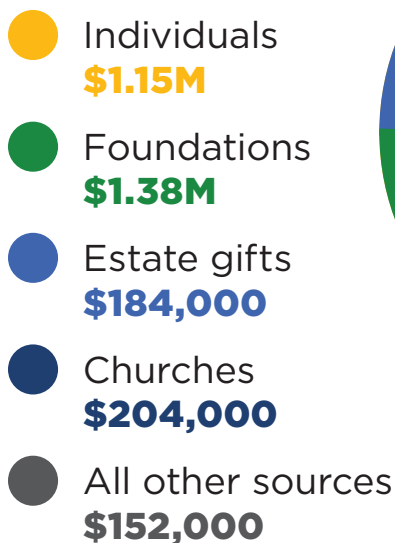
# 2022-23 Financials



Financial information is from Crossroads' preliminary financial statement. The complete audited financial statement will be available upon request in October.



# Funding Sources



## Volunteer gifts of time



In **2022–2023**, our mentors and office volunteers gave a total of **180,750 hours** to Crossroads.

The total time given by all volunteers equals the work of **91 full-time employees**.

# Ways to Deepen Your Involvement

We sincerely appreciate your support during the past fiscal year. This ministry wouldn't exist without your generous gifts of time and resources. If you wish to deepen your involvement with Crossroads, we offer several opportunities:

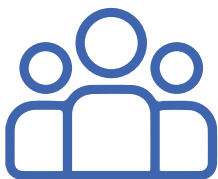


## Become a Mentor

Becoming a Crossroads mentor doesn't require you to be a Bible scholar. All you need is up to ninety minutes a week and a genuine desire to walk alongside someone behind bars. Your words of encouragement can have a measurable impact on our incarcerated brothers and sisters.

As a mentor, you will:

- Review students' Bible study lessons and provide feedback.
- Write an uplifting letter to send back to each student along with their reviewed lesson.
- Pray for your students.



## Become an Office Volunteer

Office volunteers play a crucial role at our headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan. By assisting with vital administrative and production tasks, you can help us process the thousands of pieces of mail we receive each year.



## Become a Supporter

Thanks to donor support, the Crossroads program is available to every student free of charge. By making a donation, you enable us to print and mail lessons and postage-paid envelopes to our students. Your contributions also allow us to develop high-quality and relevant Bible studies for our students. Furthermore, your support helps us train and equip our mentors to be the hands and feet of God, delivering the love and hope of Christ behind bars.



## Remember Our Students in Your Prayers

Men and women living behind bars often feel forgotten by the world. Please remember them in your prayers. Pray that our students feel loved and supported as they rebuild their lives. Pray that the Christ-centered relationships they develop with their mentors will lead to transformative change not only in their lives but also within prisons and churches worldwide.

***“Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison.” – Hebrews 13:3***



# Staff Members



**JR DeGroot**  
Vice President of  
Major Initiatives



**Wendy Hammond**  
Vice President  
of Ministry  
Partnerships



**Elizabeth Allen**  
Mentor Program  
Coordinator



**Hannah Bartz**  
Operations  
Coordinator



**Liz Bentz**  
Operations  
Volunteer  
Coordinator



**John Byrne**  
Director  
of Student  
Programming



**Amy Cain**  
Copy  
Editor



**Doug Cupery**  
Director  
of Church  
Mobilization



**Paige Deur**  
Content  
& Social Media  
Specialist



**Steve Drewry**  
Translations  
Manager



**Jose Garza**  
Graphic Designer



**Anne Hamming**  
Director  
of Marketing &  
Communications



**Wynnielle  
Howland**  
Operations  
Assistant



**Jonathan Hsu**  
Digital Media  
Specialist



**Alicia Janowski**  
Ministry  
Strategic  
Analyst



**Brian Kamstra**  
Director  
of International  
Ministries



**Jen Kimball**  
Senior Business  
Manager



**Jerry King**  
Operations  
Coordinator



**Linda Laird**  
Grants &  
Foundations  
Manager



**Jose Pichardo**  
Bilingual Manager  
of Mentor Support  
& Training



**Michelle Poole**  
International  
Ministries  
Manager



**Bernice Roshak**  
Operations  
Manager



**Alexis Ryan**  
Mentor  
Program  
Coordinator



**Karina Saigeon**  
Bilingual  
Mentor Program  
Coordinator



**Jane Strong**  
Executive  
Assistant



**Samantha  
VanRavenswaay**  
Business  
Coordinator



**Robert Woldhuis**  
Donor Relations  
Manager



**Eliezer Yeong**  
Art &  
Design  
Manager



**Alaina  
Zwiernikowski**  
Assistant to the  
Director of Church  
Mobilization



**CROSSROADS**  
PRISON MINISTRIES

***Crossroads connects people in prisons with mentors from churches to develop Christ-centered relationships as they study God's Word together.***

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