ABOUT DOWN THE ROAD

**Down the Road** is the magazine for the alumni of the CrossRoad Summer Institute, published annually by the Office of Vocation & Ministry at Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

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Leaning in...

I want to be engaged, not passive. I want to “live deep and suck out all of the marrow of life” (Thoreau, Walden). If I lean into life, lean into each moment, then I will drink deeply of every experience, not be drawn away too easily by all of the distractions that exist on the surface of the moment. If I lean down slightly, I’m rooted, planted, cultivating the ground under my feet.

...gently...

But this leaning in, while active, is not forced. It’s not a strained, frenetic, or wild plunge into the events or activities of the moment. It’s cool, calm, free, and trusting. Have you ever experienced high winds somewhere and actually leaned into the wind?

AS I WRITE THIS, I’m trying to sit up in an attentive and engaged manner—shoulders spread, stomach in, slightly leaned in towards the computer screen. The last time I went to the chiropractor, he had a picture on the wall of the evolutionary development of humanity from ape to an upright human, to a slightly bent-over man carrying a jackhammer, to a hunched-over office worker sitting at a desk. “And we’ve evolved?” you might ask.

But does posture really have an impact on the way that you or I live our lives?

I believe that it does.

And here I’m not referring merely to outward posture, although that is part of it. When was the last time you noticed how your posture made you feel?

Try this: sit upright, shoulders back, stomach in, leaning slightly forward (and down), and continue doing whatever it is that you are doing (brushing your teeth, reading a book, cooking dinner, etc.) in a gentle and open manner.

This posture is a practice and a symbol.

1 Here we are not referring to the concept made popular by the recent “Lean In” movement started by Cheryl Sandburg. The “leaning in” to which we are referring is something existentially “now”-oriented—an internal posture, rather than a set of external circumstances or conditions.
Have you ever done a trust fall, trusting in the unseen hands below? Life (with a capital L) takes a bit of trust. Leaning into it and down towards it invites us to trust, to believe that Invisible Hands will carry us if we simply lean in. And because I am not afraid, but trusting (Mark 5:36), I lean in gently.

...openly...

I am open to what life brings my way at any moment. I am not afraid. I’m not huddled in fearful suspicion, waiting, almost anticipating, the next threat to my happiness, sinlessness, or survival. In the same spirit of loving trust, I humbly (i.e., leaning in, and slightly down) open myself up to what Life brings my way—to Life’s great Mysteries available to us at every moment. I need not fear corruption, becoming impure, or being harmed. The humility of diving beneath the stormy surface of things, of tapping into the river of knowledge beneath appearances, will protect and nourish me. I can breathe in deeply the fresh and new air of each unique and delicate moment.

...lovingly

If we bring love to what we do, then everything is lovely. If our posture, our gaze, is beautiful, then the object of our gaze will be beautiful as well, even if it is seemingly ugly.

Putting it all together

So gently lean in, openly and lovingly. Life, like a seed in the sun, will blossom under the warm rays of your loving attention.²

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VOCA TION

“I have been greatly transformed by this program spiritually, and have gained lifelong friends who I know have also been transformed. CrossRoad has pushed me to realize my vocation in Christ.”

—NICHOLAS MAKIEJ, JULY 2016
INSIGHTS FROM CROSSROAD 2016

WHO AM I?

“I feel that the connections we have to the rest of the human race are of the utmost importance, [along with] our connection to God, and to the created world. The theme of unity and fullness is very important in Orthodoxy ... I’ve learned a lot about trying to see myself as part of the larger body of Christ, while still an individual with useful skills and talents.”

-Mitry Anderson, June 2016

WHO IS GOD?

“Over the past four days, I’ve learned not only invaluable tools with which to approach Scripture and the study of our faith, but also I’ve had the opportunity to begin to delve into the questions of who Christ is. I learned that Scripture is not simply readings to take in but a place in which we are directly in communication with God.”

-Charissa Skoutelas, July 2016

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

“The service experiences opened my eyes both to the need but also the beauty to be found in everyone, especially those we often forget.”

-Jivan Purutyan, July 2016
I greet you with the peace and love of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the prayers and support of our administrators, faculty, students, and alumni.

The CrossRoad Summer Institute at Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (HCHC) is the flagship program for junior and senior students to connect with the Orthodox Christian Faith - its theological and spiritual tradition.

The gift of enlightenment of our Faith and lifelong friendship from this program is not a one-time occurrence, but rather an enduring evolution of love and maturity in our school community. By your attendance, a flicker of Faith kindled by the Holy Spirit has been ignited into a new life in Jesus Christ, a life to be shared and cultivated at higher levels of learning of the Orthodox Faith.

For just as a fire does not grow without oxygen and wood, so too our relationship with God cannot continue to grow if we do not live our lives as pilgrims, ever-learning and seeking to associate ourselves with the friendship and support of other Orthodox Christians in the hope and anticipation of salvation.

Having experienced our campus, I encourage you to learn more—more about the courses and programs offered within its gates and those online in the future. If you have not already, it is my hope that each of you will consider attending and transferring to HCHC in pursuit of a life of leadership and service to our Church and society.

We love to hear from you and stay in contact with you. Please continue to share your amazing professional and personal stories with us, 'like' us on social media, and encourage your friends to also consider attending additional classes and returning to our school to pray and encourage others from future CrossRoad cohorts.

CrossRoad alumni, HCHC is your home. We welcome you always, and pray for you twice daily in Holy Cross Chapel. Please remember us in your prayers, and hide not the Light of Christ, which is never overtaken or abandoned, but with us always throughout our lives in faith and in works.

May God bless you.

In Christ,

Rev. Fr. Christopher T. Metropulos, President
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“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but keep it on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

–Matt 5:14-16
The Semester of Faith program offers students from other colleges and universities an opportunity to study at Hellenic College. Students continue earning credit toward their bachelor’s degrees while exploring their faith more deeply through theological study and daily worship in an Orthodox Christian community.

SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE!
Learn more at www.hchc.edu/admissions/semester_of_faith

OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS
Phone: 617.650.1285 | Text: 617.651.0392
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General Board Updates

» In November 2016, the 2016 and 2017 Boards gathered together for the second annual board retreat to transition to the new year.

