

The CrossRoads Connection



A Youth and Young Adult Ministry of
St. Andrew United Methodist Church

Garrett and St. Andrew: A winning team!

I am about to watch my son, Garrett, and other CrossRoads kids graduate high school and move on into their adult lives. Garrett has chosen a path different from the one I laid out for him when he was all of ten hours old. He has taken his own path throughout the last 18 years.



Dana Kirkwood is the Program Director for the CrossRoads community.

A long time ago, I realized that, as parents, we weren't going to be able to raise Garrett alone. We were going to need a team! I dubbed it "Team Garrett". This included his family, his friends, his educators, his community, and his church. While there were hundreds of teammates, the MVP was always, and remains, Garrett Kirkwood!

The thing that I noticed most was that Garrett seemed to learn quickly to rely on his team. It was vast and it was

deep. For that very reason, Garrett has always been successful. What do I mean? Well, it is simple really. Garrett was always smaller than the other kids. I worried that he'd not be accepted or worse, he'd be ridiculed. Yet,

as early as kindergarten, Garrett's friends seemed to not notice. His teacher informed me that he was making excellent friendships and used his big personality to redirect any concerns about his size.

Here was the start of his St. Andrew team members. You see, he and Andrew Brainard met in kindergarten. It was Andrew's mom, Becky, who suggested I bring the kids to Vacation Bible School (VBS) that started us attending St.

Andrew. And because of our introduction to St. Andrew, Garrett found many of his important team members!

Here, within this church, Garrett has been surrounded by people that have loved him as their own. He had wonderful VBS leaders, Sunday school teachers, and people in the congregation that always checked on him. In fact, when someone heard he was struggling with reading because of dyslexia, he was quickly hooked up with tutoring. Billie Bruce came onboard the team helping to guide me through the difficult and trying process of getting an individualized education plan for Garrett that worked. Janet Dietz stepped up helping with his math. As the years progressed, math was an area that the St. Andrew congregation continued to

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Our VISION: The CrossRoads Youth Ministry of St. Andrew United Methodist Church embraces and supports the youth and young adults of our community and their families, seeks to inspire and guide their spiritual growth as Disciples of Jesus Christ, and then, empowers/challenges them to serve each other, the church and the whole world.

BroZone/GOLDen Girls



What are our CrossRoads women saying about GOLDen Girls?

"I feel GOLDen Girls is an environment where the girls know they can go every week—same time, same place—that has consistency in a very inconsistent time of their lives. The consistency being taught is the love of GOD and how they can apply and trust in that love during anything in their lives. Teens can feel very alone and this group is a place they can go to feel they are with others on this journey."

~ **Liz Stettler (leader)**

"GOLDen Girls is more important to me than anyone will ever know. I love getting to spend every Monday night learning more about God with all of these amazing Christian ladies. I can trust these girls with the world and I know I have made friendships that will last a lifetime."

~ **Hannah Brainard (sophomore)**

"GOLDen Girls is important to me because it helps with my confidence. It has helped me to make friendships that are lasting and impacting my life in amazing ways. The girls are important to



Our Seniors—Meghan, Markie, Skylar, Catie, and Lauren

me because they are a lot of fun, they help me through things, and all I have to do is help."

~ **Mackenzie Kirkwood (freshman)**

"GOLDen Girls is important to me because I get to interact with other girls my age that I don't always get to see. The other girls are really open

mindful about everything and make it fun. I feel like I actually get to learn quite a bit and expand my knowledge about Christianity and Jesus."

~ **Nicole Lindsey (sophomore)**

"GOLDen Girls is important to me because it helps me connect with this group of girls. I have learned the importance of having peers that have the same beliefs as me."

~ **Kaitlynn Norris (freshman)**

"GOLDen Girls has been my primary support system since my freshman year. There is absolutely nothing better than having a group of powerful girls standing behind you, always there to back you up. I honestly believe that this group, and groups like it are key to empowering our youth."

~ **Markie Soposky (senior)**

"GOLDen Girls stands to me as one of the major turning points in my life! It helped me through weeks of constant support,



Skylar, Markie, Lauren, Meghan, Catie Jordan, Colleen, Alexis, Ceiarra, Natalie, Jessica, Kadie, Nicole, Kaitlynn, Authum Piper, Jamie, Mackenzie, Hayley, Hannah, Dee Dee

regardless if I actually showed up or not. It helped me not only in problems and troubles I was facing in my life, but also problems and issues I had obtained throughout the years that I hadn't yet come to terms with yet. The women and young ladies who I surrounded myself with helped show me meanings of things I'd never attempted to comprehend. The idea of morals and how a woman should act were simple, one line sentences that I heard and learned to agree with, but GOLDen Girls showed me that with the help and love of those around you, you can accomplish anything you wish or desire to be. You can achieve with the knowledge, that no matter where your path with God may lead you, you will have a support system like no other standing behind you, every step of the way. I can not even attempt to show my appreciation for the group or those involved but I will owe them for the rest of my life."

