



CAROLINA CROSS CONNECTION

Kin-dom Impact Report

2023

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Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit. - e.e. cummings

If I could add, it also reveals the Holy Spirit. Carolina Cross Connection's camps are a magical place to learn about yourself and others. How are you going to react to singing silly songs? Will you look cool or not? How will you interact with strangers? Will you have something in common? Regardless of age, we constantly try to evolve in many areas—personality, faith, comfort, wisdom. And we believe CCC offers that for all.

Our Board of Directors met in October and spent several hours discussing CCC's purpose. Here is what we came up with **Carolina Cross Connection's purpose is to provide an affirming camp space to see Jesus through curiosity, community, and service.** We believe that when we give a space for people to escape for a week, they can learn more about themselves, others, and Jesus. While it is admirable to say we will provide a safe space, we don't think that is possible. When you bring a bunch of broken people together, it is not safe.

A great example of this is the church! While we cannot promise safety, we can promise curiosity. We want everyone who attends a CCC camp to come curious. This allows stereotypes to be eliminated and new friendships and families to form. Curiosity leads to wonder, joy, and Jesus. It leads to open conversations and tables. It leads to growth, which we know leads to life. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging are necessary to understand the Kin-dom of God, and we can only consider engaging in that way through curiosity.

This is going to lead us to new places and spaces. Churches are longing for an affirming camp to attend. We are excited about how God continues to open doors, and our goal this year is to pray for guidance and walk through those doors!

Peace,



Brittany Bethel, Ed.D.
Executive Director

2023 STORIES

Haley Kerr - Home Repair Program Director - Access & Dignity

You often hear of bosses getting the best understanding when they get a chance to be hands-on. This summer, some of our admin team got the opportunity to figuratively and literally dig in the mud building a ramp for some neighbors in Wilkesboro, NC. A CMG from West Wilkes started the project with a demo of the existing porch and steps. Then, because of extenuating circumstances, we needed to finish the construction aspect of the project. If you ever want to see how well a group can work together, put them on a worksite! Apart from interacting with neighbors in a way I don't usually get to, one of my favorite parts of this project was seeing my friends shine. Brittany was our go-to quick math guru, which I find invaluable (I was an English teacher, OK!). Taylor has the creative problem-solving skills one could only dream of. Lauren was a great teacher and incredibly patient when she didn't have to be. While this project was pretty straightforward, we hit our typical worksite snafus that needed to be worked out and often literally had all hands on deck. While the miter saw was roaring, someone was measuring, another was digging, and the other was screwing in decking boards. After we finished, took showers, and sat down for dinner, I couldn't help thinking 1) how dog tired I was and 2) of the campers who do this for our organization 6 weeks out of the summer and then go back to camp with smiles on their faces, playing games, experiencing worships, and getting up bright and early to go back at it. Pure admiration. This experience highlights the multiple facets that come into play to make home repair at Carolina Cross Connection work. I am so proud of the people I work with, those who come back to camp every year, and those who support us from afar.



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2023 STORIES

Laura Brown - Advocacy & Awareness Program
Director - Advocacy & Spiritual Exploration

Community cookouts and softball games are one of the highlights of our summers in Asheville! In fellowship with Haywood Street Congregation, Reeves Chapel UMC, Sardis UMC, and Asheville Church, we are guaranteed to have a good time. At this intergenerational gathering, we feast on hot dogs, hamburgers, and chocolate eclair. We can always count on our friend Jerry to lead us in our chocolate eclair competition and to declare a winner! This summer, we shared in communion before heading out to the field to give our best attempts for a home run. What's the easiest thing to spot during our competitive game? Joy and encouragement! Whether the students and community members are playing or cheering from the sidelines, everyone plays their part in making it a joyful time. As we don our mits and walk to the bat, any separations in churches or by society that exist fall away and we all have one goal: to have fun! To me, it is one of the truest pictures of Christ' family gathered together. This summer was no different and even more people joined us from the community than ever before! I have to be honest, I don't remember which teams won but I will always remember the smiles and love shared! For a moment, we were together and it was good.