» We revamped our mission and vision statements to serve as a guide for our future programming.

» We are beginning to develop a set of bylaws to better serve the CrossRoad alumni.

» During our monthly CR AAB calls, we have begun a board book club with the purpose of continuing to develop together spiritually through readings and discussion. We are reading *Tattoos on the Heart* by Father Gregory Boyle. [We are in the planning process of piloting a similar book club open to all CrossRoad alumni.]

» CrossRoad Presentation: We are in the process of developing a set of materials for CR alumni to present to their local communities to share their CrossRoad experience.

» Stay involved! Reach out to us if you have ideas or questions!

Sustainability Committee

» Through the generous support of our CrossRoad alumni family, we raised $19,000+ in FY2016 for the Sophia V. Bambalis CrossRoad Alumni Scholarship Fund and Endowment!

» We released $10,300 in financial aid from the Sophia V. Bambalis CrossRoad Alumni Scholarship Fund to help 18 students attend CrossRoad in 2016.

» We were able to put over $9000 into the Endowment Fund, which now stands at $22,043. Once the fund reaches $100,000, the interest will be used to provide ongoing scholarship support.
This summer the AAB launched an exciting new initiative! You may remember that the last night of CrossRoad the staff prepare participants to take all they have learned back home into their communities through a session called “re-entry.” As a board of CrossRoad alums, we thought there’d be no better way to equip the newest CrossRoaders than by bringing in those who once sat in the very same seats and have been figuring out how to walk the road of the cross ever since.

To that end, the Alumni Board planned and implemented the re-entry session. Eight local alumni formed a panel on HCHC’s campus on the last night of the July session and shared their experiences with the newest CrossRoaders. A few days earlier in the session, the staff collected questions that the CrossRoaders had for the alums around how to live their faith and vocations beyond CrossRoad. The panel was then structured around these questions.

It was a perfectly synergistic event. The alumni were energized and strengthened by being back at CrossRoad, reflecting on their life experiences, and sharing them with their youngest CrossRoad brothers and sisters. The CrossRoaders in return soaked up their guidance and wisdom, made connections with their greater alumni family, and left feeling more confident and equipped to go back into their communities and continue on their paths supported by their CrossRoad family.

We all have a shared experience; it was a truly beautiful thing to witness the coming together of generations of alums supporting and loving one another. We look forward to this initiative continuing and growing in the years to come!

“...we shouldn’t talk to someone because they aren’t Orthodox but we also shouldn’t go into a conversation with a high-horse attitude that we will “be a good influence on them...” Because I’ve met so many people who aren’t Orthodox through my work... I invited some of my coworkers and employees to my house for Pascha. There were over 15 people and only one was Orthodox. I can say with certainty, if we cut off our relationships with people who aren’t Orthodox, then those 15 people and probably hundreds and thousands of others in the world would never hear the resurrection hymn and hear “Christ Is Risen.” If we don’t reach out to people around us, they’ll never hear the good news.”

—Anthony Jonas
Panelist Speaker, July 2010
April 15, 2016 young adults gathered at Hellenic College Holy Cross for the CrossRoad Alumni Retreat. Students from all across the country traveled to Brookline to reconnect with fellow “Cross-Roadies,” meet alumni from other years, deepen their relationship with Christ and the Church, and hear from an inspiring speaker. This year’s retreat focused on “Music: Window to the Soul?” Retreat participants were encouraged to take a closer look at the power and influence of music on their lives as Orthodox Christians. Guest speaker Dr. Peter Bouteneff presented some fascinating reflections on his scholarly and personal experience with world-renowned Orthodox composer Arvo Pärt. He led the attendees on a musical journey through selections of Pärt’s compositions, and explored the relationship of music and spirituality in their lives as Orthodox Christians. Alexandra Alexiades, an alumna of the July 2009 CrossRoad session remarked, “Music is a great big part of my life. I play it, I listen to it, I love it, and now [after the retreat] I have a deeper understanding and spiritual connection with it and love it more.”
As a senior industrial engineering student, I’ve completed five internships, lived in different states, and met hundreds of interesting people. In all these experiences, the concept of vocation is still something I am learning about every day. After all, how can I answer Christ’s call to love God and neighbor while spending the majority of my days maximizing efficiency of manufacturing and inventory systems? Well, one day at my second co-op, working in a circuit card assembly manufacturing area, I was fortunate enough to understand a bit more clearly how this is possible.

Working in an electronics manufacturing environment, my team was constantly under lots of pressure to meet our high quality standards and our tight production schedule. It was incredibly easy for somebody to get annoyed quickly, and employees (myself included) often lashed out at others for the smallest things because of this. After a couple of months, during one of the most stressful days, the team’s kindest, best worker was going about her business as if we were not behind schedule and had not just realized that we caused a $500,000 quality defect. Sort of annoyed with this woman’s positive demeanor, I asked her why none of this was bothering her. In response, she told me that her job was not affected by these recent happenings.

At first, I really did not pay too much attention to her, but it bothered me that I did not understand her peculiar answer. Later, I approached her for clarification. This time, this sweet older woman told me she was a Christian and that her job was not building circuit cards, but to love everyone she comes into contact with no matter what. She explained, “Whether things are going well or not is no reason to treat anyone with less respect than they deserve as a human being.”

Her words had a huge impact on me. They drove home the CrossRoad point that vocation is not about what you do. Instead, it is about how you do it. This summer I was able to spend some time on Mt. Athos, and I had a conversation with one of the fathers about this. This monk’s advice was rather simple as well. He told me that the most important thing laypeople can do career-wise is to do what they love. The monk explained that when we do something we love, it is easier to treat everyone we encounter with love. He went on to say that the world needs all sorts of professions and trades. I realized that it does not matter in what industry or with which company I look to make a career. What matters is how I treat people.
This summer I was given the difficult task of leading a CrossRoad session on the topic of “sanctification of time.” Why was it so difficult? Even though sanctification of time is a beautiful topic, I realized I didn’t have great answers to key questions: How do I spend my time? Do I manage my time well? Do I waste my time and if so, in what ways? Am I sanctifying my time?