~ **Skylar Ebershoff (senior)**

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help with. First, Jeremy Boggess and then Sarah Vallier helped get him through Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2.

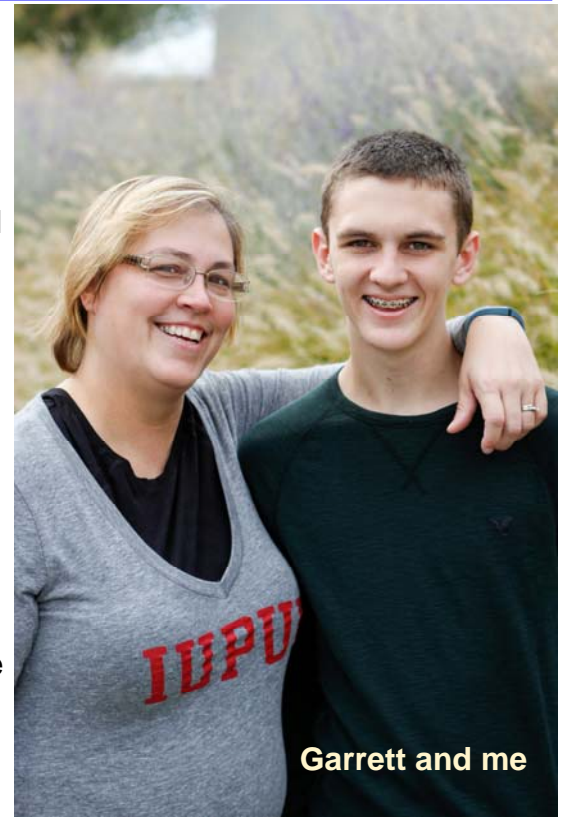
Team Garrett managed to successfully prepare Garrett to pass his End of the Year Assessment on his first try!

But equally as important, CrossRoads leaders and volunteers helped Garrett learn how to be a man of God. It started simply with his junior high leaders guiding him towards missions, study of the Bible, and the importance of good choices. Garrett began to pick his friends within church. If his friends didn't go to church, Garrett got them involved. These leaders welcomed his friends with open arms.

If you were to ask Garrett what was most influential

about his St. Andrew family, he would tell you quite plainly that they held him accountable, they loved him through his faults, and they pushed him beyond his boundaries. His mentor during confirmation, Wes White, has continued to talk to Garrett and check in on him. His Sunday School teacher, Scott Eaker, helped him secure his first job and taught him accountability. His youth leader, Tom Arrowsmith, reminded him that service is best done with a smile and a joyful heart. His BroZone leader, Kim Weston, gave him opportunities where he could apply his leadership in the church and outside.

Through all these people and countless more, Garrett has become an amazing young man. While, as a mother, I am worried about the path he's chosen as the leader of



Garrett and me

CrossRoads, I know that Garrett and the many other seniors getting ready to go out into the world, will serve as a beacon of God's love in all corners of the world. They, with your help, are making a difference for the most important team—Team Jesus!

Dana

Direct Questions: Dana Kirkwood
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Watch your thoughts, they become your words. Watch your words, they become your actions. Watch your actions, they become your habits. Watch your habits, they become your character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.



Andrew, Joe, TJ, and Garrett at VBS

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11



As our year comes to a close, some amazing people are stepping out of CrossRoads Leadership positions. This is a great opportunity for you to make a difference in the lives of others!

Junior High:

- † Sunday School Coordinator
- † Youth Group Leader Assistant

Senior High:

- † Sunday School Teacher
- † Youth Group Leader and Assistant
- † BroZone Leader and Assistant
- † GOLDen Girls Leader and Assistant

If you are interested, please contact Dana Kirkwood.

Remember, you can always access the CR calendar on the Web at thecrossroads-umc.org



CrossRoads students enjoyed their time last Saturday gathering sticks, raking and sharing lunch at the home of Bob Gordon.



Just a reminder that this year's mission students are more than willing to work for you!

The mission trip costs families \$460 per student. This cost includes travel to camp, additional tools on the mission sight, all meals, and accommodations at the camp.

One way to teach our youth the value of work is to allow them to

earn money for their own trip. If you are interested in having someone come help you, you can call any of the adults on the team. Our numbers are in the directory.

- ♦ John Baldwin
- ♦ Angela Johnson
- ♦ Dana Kirkwood
- ♦ Jeff Norris
- ♦ Kim Weston
- ♦ Todd Weston

We will work to create an appropriate team for your needs. However, please keep in mind, the youth need some advance notice to work with their families to coordinate permission and transportation.

Please help support our youth and get to know them.

See YOU at the CrossRoads