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2023 STORIES

Grace Nolasco - Honduras Program Director - International Experiences & Relationships

My very first summer with CCC I went to an activity called Refugio. This activity was something they did once every summer and they will bring the kids from the homes we partner with in Honduras to stay with the staff and campers during a weekend so that they could have a camp-like experience. That weekend was magical. I already knew most of the kids in there, but it was so awesome to see them in a different setting. During that weekend I hung out with three kids from a home called Proniño. This home specifically works with kids that have been neglected and abused and exposed to different substances their whole lives. These three kids were the highlight of that whole summer because they reminded me of the things that matter, of the things I was taking for granted and most importantly, they reminded me that God does work in mysterious and graceful ways despite any situation. Fast-forward to 9 years later and they continue being one of my highlights in life. This summer we hosted Refugio and these three little boys I met a long time ago, showed up as teenagers full of their teenage dreams and the hardships that being a teenager brings. This year it was so special to see them involved in the activities we did because they were not participating in them out of obligation or just because they had to follow everyone else but because they felt Jesus was talking personally to them. This year I got to see how much they've grown not only in size but in maturity, love for others and Jesus, patience, and gratefulness. Watching them interact with other kids, participating in activities and having conversations with them was the highlight of this summer. Refugio it's a magical thing to experience but these three boys and their stories will always be a reminder to me of why we do what we do.



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2023 STORIES

Taylor Whitley - Director of Church & Staff Connections

Working with the summer staff this past summer was a joy and a privilege. It was an honor to witness each of them selflessly serving others, displaying a love without reservation or condition. Their dedication to making a positive impact on the lives of those they encountered was nothing short of inspiring. Each day, they embodied the spirit of compassion, empathy, and a genuine desire to make the communities they were in a better place. Their actions spoke louder than words, and their commitment to helping others was heartwarming.

What made this experience even more profound was witnessing the growth in their relationship with and understanding of who God is. Throughout the summer, it became evident that their faith was not just a set of beliefs but a guiding force in their lives. They embraced the values of kindness, forgiveness, and gratitude.

In the end, working with the summer staff was a reminder of how critical they are to what we do at Carolina Cross Connection. Seeing them love neighbors, campers, and each other was beautiful. They are an embarrassment of riches and I consider it an honor to have served with them. May we all learn to love others as they did this summer - love without a "but."



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2023 UPDATE

Carolina Cross Connection connects churches to communities while making space for Jesus to transform lives through relationships.

01

Camper Numbers

2020: 0 campers, 2021: 524, 2022: 551, and 2023: 653. We are seeing steady growth in our camper numbers after COVID. We are grateful to partner with such incredible churches. We had eight brand new churches who all chose us because we are an affirming and diverse camp experience.

02

Strategic Partners

On top of our incredible partners in our Home Repair counties, Haywood Street in Asheville, and the Children's Homes in Honduras, we added a few new partners this year. One was Hood Huggers, which is a tour in Asheville that explains the Black experience and another in Asheville is Christmount Christian Assembly Retreat Center. Christmount allows us the opportunity to host more adult year-round experiences.

03

Reconciling Ministry

This year our Board voted to become a Reconciling Ministry. This means we adopted their stance on being open and affirming to all people who attend our camps. This is a national United Methodist Church organization.