In reading on the topic, a clear common theme arose: what we value most in life should be the guiding force that drives the way we spend our time and with whom we spend our time. This may seem obvious. However, when I sat down to identify my values and priorities, I was shocked to realize that much of my time was spent on things I do not value: Facebook/Instagram-scrolling, Netflix-bingeing, getting frustrated about things I can’t control like people who cut me off while I’m driving, or just going through the motions of my job without remembering there’s a person on the other end of that email, or a student is yearning for a conversation. My time was not spent taking moments to make that extra phone call to a dear friend I haven’t spoken to in a while, or journaling and reading at the end of the day; things that have always been life-giving for me. In confronting these realities, I was comforted by the lessons I learned from our Orthodox faith’s perspective on time.

The Church gives us a beautiful example of how we can re-focus and sanctify our time through our liturgical life. The liturgical calendar shows us the event, person, and moment that should stand at the very heart of our time—our Lord’s Pascha. As Fr. Alexander Schmemann writes, “Pascha is always the end and always the beginning. We are always living after Pascha, and we are always going toward Pascha.” Therefore, the Church organizes its entire liturgical cycle around the first and most important event and the first and most important Person. It is because of this Person and this event that our lives take on new meaning and purpose. In Schmemann’s words, “We are no longer people living in meaningless time that leads us to a meaningless end. We are not only given a new meaning in life, but even death has acquired new significance.” Because of this, we know that the way we spend our time here on earth matters.

What if we really understood our time through that lens? What if, instead of either wasting time, or...
viewing other people/tasks as interferences with our time, we began with the assertion that, as Dr. Rossi says, “time is not our own...Christ is everything, including the giver and owner of our time. He is the Way we format our schedule, the Truth about the meaning of time, and the flow of Life that moves us through time.” What if we looked at the way the Church structures its time and used it as a model for how we explore our own use of time?

While this topic was hard for me to explore, I am forever grateful for the task because it gave me an opportunity to ask myself: what event, person/people, belief, value, etc., guides the entire rest of my year, month, day, minute, in the way the Church allows Pascha to? Undoubtedly, Christ stands at the center of this because I know that how I spend my time is either bringing me closer to Him or pulling me away from Him.

Now I pause and ask myself: how can I sanctify my time so that it is spent focused on what I value most. This is not just a lofty goal; it is a hard reality. I am striving to “take the time, which is part of the natural creation, set it apart from earthly matters, make it holy, and offer it back to God through a life well pleasing to Him.” Through this, I’ve discovered that there are ways to sanctify even the most mundane tasks of life; there are ways to sanctify our conversations, emails, morning routine, exercise, and friendships.

I came to the conclusion that the way we sanctify our time looks different for everyone, but it begins by taking a hard look at how we really spend our time and reflecting on concrete ways we can sanctify it. For me this meant I needed to:

A. Identify the priorities, goals, and guiding principles of life, starting with Christ at the center

B. View the present moment as a Sacrament (Read Dr. Rossi’s Becoming a Healing Presence to learn more!)

C. Participate in the life of the Church more intentionally

D. Remember that: “You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.”

E. Exercise mind and body—e.g., Reading more, exercising on a regular basis, keeping up to date with current events, etc.

F. Acknowledge the ways in which I waste my time; write down all the things I wish I could do if I had more time...then swap!!

G. Reflect on the moments, people, conversations, and places where time has been sanctified. MULTIPLY THESE!

H. Find time to be still

I say all of this because the way we spend our time does matter. God calls us to be faithful servants of our time, talent, and treasure. Ineffective use of our time can frustrate or even inhibit us from being our most authentic selves—people made in the image and likeness of God. Sanctifying our time allows us to become people of integrity who make good decisions based on what we value. Ultimately, when we fix our hope on Christ’s Passion and Resurrection in the time we’ve been given, we allow time itself and our lives to become sanctified.

4 http://becomeorthodox.org/the-sanctification-of-time/
OUR PLACE AMONG THE STARS

Alexa Terezakis, July 2016

We lay under
And within creation
Beneath a sky
Of fading blue
Atop a deepened green
Our hearth
Comfort
And home
For the hour

Tell me,
What gives you light?
Where is your hope?
In the darkest of hours?
Do you find security
In love
Or in a higher being?
In the light
Of an unearthly God
Or in the strength
Of worldly kin?
Tell me the beauty

Of a human being
A source of life
So pure
In its ability to love,
Forgive, and perceive;

As for faith
Tell me
What the love of God
Means to you;
To know the weight of the world,
The thought of our smallness
The acceptance
Of all fears and insecurities
In favor of
The indispensable
Love of God

I pray
That we will be able to find this
In the tasks which make us feel
Most alive;
Finding the strength in our faith
To leap over mountains,

Soaking in
The blessed light of Pascha,
Spending time with Those we love
And finding fellowship
With the souls
We’ve only yet to know

So tell me,
My friends,
What is it
Which makes us most whole
After feeling most broken?
Tell me,
What is it
That brings light
To your love of God
And our place
Among the stars?
In this work, I’m using a variety of scumbling techniques with very thin oil paint. This allows the light from the white ground beneath to shine through the colors of each layer and emit the brightest and highest intensity of each translucent chroma. The organic quality of the line, energetic gesture, and experimental texture carries the viewer’s eye through the entire piece; bouncing interest and resting in different sections of the composition. Both the imagery itself and the technical aspect of the work parallel how our love for Christ should be: open, excited, joyful, colorful, and bright; letting the light of Christ shine through us.

Sophia Kayafas is a CR Alumna from June 2009 and received a master’s degree in fine art from the New York Academy of Art. She is currently completing a fellowship year at the Academy.
“Hello sir, my friends and I are going to breakfast. Would you like to join us?” I said with as much confidence as I could muster. The stranger looked back at me with wide eyes. He had dark skin like me and sported a thick, black beard. He checked over his left shoulder and then his right to be sure I wasn’t talking to someone else. But I knew there was no one behind him.

“What?” he managed to muster after a long silence.

“My friends and I,” I said, gesturing to the girl behind me and a couple of other people, “are going to breakfast. We were just wondering if you would like to join us.”

