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## **Can At-Risk youth in Eastern Massachusetts beat the odds to, not only graduate from high school, but realize a college education?**

Boston, Mass. – On Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:15 pm, Boston-area organization serving at-risk youth, Crossroads for Kids, celebrated its first graduating class of their five-year C5 Teen Leadership Program at a graduation ceremony at Faneuil Hall. While Boston Public Schools has only a 57% graduation rate, 100% of the teens who have completed this program are graduating from high school and 93 % are going to college.

The 41 graduates have spent the past five years participating in Crossroads for Kids comprehensive programming to develop and refine their leadership skills with a focus on community service and a goal for college acceptance and career readiness. Thirty-eight of these graduates will be attending college in the fall and nearly all of them will be the first in their families to attend college or university.

In a time where funds are being diverted from public schools around the country, programs like Crossroads for Kids C5 Teen Leadership program, which serves high-potential teens from risk-filled environments across the state, are vital to ensuring the continued success and safety of Massachusetts at-risk youth. Many of these graduating teens never considered college as an option until they joined the Crossroads family.

When 17 year-old DiAndra first joined Crossroads C5 program five years ago, she wasn't thinking of going to college. The Crossroads staff guided DiAndra and her peers through an intentional series of experiences and opportunities designed to help set goals, and understand the steps each of them needed to take to prepare for college and meaningful employment. The pinnacle experience was a 9-day tour of New England colleges, that allowed DiAndra and her friends to really see what college life would be like and to understand the college application, interview and financial aid process.

Today, DiAndra is excited and ready to head off to college in the fall. "Crossroads has given me an opportunity that many city kids do not get. If I weren't involved in this program, my life would be a struggle," says DiAndra, "having C5 as a support system has helped me reach for my dreams without limitations." DiAndra has been accepted to Johnson and Wales, her first choice, and plans to study business management.

### About Crossroads for Kids

Crossroads for Kids has been unlocking opportunities for at-risk Boston area youth to transform their lives for 75 years. Our experienced and dedicated staff counsels, nurtures, and builds critical relationships through immersive year-round and summer camp programs giving youth valuable life skills and a consistently safe place to turn regardless of their individual situation. Serving over 1000 Boston area youth each year, Crossroads for Kids immerses children ages 7-17 in a safe, supportive community, preparing them to meet life's challenges as they learn, grow, and discover their own unique potential.

Crossroad for Kids website is located at [www.Crossroads4kids.org](http://www.Crossroads4kids.org)