04

Future Building

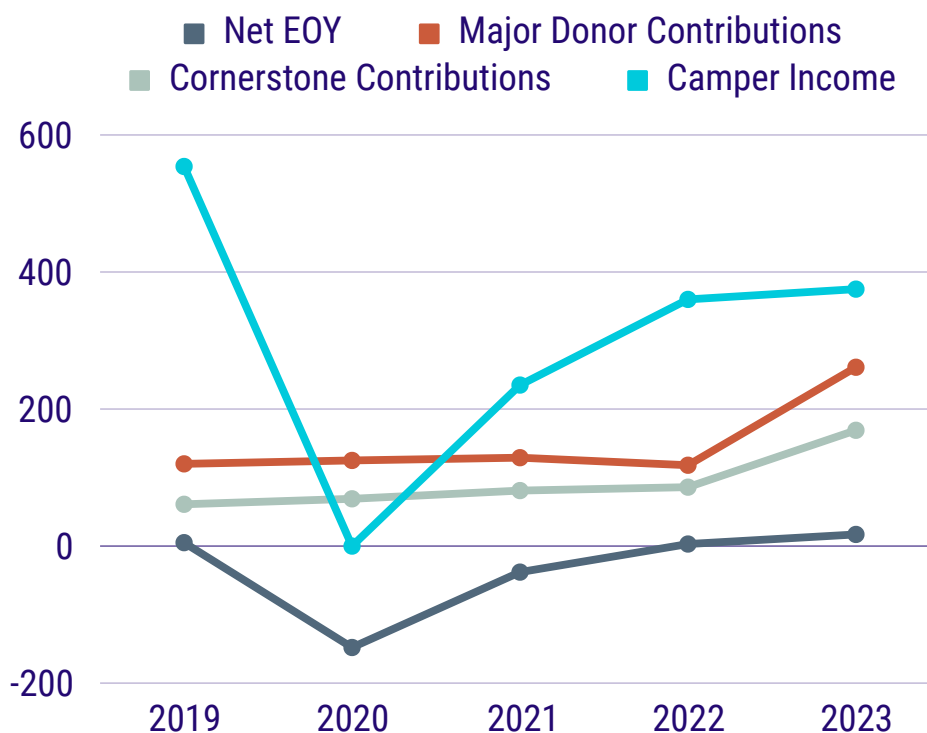
We received first-time grants from AARP and the Outer Banks Foundation and continued support from SECU, NC Community Foundations, and the Reynolds Foundation of the Western North Carolina Conference.

2022-2023 FINANCIALS

Financially, CCC is building back. Due to giving camper fees back in 2020 and below-average registrations in 2021 and 2022, we are building back our reserves. We must increase recruiting and Major Donors, Grants, and Cornerstone members to move forward to achieve the financial goals we have set for this year.

CCC's Financial Picture

Data is the in \$1,000s and shows end of fiscal year (September 30).



7

families make up our Major Donor list (\$10,000+)

66%



of our income came from camper fees.

90/411



of donors are either Cornerstone and/or Major Donors.

- Income: \$861,237
 - General and Fundraising \$175,133
 - ONE Campaign and Staff Partnerships \$185,168
 - Camper fees and program income \$384,807
 - Grants and Employee Retention Credit \$116,129
- Expenses \$843,844
 - Administrative Benefits \$245,671
 - Business Insurance, Office Operations, Events, Administrative gas, and mileage \$232,116
 - Program Operations (camp rental, camper food, summer staff expenses, camp programming, projects, vehicles, storage) \$481,886

Net income: \$17,392

2024 GOALS

I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:5-7 NLT

Key Indicator	Activity / Project	Data / Outcome
Maintain 80% of 2023 campers and add 432 new campers.	Taylor will be solely working on recruiting this year. We are focused on churches outside of NC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will allow for maintained discipleship and steady growth.
Expand our Advocacy and Awareness program in Asheville, offering year-round retreats to mainly adult groups.	Laura is working on expanding our Asheville programming to train groups on how to do Advocacy work in Asheville and then take it home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year round work will allow us prepare more individuals for the hard work of advocating for those in the margins.
Diversify Service Areas racially and socioeconomically.	Haley will be working to find more strategic partners in our current services that will help us serve a more diverse population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will partner with more racially diverse agencies to learn how to best serve their community.
Expand funding to meet industry standards of salaries and benefits.	Salem and Brittany will be working to write more grants and expand our Major Donor network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are currently 25% behind on all levels of year-round salaries and benefit packages. The goal will be to incrementally close that gap.

2024 STRATEGY

A vision without a strategy remains an illusion. –Lee Bolman

In 2023, we were allowed to work with Patton McDowell at PMA Consulting. This was a part of the grant given by SECU. They specifically helped us identify gaps in services in diverse areas in North Carolina and other states in the Southeast. They also gave us tools to help us continue to diversify leadership.