“Can I get a cigarette instead?” he asked.

“Sorry, we can’t do that, but we can definitely buy you a cup of coffee,” Sophia said, interjecting herself into the conversation. The man looked down at his hands, which were covered in dirt, and mulled over the offer.

“All right, why not,” he grudgingly said.

“All right, I’m John by the way,” I said as I stuck out my hand.

“Louis,” he said, taking my hand.

I don’t remember every detail from the morning. But what I do remember is most of the breakfast we had with our CrossRoad staff leader counselor Sophia, my fellow ‘CrossRoadies,’ Sophia, Ashby, and Emily, and our ‘homeless’ friend Louis. We were all a little nervous. As part of CrossRoad, we were in the part of the program where we learn and reflect on love for our neighbors. Other groups went to McDonald’s, purchased a dozen Egg McMuffins, and handed them out to people on the streets. I saw other groups stop and casually start conversations with other people, some who were homeless and some who were just waiting at the bus stop. After a short walk, we walked into a Dunkin Donuts.

“What do you want?” I asked Louis “I’ll get you.”

“I don’t care, man, whatever you like,” he replied.

“I always get the chocolate donut holes. Those good?”

“Can you get a muffin, too?”

“Yeah, sure.”

“Yeah, get a muffin with a ton of sugar on it,” Louis said, flashing a smile for the first time all morning.

“Sure, no problem,” I said to Louis, before turning to the cashier, “Good morning ma’am.”

“What do you want?” the cashier coldly replied.

“Can I get a box of chocolate donut holes, two muffins with extra sugar, and two small black coffees?”

“That will be $11.06,” she said turning back,
clearly done with me.

“She is definitely going to spit in our food,” Louis whispered in my ear.

“Wow, I’m used to southern hospitality,” I said walking, back re-join the rest of the group at a table by the window, “and on top of that, my dad owns a restaurant. You would get shut down for service like that in Alabama.”

“No sh*t, your dad owns a restaurant!” Louis exclaimed as his face lit up, “I’m a chef. What kind is it?”

“It’s a Meat-and-Three, it’s kinda a southern thing.” As it turns out, that little piece of information was the key that unlocked our new friend. We spent the next fifteen or so minutes talking about food: what we liked and didn’t like, our favorite types of food, and what types of dishes Louis makes. While the rest of us sipped hot coffee and ate our breakfast, Louis barely touched his muffin or drink. Rather, he spent the whole time telling us about his life.

Without asking or probing, Louis had offered his life story. It was a tough one, marked by his struggle with alcoholism. He’d been a pretty successful chef, having cooked for famous celebrities in Boston, including Tom Brady, but recent life events had triggered his alcoholism and cost him his job when he showed up to work drunk. Alone, unemployed, and homeless, Louis had been wandering the streets of Boston for four days before I asked him to join us for coffee.

“Sweetheart, don’t give up on yourself.” I turned around to see some old woman had been listening to our conversation the entire time.

“They call me Grandma here,” she continued in a thick Boston accent, “I’m in here everyday.”

“Grandma!?” Louis said, “you don’t look a day over 40!”

“Oh yes, I’m definitely Grandma.”

“If you guess my real age, I’ll give you a hug,” Grandma wagered.

After a couple of tries, Louis finally guessed it.

“78.”

“You got it,” she said, as she rose up for a hug. As they embraced, tears began rolling down his cheeks.

“Remember to keep Jesus in your heart,” she whispered.

“I know,” he said, reaching into his pocket and pulling out a white rosary, “I try.” My mouth dropped. Absolutely stunned, I looked around to see if my friends had shared similar reactions—they did.

After Louis told his story, we each took turns telling ours. Emily survived brain cancer as a child and was now going to the military. Ashby lived on a farm in Colorado. Sophia, who was always quiet, simply said she was friends with Ashby. The other Sophia said she grew up in Boston and was a student here. I let him know about my family’s immigrant story and about my future hopes and aspirations. Some people revealed more than others, but the whole time Louis never stopped questioning, probing, or yearning to learn more about us as people.

I don’t know whatever happened to Louis, or Grandma, or the rest of the Dunkin Donuts. Maybe he still wanders the streets to this day, never rebounding from such a hard fall. Or perhaps he goes into Dunkin Donuts every morning to share a cup of coffee with Grandma. I don’t know if God sent Louis to us, or if He sent us to Louis. I don’t know a lot of things about that morning, but I know I’ll never forget my breakfast club.
The challenge to not go numb
Reflections on the Refugee Crisis
Sophia Maria Gardner, 2016 CrossRoad Guest Speaker

Two years ago, during a live panel discussion on the Syrian crisis, one of the panel speakers said this:

“Our challenge is to not go numb, but to remember the numbers, to remember the faces.”

It is now two years later and the crisis has not gotten better – it has gotten worse. The Syrian conflict and the refugee crisis is white noise in a world that is drowning from information overload.

As Orthodox Christians in the United States, we tend to watch suffering from far away, often from a comfortable couch with a favorite drink in our hands. The refugee problem is a theoretical one rather than a personal one. So we watch, and listen, but our hearts are numb to the true pain of the problem.

In the last four years, my husband and I have become more connected to the crisis through humanitarian aid trips to the Middle East. In Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan we have met with many refugee families and with those who daily work to provide solutions to seemingly impossible situations. Our hearts have been changed and challenged as we have heard stories from people whose lives and bodies bear witness to a crisis.

We heard from a farmer who had to flee Syria when ISIS arrived in the neighboring town. His family had farmed 1500 olive trees for generations. After fleeing to the Bekaa Valley in neighboring Lebanon, he received word that ISIS had cut down the olive trees for firewood. We heard about babies born whose moms could not feed them, about husbands who had died, about children who were exploited. We learned that ISIS is but one evil that refugees face. The other evil shows itself in those who would buy children from a desperate parent, scheme to traffic vital organs, and charge thousands of dollars so people can drown in a poorly made boat.

