



Every Child Deserves A Chance

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Crossroads for Youth personnel perfect for the purpose

OXFORD, Mich.—At Crossroads for Youth, a nonprofit treatment agency that serves at-risk children and youth ages 7-17, the staff play a critical role in the success of each individual that comes to the facility in Oxford.

Admission Director—Typically, the first person from Crossroads for Youth that a child and his or her family meet is Admissions Director Sherry Pianko. Pianko talks to each child, whether from the Department of Health and Human Services or from the juvenile justice system.

“We look at their background and history to determine if Crossroads for Youth is an appropriate place for them and, if so, which program they would thrive in,” Pianko explained. “We want to set children up for success—they’ve already experienced enough traumas in their lives.”

Pianko has been employed at Crossroads for Youth since 1998. Prior to joining the organization, Pianko worked with pregnant teens, Vietnam veterans and within the Los Angeles Unified School District. Pianko has a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Michigan.

“The best part of my job is providing children and families with hope and watching them heal,” she said.

Re-Entry Coordinator—Samantha Speece, who has been a part of Crossroads for Youth since 2013, leads a staff of three with the goal of making sure a child who completes their assigned program doesn’t return to Crossroads for Youth.

“Our main focus is to provide a safe and stable environment for children to return to,” Speece said. Speece and her team work to keep the children busy, focused and out of trouble. They work to find and provide extra support with the entire family, siblings included.

Prior to becoming the re-entry coordinator, Speece was a Crossroads for Youth treatment specialist. “Seeing a kid come into the program they don’t want to be at and then seeing the positive change they go through at the end is amazing. That’s why I do this job,” Speece said.

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Crossroads for Youth personnel perfect for the purpose, continued

Programs and Training Director—Karen Gully has worn many hats during her tenure at Crossroads for Youth, so she was a perfect fit for her current position as programs and training director. Her duties include working with all staff and volunteers on explaining the various programs, as well as keeping the board of directors up to speed with what is happening with the nonprofit.

“It’s all about the kids,” she said. “Watching their transformation, it’s really something to behold,” she said.

Clinical Director—Twenty years ago, Chris Veihl came to Crossroads for Youth as a therapist. In his current role as clinical director, Veihl designs and oversees therapeutic programs and supervises five therapists. Veihl has a Master of Arts degree in counseling from Oakland University.

Veihl’s therapeutic philosophy is one of compassion, safety and guidance. “It may not have been the best situation that brought a child to Crossroads for Youth, but now that they are here, we’re going to do all we can to provide a safe environment and to make sure all their needs are being met,” said Veihl.

Executive Director—At the helm of Crossroads for Youth is long-time employee Marc Porter. Formerly a firefighter in the U.S. Air Force, Marc served many different roles for Crossroads for Youth, including treatment specialist, program supervisor and program director, before being selected by the board of directors to be executive director in 2016.

“For 65 years, Crossroads for Youth has been an innovative, forward-thinking facility for at-risk, abused and neglected Michigan youth and their families,” Porter said. “Our continued goal is to assist children wherever and whenever we can.”

Porter has a Master of Arts in counseling from Oakland University.

Crossroads for Youth is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) treatment agency that serves at-risk children and youth ages 7-17. Crossroads for Youth believes that every child deserves a chance and as such, works to strengthen families and youth with skills and tools so they become valuable contributors in their communities. For more information on Crossroads for Youth, or to make a donation, go to www.crossroadsforyouth.org or call 248-628-2561.

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