We also used this fiscal year to clarify our strategic plan for 2024-2027. The top 5 improvements are as follows:

GROWTH PLAN

CAROLINA CROSS CONNECTION 2024-2027



CAMPER NUMERICAL GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Due to COVID, camper numbers have decreased. The goal is to achieve a 67% increase in overall camper participation over the next 5 years while ensuring that camper fees remain low.

This will require the implementation of creative and cost-effective camp rental partnerships.



EXPAND FUNDING TO MEET INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR EMPLOYEES

We are currently 25% below national average salary average of religious nonprofits our size. The goal will be to make salaries and benefits competitive for all employees over the next 5 years.

This will require more grant writing, monthly donors and major donor involvement.



ADVOCACY & AWARENESS PROGRAM EXPANSION

In Asheville, our programming addresses systemic injustices, providing people of all ages with the knowledge and tools to initiate advocacy efforts. Previously limited to student groups, we now aim to expand by offering year-round retreats for diverse age groups.

Additionally, we've received inquiries to launch similar programming in other states.



DIVERSIFY ALL SERVICE AREAS

In 2023, utilizing a grant, we engaged a consultant to assess our service areas, specifically mapping programs like Cross Connection across diverse states.

The findings revealed a lack of racial diversity in most of our service areas. Our objective is to extend our presence into more underserved communities over the next 5 years while preserving our existing long-term relationships.



CREATE TRAINING RESOURCES

As we expand our service areas and diversify our staff, it's crucial to ensure that program participants are well-equipped to engage with diverse communities.

In the next two years, our plan is to develop advocacy and awareness training programs for all our service areas. Additionally, we aim to conduct accessible and informative training sessions tailored for churches.

TO PROVIDE AN AFFIRMING CAMP SPACE TO SEE JESUS THROUGH CURIOSITY, COMMUNITY, AND SERVICE.

2024 FUNDRAISING GOALS

We see an incredible future, but we must secure and inspire the right now before moving forward.

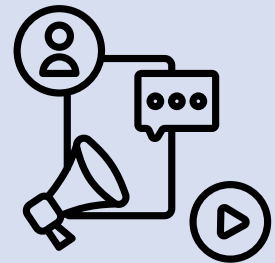


Grant Writing

We are writing for and prayerfully expanding \$127,000 in grants for 2024.

Marketing

Grace Nolasco has come on full-time to run our Honduras program and Social Media content creator/manager. We hope to use Social Media more effectively in our fundraising efforts.

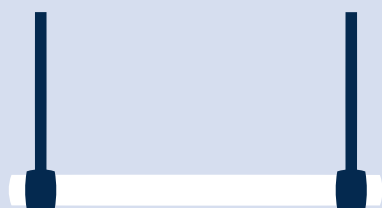
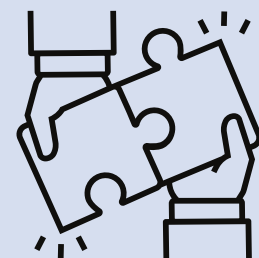


Fundraisers

Our goal for this year's Benefit Dinner is \$36,000 and will be held at Cabarrus Brewing's Kettle Room on September 21, 2024.

Major Donors

We have incredible families who have given generously so that we can continue dreaming. Our goal this year is to expand that base by 10 families.



Cornerstone

We have 90 families contributing from \$5 - \$5,000 per month. We hope to expand that base by adding ten new families in the \$100 - \$200 per month range.

Carolina Cross Connection is a team. Every individual who comes to camp, works on Summer Staff, donates, and serves on the Board of Directors is invaluable to the organization. A few thanks you's are necessary.

Year Round Administration Team

Brittany Bethel, Executive Director
Salem Sheridan, Director of Connection & Ministry Advancement
Taylor Whitley, Director of Church Connections & Summer Staff Recruitment
Haley Kerr, Director of Home Repair Ministry
Laura Brown, Director of Awareness & Asheville Ministry
Grace Nolasco, Director of Honduras Ministry & Social Media Strategist

Board of Directors

Ied by Board Chair Beck Saunders

Cornerstone Members & Major Donors

and all staff partners and contributors

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to expand our Kin-dom work.

CONTACT

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