But that is not the whole story. We also witnessed extraordinary resilience and joy. We drank rich cups of Arabic coffee as we sat in tents or small houses, getting to know people by name. The statistics we had grown weary of became real faces and real lives. This summer while sharing some of these stories with students at CrossRoad, we were struck by the interest and empathy that came from the groups. They entered into the stories with us and challenged us by their passion and concern.

So I offer a challenge.

There is unprecedented opportunity to get involved through volunteering, studying, and learning more about this crisis. You have a hope that is beyond human understanding that you can extend to those who are suffering.

As you go into the world and leave the safety of homes and parents, think about getting involved. Think about studying refugee and migration studies, medicine, social work, nursing, or any number of other disciplines that will prepare you well for serving the refugee community.

The challenge to not go numb is a big one, but you do not enter it alone. Instead, you go well-armed with the grace of God and the Jesus Prayer on your lips: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” Have mercy indeed.
Sophia Maria Gardner speaking to the 2016 CrossRoaders on the Syrian Refugee Crisis
Four years ago, when I moved to a small town in Illinois to start my journey working towards an MD/PhD, I decided to find a nonprofit at which to volunteer. Just because I was in school didn’t mean my life was on hold. Investing my time and energy into nonprofits has always been something I have enjoyed. I found it helps to balance my life.

These days it seems everyone has jam-packed lives. Life can be crazy. Sometimes it is crazy in a good way and other times it just plain wears me down. In the whirlwind of classes, preceptorships, study groups, research, and exams, I often find myself moving too fast. It can be difficult to slow down. However, when I allow myself to do so, God often grants me a little gift that keeps me going. Maybe it is through a beautiful day, a young fawn on a walk in the park, or a tree starting to turn a lovely autumn red or orange. These little gifts give me an opportunity to pause, appreciate, and reboot. They refocus me and help set me on a better path to do God’s work that day.

Other times God has me slow down for a reason. I notice a colleague in need of a listening ear or a mother who needs help at the grocery store. I am a better friend or a more compassionate stranger; I have the chance to treat my neighbor as myself.

Still, oftentimes I need help slowing down, so I have learned to build in some designated times to make sure I take time for my neighbors. I became involved with an interfaith, nonprofit clinic called Avicenna Community Health Center. I have come into contact with many individuals from different faiths and ethnicities through this work with Avicenna. A local mosque started this free clinic six years ago, so many of my new friends and colleagues are Muslim. Together, we have found ways to unite to serve the uninsured and underinsured in our community. I love the way that serving our neighbors unites people of all backgrounds. In working with our patients, I feel so blessed to witness the strength of the human spirit, as well as people’s true resilience and faith. It has continued to teach me the importance of slowing down and putting the other things in my life into perspective.

I credit CrossRoad with helping me learn to slow down and take time for my neighbors. Over twelve years have passed since I attended CrossRoad in 2004. One of my favorite experiences was the breakfast search. It was such a simple idea. Invite a stranger to breakfast and possibly share in a good conversation or at least one another’s company. It was a way to slow down and really see the people around us. Volunteering at the clinic and out in the community helps me stop purposefully and slow down. After all, who knows whom God wants us to meet? Perhaps that person could be God’s gift to us if we choose to slow down and take notice.
Your support in any amount allows CrossRoad to stay vibrant, strong, and accessible to all students!

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RESOURCES TO KEEP LEARNING

Look at what our beloved CR professors/guest speakers have been up to in the publication world!

For online links to all of the following resources and additional resources, visit http://www.crossroadinstitute.org/classroom

Dr. Albert Rossi
A Message for Youth on Sex (Audio online)
What Is a Healing Presence? (Audio online)
The Rise of Scripture (Audio online)
*The Chrysostom Bible: Hebrews: A Commentary* (Print)

Dr. Michael Legaspi
“Merely Academic: A Brief History of Modern Biblical Criticism” (Print)
“Wisdom and Education: An Old Testament Perspective” (Print)
Review of Patrick Gray’s *Paul As a Problem in History and Culture* (Print online)

Dr. James Skedros
“Military Saints in the Byzantine Tradition” (Print)
“You Cannot Have a Church without an Empire: Political Orthodoxy in Byzantium” (Print)
“Sanctity and Holiness in Byzantium” (Print)

Rev. Dr. Thomas Fitzgerald
*The Ministry of Reconciliation: Essays in Honor of Metropolitan Maximos Aghiorgoussis* (Print)
*Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education* (Print)
“A Theologian’s Contribution to Christian Unity” (Print)
“A Global Council for Unity” (Online)
“Preface: The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Dialogue with the Church of Rome” (Print)
“The Orthodox and the Catholic Church: What Has Changed in 50 Years” (Print)
“Fr. Thomas Fitzgerald on The Great and Holy Council” (Video Online)
“The Meaning of Epiphany” (Video Online)

Rev. Dr. Paul Tarazi
Orthodox Bible Commentary - The Old Testament (Audio online)
Orthodox Bible Commentary - The New Testament (Audio online)

Rev. Fr. Luke Veronis
“Speaking to Secular America”-Missions Institute of Orthodoxy Christianity Conference (Videos Online)
The OVM is excited to announce the publication of a new volume that we’ve been working on since our first St. Photios Faith & Learning Symposium in 2006. It’s a collection of essays by leading Orthodox theologians and scholars—including a number of CrossRoad faculty! During CrossRoad, we make the claim that your vocation, as your unique and ongoing response to Christ’s call to love God and neighbor, will have an impact on everything in your life—even your studies in college and beyond. This volume offers thoughtful insight on the topic of faith and learning, religion and higher education, for us—today.

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Highlights from the Book
“Faith preserves and realizes the ideal of knowledge and dispels faint-heartedness... Illuminating the boundaries of intellectual activity, [faith] rouses a thirst for knowledge, [as well as] deepens and clarifies interest in research . . . . Faith accompanies knowledge on all steps of its development.”

From a 1908 sermon of Ioann Filevskii, professor of theology at Kharkov University, Russia. Translated and quoted by Dr. Vera Shevzov

“When human desire is instructed, chastened, and directed toward God, it engages the whole person in the quest for knowledge—his drive to understand the world, his thirst for justice, his capacity for love.”

