

# Crossroads Connection

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[www.crossroadslongmont.org](http://www.crossroadslongmont.org)

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## Crossroads Celebrates First Graduation

*On Tuesday, May 20, Crossroads graduated our first two students in a wonderful, packed celebration. Below are photos from the event, as well as a Longmont Daily Times Call article by community reporter Whitney Bryan, published the day before graduation (Monday, May 19).*

A year ago Longmont resident Sarah Peña was not sure that she would graduate from high school, and now she is planning for college. After some tough years in public school and a failed attempt at finishing her credits online, Peña, 19, was desperate to get her high school diploma. About eight weeks ago, she enrolled at Crossroads School and was inspired to start planning her future. Peña and classmate Tyler Thrush will graduate from Longmont's Crossroads School Tuesday during the alternative school's first commencement ceremony.

School administrator Barb Bulthuis is hoping graduation will be a traditional event despite the school's nontraditional mission. "We want it to feel like a real graduation for them even though there's only two of them," Bulthuis said.

The school opened in 2010 and currently has 22 middle and high school students, said school administrator Barb Bulthuis. The commencement marks a milestone for Crossroads, Bulthuis said. "It's a tangible marker for the success of our school," she said. "This proves that we're making a difference in the community, like we said we would."

Peña racked up several absences during her junior year at Erie High School after some of her friends died in an accident. School wasn't the same without them. On the days Peña did go to classes, she was distracted. Her grades suffered and, eventually, it was too much to bear.

Peña could not catch up so she tried completing her senior year online. But without teachers and peers to support her, she failed most of her online courses. "I was always either ahead or behind," Peña said. "I could never go at my own pace until I came to Crossroads." Following graduation, Peña is planning to go to college after serving in the military as a nurse or medic.

Like his classmate, Thrush, 17, was distracted at school and skipping classes during his sophomore year at Niwot High School. Thrush started hanging out with the wrong crowd, he said. Teachers let him leave class without a fight and no one, except for his mom, seemed care that he was going down a bad path. Thrush's mom moved him to Crossroads during the spring semester of his sophomore year where he found the support and guidance he needed to graduate.

"It turned out that this was the best thing that could have happened," Thrush said. Thrush already has a job lined up with his brother following graduation and is hoping to start college in a couple of years after he saves some money.

Graduation is more than a next step for the Crossroads graduates. It is proof that they're survivors. "It's like I've been holding my breath for the past three years and now I can let it out," Peña said. "I've made it. We've made it and now we're going to do something great."



*Tyler Thrush speaks about his challenges and goals; graduates receive a blessing, led by inaugural Commencement Speaker and Journey Church Pastor Rick Ebbers; Graduates change their tassels; Sarah Peña celebrates her success (photos by Crossroads student Jon Ballard)*

# Hope Rises for Crossroads at Biggest Friends Dinner Yet

by Crossroads Parent Rebecca Barnes



Crossroads high school students volunteered at the dinner, serving a delicious meal and helping with the auction; keynote speaker Howard Nourse challenged listeners (photos by Crossroads parent Ron Ballard)

Crossroads can continue offering hope to kids who have slipped through the cracks of more traditional schools, thanks to donors at the Annual Friends Dinner for Crossroads School. The May 2 event netted a whopping \$35,000 for the four-year-old school. That total was nearly three times the amount raised at the dinner last year, according to Crossroads School Administrator Barb Bulthuis.

Red, black and silver balloons drifted up from tables set in the hall at LifeBridge Christian Church in Longmont, to reinforce the theme for the evening: Hope Rising. For parents and students with no other hope for schooling, Crossroads has become that hope. "Ultimately that's what it's all about," Bulthuis said. "Students finding hope."

With an increase in registered attendance at Crossroads from four students in the fall of 2010 when the school opened, to 22 students today, the school has found a need and met it.

Longmont Mayor Dennis Coombs attended the dinner in support of Crossroads, because he said no other school is meeting the need that Crossroads has found in providing one-on-one instructional support for kids who need to complete high school. "Crossroads is a school that reaches out to a segment of the population that is not really being served," Coombs said.

Bulthuis told the crowd of just over 100 people who gathered at the Friends Dinner that kids find Crossroads through therapists, probation officers, other schools, and pastors. They come for help with

academics, behavior issues, and special needs. "They all have one thing in common," Bulthuis said. "Traditional school doesn't work for them."

Crossroads finds support from individuals, businesses—dozens of which donated to the Friends Dinner and auction—as well as foundations and churches. Board member Howard Nourse gave the keynote address for the evening and reminded those in attendance that financial support was just one of the four legs holding up the mission of Crossroads. In addition, he said, Crossroads is able to assist students with individually distinctive programs because of their highly qualified staff, their facilities and volunteers. He encouraged donors by saying that the school has operated on a balanced budget for all four years of its existence, and that giving to Crossroads is bigger than simply a contribution.

Supporting Crossroads is more an investment than a gift," Nourse said. Those investments have only increased over the past four years at Crossroads.

"Every year it gets bigger and its impact increases," said Konni Keuter, a board member and teacher at Crossroads.

Connie Nourse, teaching principal at the school, echoed the excitement about the increase in funding for the school, saying that the support is a confirmation of what she said she feels is God's mission for the students who attend Crossroads. "It's beyond my wildest imagination," Nourse told the crowd at the dinner.

## Main Street Car Wash Fundraiser: Join Us!



**Wed, June 11, 8:30 am - 5 pm; 2025 N Main**

Students and volunteers will greet you as you get your car cleaned and detailed by the professional staff at Main Street Car Wash. Crossroads will receive a percentage of the proceeds, and we'll have a great time! We hope to see you there!