Dr. Michael Legaspi

“Overall, I think, the Church’s record throughout its two millennia of history can show that it has always been [at least in the cases of its greatest and most spiritual teachers] one of the most profound forces for the education of a deep human civilization. It has loved learning. It has wanted to educate its people. It has told them luminous stories. It has produced countless books, at great cost of labor. It has loved (and invented) the codex. It has delighted in men and women of learning. But always, it has known where its learning was looking. It has, to repeat the axiom of Saint Gregory the Theologian, “put letters in obeisance to the Word.”

Very Rev. Dr. John McGuckin
Joanna Christakis, June 2010

Since CrossRoad, I have fulfilled my calling of becoming a nurse! What better way to serve God than caring for others through him, praying for the love and patience you need to make it through the shift? While this vocation is challenging and ever-changing, I could not imagine anything more fulfilling. Transitioning to "adult" life, what with living away from family and dealing with finances, can be tough, and I don’t think I can do it without the love and prayers of my fellow CrossRoadies. We make an effort to see each other at any opportunity, and thank God for that. Thanks to CrossRoad, I am confident in my life path and I have made friends who have become family.

Gabriella Christy, July 2012

I am in graduate school for clinical mental health counseling with a concentration in play therapy. I have moved to Charlotte and have been attending Holy Trinity Cathedral.

Greg Cleghorn, July 2009

Lesson from a two-year-old old: Stay positive. I recently pulled out of a oil change place after stopping with my beautiful two- (soon to be three) year-old daughter Alyse. After pulling onto the road I was nearly broadsided by a driver who couldn’t be bothered with stop signs. It was very nearly a decent collision. I was not happy with the other driver and mumbled something under my breath. Alyse: “Daddy, why is he a jack’ss?” Me: “I didn’t mean to use that word. He’s more like a clown.” Alyse: “Why was he driving funny?” Me: “Yes, he’s a very funny driver.” Alyse: “Then why don’t you laugh about it?”

Spridoula Fotinis, July 2015

“The CrossRoad July 2015 Session (along with Quinn Marquadat from June 2015) spent a week together at Project Mexico learning and growing together in how to serve our neighbors, how to lay the foundations for our spiritual lives, and that the simple things in life are the best things. Together we experienced an indescribable peace and love as we lost sense of time of this world and enjoyed and learned how to able to fully give our time and talents to serve Christ in the persons of our neighbors.”

Yiannis Gemellos, July 2012

I’m graduating as a double major in Biological and Cognitive Sciences from the University of California, Merced! During my stay, I joined a professional medical fraternity (Phi Delta Epsilon) and founded a chapter of a social fraternity (Pi Kappa Phi). I’ve also been published in the Undergraduate Research Journal, become a certified emergency medical technician, and I’m going to Cambodia as a health extension volunteer for the Peace Corps. Throughout all the things that’ve happened, I believe God has truly prepared me for my future career as an immunologist with all of the experiences and opportunities He’s brought my way.

Taylor Henderson, June 2016

I enrolled in college at Hellenic and am in my first semester as a freshman in the Religious Studies program. I’ve enjoyed all my classes so far and my Introduction to Orthodoxy class has really been insightful and has started to relate to various topics I learned more about at CrossRoad this past June!

Anthony Jonas, July 2010

“Since graduating from Hellenic College in 2015, I have begun two career paths in two quite different realms. During the day, I serve as an assistant teacher in a Pre-K and Kindergarten classroom for children who have behavioral and emotional needs. After the school day, I serve customers at a coffee shop in Back Bay, Boston. My career paths complement one another so perfectly that I find myself at the intersection of professional drive and personal happiness. I revisit the thought to ‘live in the moment,’ a lesson that CrossRoad instilled in me.”

Katie Jouthas, July 2012

Hey everyone! I recently moved to Boston and I am studying higher education administration with a concentration in spirituality, faith, and student formation at Boston College! One thing that has stuck with me over the last four years is: the closer I am working towards my relationship with Christ, and the more all my relationships are working towards Him, the stronger and more peaceful our lives are. When working with college students who are trying to self-identify, I feel empowered, being so strong in my faith, and that would not have been possible without CrossRoad and many of you.

Susan Kourtis, June 2014

Studying theology and education at Boston College, each of my classes has taught me something about vocation. In my class on working with special needs students, we revisited a theme that often came up in my reflections during CrossRoad: discovering each person’s unique value and doing everything you do with love. Being a GOYA advisor, these are two important lessons that I work to evoke in every aspect of my role. I am also blessed to have been able to work in the CrossRoad office for the past two years, where I learned so much! Miss my CR family greatly, hope you are all well!

Constantine Kousoulas, June 2016

Being a senior, my mind is constantly on college applications. I admit it is a bit daunting. I’ve asked myself “What do I want to major in?” since eighth grade. This question has confounded me for years now; nothing seemed right. For every option there was always a nagging doubt. But upon coming back from CrossRoad this past June, I realized I’d been asking the wrong question. The question I know to ask is “What does God want from me?” The lessons from CrossRoad are my map on this crazy college journey. While my vocation is still unclear to me, I feel more confident than ever that God is looking after me, that He will guide me with my life and reveal to me what my calling is in due time, if I just place my hope in Him. God bless you all.

Melissa Likiardopoulos, July 2009

Living in New York City, I cannot ignore the mad rush that is the modern (or postmodern, or post-postmodern) world, a culture of chaos and raw nerves. Working in academia, I cannot avoid being shaped and formed by the blind knowledge which this world heralds as fundamental truth. But I’ve come to remember and realize that if humility is simply keeping one’s heart soft and malleable, then I must continually turn to the Holy Spirit, as He is the seal and will impress Christ’s image on my heart. And this constant turning is nothing more than an intimacy with God, the constant remembrance of which the Fathers speak.
Marie Louwers, June 2015
In school for nursing! It’s super hard, but I love it. I’ve got a few years left, and it’s hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel…! My seventeen-year-old brother was killed this past summer. Weeks after my brother’s death, my grandpa had emergency surgery and my mother was in a car accident. Challenging summer to say the least. In the past few months I have heavily gravitated towards my CrossRoad family. I honestly do not know where I would be (not in a good place) if I didn’t have such beautiful individuals to keep me in check. The love and support is endless. If I have learned anything from the chaos of the summer, it is the following: life is just as fragile as it is beautiful. Take nothing for granted. Happiness is a choice. Love unconditionally. I started kickboxing (my brother always wanted me to go to the gym. I hate gyms, so I found a medium: a gym only for kickboxers), and I love it. I bought my first car – yay! I traveled to Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island this summer to see some CrossRoad friends 😊.

Paul Murray, July 2012
I am a senior in college, and I have spent the past three summers as a camp counselor. Being a counselor is an amazing lesson in vocation because you come into it with an idea of who you are, what your strengths are, and how you will use them in this environment. You imagine yourself being good at some things and bad at others. But the people in charge may see something different in you and assign you to a role that you never saw yourself playing, and you discover new strengths and weaknesses about yourself, while building on the strengths and improving on the weaknesses. In this way you develop a more accurate sense of self and a better understanding of your vocation.

Pres., Caroline Pavlakos, June 2008
2016 has been a year of great transition for us both. Early in the year, by God’s grace, we proceeded towards ordination to the priesthood. This compelled us to move to Clearwater, FL, where Fr. Andrew serves as Assistant Priest and Pres. Caroline as a kindergarden teacher. Our various transitions have been positive and enjoyable, yet have also come with many struggles. These struggles have been opportunities for growth. We have deepened our love for each other by offering more sacrificial love, both in big and small ways. Fr. Andrew Pavlakos (CR ‘05) and Pres. Caroline (Kouretso) Pavlakos (CR June ’08)

Sophia Petrou, June 2015
Sophomore year at Hellenic College Holy Cross double majoring in Classics and Religious Studies has given me already in September my fair share of work, but the simple things of life are what have hit home with me so far this semester. The turkeys gobbling on campus, the birds chirping and flying home in the evening, the crickets chirping at night, that are slowly becoming more and more silent as the true season of nippy New England fall moves in. All these little pieces of the day have made me realize and appreciate how truly every part of life, including the painful parts, holds some simple beauty to be appreciated and absorbed.

Alexia Savas, June 2016
These last few months have been a whirlwind! I began private pilot ground school this fall. I’m loving every bit of it, even if I am the only girl in my class! Being immersed in something so specific to a certain profession has really forced me to approach my studies with a different perspective. Because I deeply love and appreciate flying, I’m already beginning to see Christ and His work in what I do. I feel blessed to be following a childhood dream, especially knowing that I will always have Christ in my life no matter what I do!

Dorothea Staursky, June 2010
In this stage of my life, I’m learning about being patient and trusting in God’s plan for me. I find myself constantly looking towards the future and wanting to reach the goals I have set instead of being thankful for today and all that God has given me. I’m really trying to recognize that God has me where he wants me in this moment and that I need to use the opportunities and the talents that He has given me to glorify Him in my career and in my daily life.

Eva Tempenis, June 2015
This past summer, I had the privilege of being co-counselors with one of the most wonderful people on the planet, Josephine West. (Josephine and I met last year when we attended the June 2015 session.) Josephine’s parents, Fr. Alban and Kh. Krista, are the directors at Camp Saint Mary of Egypt in Post Falls, Idaho where we were counseling the nine and ten-year-old girls which was such a refreshing experience. At the end of the day, we sang the Jesus prayer song Dr. Rossi had taught us as we tucked them in and it brought back so many good memories. And of course, we had to be “twinning” in our CrossRoad shirts and bags as well 😊. If it had not been for Josephine asking our CrossRoad group if anyone was willing to be a counselor for ten days, I would not have experienced the joys of flying across the US (which was so grand), reconnecting with old and new CrossRoadies, and meeting many new amazing souls. Glory to God for all things and for CrossRoad!

STAFF UPDATES

I was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop John of Worcester on September 7, 2015. Serving in my role as Dean of Students here at HCHC as a priest has been a huge blessing in my life. One of my favorite parts of the priesthood thus far was serving as a chaplain for the second session of CrossRoad this summer. I love the program so dearly, and I loved the opportunity to worship and spend time with the participants (and the staff was pretty cool too.)

Ann Bezzerides, Staff 2003–2016
First, I am flabbergasted that we’re preparing for the FOURTEENTH summer of CrossRoad. How did that happen? Second, I’m now closer to CrossRoaders’ parents’ ages than the participants—how did THAT happen? Third, that means I appreciate all of your PARENTS more than you can ever know (until you have middle school-aged kids or so). Fourth, I am currently really interested in the topic of youth, screens, and particularly smart phones—how our faith and life is being affected by them. Our attachment to our phones is now ubiquitous; our lack of ability to be attentive to one thing, task, person, prayer is now challenged in the most serious way. “Wisdom, attend!” How can we now? If you find, read, or have insight on this, email me! I adore hearing from CrossRoaders. You are all, always, every one, in our prayers and very loved.
Bryce Buffenbarger, Staff 2014, 2016
Bryce is in his final year at Holy Cross. He and his wife, Elyse, are trying to take advantage of all that this great campus and city have to offer in their rapidly diminishing time left in Boston. Along with most of his fellow seminarians, he has no idea what the future holds, but is eagerly anticipating the revelations to be witnessed in the coming few months!

George Bryant, Staff 2014
Hey guys! I'm finishing up grad school here at HCHC while coaching rowing on the Charles (until the river freezes over). This past summer I served as a camp counselor at St. Nicholas Ranch and St. Timothy's camps. It was wonderful, to say the least. I've learned about the power of a loving community more than ever, and pray that you also find yourself in such a context. And in the words of St. Porphyrios, recall that the "whole [spiritual] secret lies in simplicity and meekness."

Demetri Constantine, Alumni June 2010; Staff 2016
I'm now in my second year in the MDiv program at Holy Cross and am looking forward to my third and final year. Having been a CrossRoad participant and spending a lot of time doing youth ministry, I was amazed at the amount of work that is required to be an effective youth minister. I found that it was much more difficult and serious than what people say, and I still feel unprepared even after spending over 100 hours of training for CrossRoad staff. It all starts with the belief that Christ will guide and transform every life, if only we give Him the chance.

Fr. Kosmas (Mike) & Anna Kallis, Alumni 2006 & 2005; Staff 2011-2014
It's been a whirlwind year for us! Mikey (now going by Fr. Kosmas, which is his baptismal name - yes we know, it's confusing) was ordained to both the diaconate in October and the priesthood in April. He is continuing to serve as youth director and assistant priest at SS. Peter and Paul in the northern suburbs of Chicago. Anna was also hired by SS. Peter and Paul this past year to be the church school director. We love working together tag-teaming the youth programs at our parish!! Life working in a parish is hectic and can be exhausting and frustrating at times, so we force ourselves to take breaks, go on walks and runs by the lake, and enjoy our awesome city! We are constantly running into other CrossRoad alums through our work with camp, OCF, and YAL, which is always so wonderful! CrossRoad stays in our hearts always, particularly as we are now fully adulting and trying to figure out how to do this phase of life. We find freedom in the vocation definition, remembering that our call is "unique and ongoing," meaning that we get to continually figure it out and experience it in a new way everyday as we strive to love humanity through our unique gifts and talents. We miss all our CrossRoadies and pray for you all often!! Sending much love!

It's been over five years since I've transitioned out of Boston and my role as CR Director, but I love staying connected to the CR family as much as possible. I'm happy to have crossed paths with CR alumni at events such as College Conference, Real Break, and other conferences and retreats (see photo). I currently reside in Austin, where I continue to work in the healthcare and fitness industries. In addition to taking advantage of the city's music, food, and outdoor scene, I'm active in my local parish, participating in music and young adult ministries, and am the proud godmother of six! This past year I was privileged to be a part of St. Kassiani Byzantine Choir, a newly formed national women's choir. Life is a mysterious adventure, and my prayer is that we all move forward on our journeys in Christ in His love, without fear. "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. [...] In this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because he first loved us." 1 John 4:9, 17-19. God is good!

Olenka Ramos, Staff 2014, 2015
Let's see, the biggest update is our bundle of joy and squish named Ivanna. She takes up most of our time and life and it's a great blessing. Christ is working through her and healing us. We are sad to encounter our last year on campus as my husband graduates this coming May, we love it here so deeply. This past summer we got to travel to Europe on the St Helen's Pilgrimage - that was lovely. In my spare time I'm working for a catering company and thank God still able to do a lot of reading!

Fr. Milad Selim, Staff 2009, 2010
As a father of two (Natalie, four and Noah, two), life is always exciting. With my busy schedule and constant parish demands, I've learned the importance of balance and time management. Having a family requires a lot of time and commitment, but I can truly say that it has made me a better priest and servant of the Lord. You quickly realize that you are responsible for your family's salvation, bringing God to them and bringing them to God, a call we all share as Christians. I miss spending time with CrossRoad Staff and CrossRoaders. I follow your news and updates and I'm so proud of your accomplishments and happy to see you answering God's call.

John Tsikalas, Alumni June 2010; Staff 2016
Hello everyone! I'm in the beginning of my second year at Holy Cross (in the seminarian program). School's going great and I'm actually getting married in January... so my life is both very busy and very exciting. This past summer, I was on CrossRoad staff and I learned so much from both the staff and the participants. One thing in particular I try to keep in mind is that human beings are so complex and intricate. The participants showed me that there is always something deeper going on in people's lives than might appear on the surface. I'm very grateful for my experiences working with you all and I pray all is well in life!

Danielle Xanthos, Staff 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016
As the August days came to a close, I headed to Colorado to embark on a journey toward a Doctor of Psychology degree at the University of Denver, specializing in military Psychology and oncology psychology. Perhaps deep down I've always understood there to be some significance in the transfiguration of our own struggles into a positive force that can serve others, but I think I'm finally putting that into action. I'm realizing once we emerge from a storm, weeks or maybe decades later, it's possible to go back in better prepared for the elements, wearing rain boots and a raincoat, to walk with others as they go through it. It certainly isn't easy, but with faith, hope, and love (and gratitude!), it's possible.
What is CrossRoad?

The CrossRoad Summer Institute is a ten-day program for Orthodox Christian high school juniors and seniors held on the campus of Hellenic College Holy Cross in Brookline, MA.

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Who is eligible?

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☑ Students between the ages of 16 and 18 years old

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Program Dates

Session 1:
June 17-27, 2017

Session 2:
July 5-15, 2017

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CROSSROADERS

Former CR Director, Mary Long, with CR alumni at the Orthodox Young Professionals Conference in New Orleans, August 2016.

CrossRoad Alumni and Director, Dn Mike Tishel, at the Syracuse Pan-Orthodox Young Adult Retreat, November 2016

Fr. Andrew (’05) and Pres. Caroline (Kouretos) Pavlakos (June ’08) celebrating their first Liturgy at their new parish, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Clearwater, FL.

July 2015 alumni at OCF College Conference East, December 2015

July 2015 CrossRoaders at a trip they organized to Project Mexico, summer 2016.
OUT ON THE ROAD

CR June 2010 Alums at the wedding of Sophia Schermerhorn (June 2010) and her husband, Chris, summer 2016.

CrossRoaders at the San Francisco Metropolis Young Adult Retreat in Lake Tahoe, January 2016. Kyra Limberakis and Christian Siskos spoke on the topic of vocation for young adults.


CR July 2009 Alums, Allison Nieuwsma and Spyro Mantzas, on their wedding day, October 2016.

Fr. Kosmas (‘06, Staff ‘13) and Anna Kallis (‘05, Staff ‘11-’14) at his ordination to the Holy Priesthood.

CrossRoad Alumni and Director, Dn Mike Tishel, on the OCF Real Break Thessaloniki trip. March 2016.

CR June 2010 Alums at the wedding of Demetri Constantine (June 2010, Staff 2016) and his wife, Maria, summer 2015.
UPCOMING EVENTS

CROSSROAD ALUMNI RETREAT

TWO TRACKS! ONE WEEKEND!
MARCH 31-APRIL 2, 2017

TRACK A: High school/college-age alumni
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TRACK B: Post-college-age alumni held at
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CROSSROAD 2017

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