



Atlas: Lincoln

Attaining Truth, Love, And Self-control

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Brody M. Van Roekel
Director

Happy New Year!

A happy New Year dear people. We're ready to get rolling with our first full year of operation in 2019. Amazing things have already been in the works and I'm so excited to see what the Lord has in store for our mission here in Lincoln, NE in the new year.

From the Atlas launch in August, we logged almost 100 appointments with clients, spending time in different capacities and helping folks in various ways. At our two mentor training workshops, we equipped nearly 20 faithful followers of Jesus Christ to walk in meaningful relationships with people. Most excitingly, we made 5 mentor-mentee pairings, with a number of potential pairings in the works. These mentors and mentees will walk together throughout the next year and I can't wait to hear about all the growth within these relationships by everyone involved.

2019 will bring some great opportunities to go to work in His Kingdom. I've been absolutely blessed and privileged to be hired as the new full-time Director for Atlas: Lincoln starting on January 1st.

I'm also hoping to continue building our presence in the community and with people who are hurting. This will include regular office hours, prospective staffing expansions, and consistent outreach and connection to churches and organizations with whom we can partner in order to unite our community. Our hope and desire is to make disciples together as brothers and sisters in Him and show people the love of Jesus. *-Brody*

"If one falls down, their friend can help them up, but pity the one who falls and has no one to help them up!"

Ecclesiastes 4:10



Atlas T-Shirts – In our continuing efforts to get the word out about Atlas and through generous surprise donations, we ordered T-shirts! You can stop by the office or come to the Feb. 8 fundraiser and get a shirt for \$10. Also, you could attend a mentor training and receive a shirt free as a thanks for your interest in partnering with us as a potential mentor.



WHAT IS ATLAS?

"A place to come when you don't know where to turn."

Emotional, spiritual, physical or relational issues can turn one's world upside-down. For people struggling down a rough place on life's road, Atlas is a safe, confidential place to come in and let it all out. Our services are free to the public. We listen, encourage and pray with folks who come through our door. We make referrals and do our best to love each person, guide them in the right direction and walk with them on their journey – regardless of the distance. We are excited to find ways to touch lives for Christ in this community. We let each person know they matter. They matter to Jesus and they matter to us.

Atlas Fundraiser – Trivia Night – Friday, Feb. 8, 6:30-9:30 @ Hope Comm. Church

You're invited to Hope Community Church (4700 S. Folsom) to learn about Atlas: Lincoln. Hear how lives are being changed, enjoy some trivia and community, and raise some money!

\$15 cover at the door and silent auction. Bring snacks to share with friends.

All proceeds go to helping the hurting in our community. Just \$1000 pays for a client to be served by Atlas for a year.

RSVP on our Facebook event or by contacting atlasoflincoln@gmail.com or 402.781.0373



Board Spotlight – Jeff Heerspink, President - *Who are you?* I am the son of a telephone man, born and raised in institutional Christianity that left me empty. I was found by Jesus through the love of one man who took time to get to know me and share Christ with me. Today, I am blessed in my call to pastor a church in the shadow of the state capital, ministering to some of the greatest people, who are hungry for the Gospel, even if they do not recognize it.

How'd you get involved with/hear about Atlas? I learned about ATLAS many years ago. I was impressed with the care that it was possible to give to folks who were struggling by equipping “regular” Christ followers to walk with hurting people.

Why did you want to start an Atlas in Lincoln? ATLAS for me was all about God’s timing. We had started something similar in our church, only to find that we did not have enough people to walk with the hurting in our congregation. Yet, we also knew that there were amazing Christ followers in the many great churches around us in Lincoln that would love to walk along someone, if we could facilitate the opportunity. We were granted the use of a new space and the dream of ATLAS became clear to us. God has been faithful ever since.

How do you see Atlas working in the community? The beauty of ATLAS is that many people in the community are looking for somewhere to turn to get help, a place that actually cares about them. There are also plenty of people in the faith communities that are equipped with the love of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, who do not yet know how to connect to those who are hurting or are simply afraid to do so. ATLAS provides that bridge for these two people connecting in our neighborhoods and in our city.

How does Atlas help pursue our call to make disciples and build the Kingdom? I think the most exciting thing about ATLAS is multiple churches being represented through the mentors. As mentors and mentees build solid relationships/friendships, mentees are most likely going to get connected to the church that their mentor attends. It’s always easier to go to church when you know someone there. This expands the Kingdom, not any one church. It’s the “reap what you sow” principle for churches. Invested mentors sow grace and truth, acceptance and direction into lives desperate for the healing power of Jesus Christ.

Billy’s Story - Six months ago, I met a young man named Billy. We starting talking outside the church I go to on a Saturday morning. He was looking for a ride to another AA meeting. I offered to give him a ride and we hung out that afternoon. A few weeks passed before I saw him again. One day I saw him walking and ran up to chat with him. We talked once in a while in the neighborhood and started hanging out.

As we got to know each other, Billy shared more of his life. He had been in and out of foster care for most of his childhood. He'd been in Lincoln for 18 months and hadn't really been sober for any significant amount of time outside of stays in rehab facilities. He talked about all the heavy things on his heart, like working through new diagnoses and medications. We got to know each other more and more and he became more forthright about his drug use. After a span of time, we talked about him going to long-term treatment. He was resistant at first, but slowly came around to the idea.

A few months ago, he started a long-term rehab program. I’ve been able to visit him regularly. He’s going to church. He wants to be baptized. He posts positive things on Facebook, like the below, and my day is always brightened when I see them. It’s a privilege to be a part of Billy’s life and I’m so proud of how far he’s come. We’ve had many opportunities like this to walk through life’s

rough patches with people like Billy here in Lincoln. The Lord continues to bless our work, and we are thankful for every new day to go to work in the Kingdom.



Director Hired – Announcement – Carissa Martin, VP

We are so proud to welcome Brody to ATLAS as our director. Only God knew that when he brought Brody to Lincoln, it was for a different purpose than we anticipated. Brody stepped into this infant ministry and quickly revealed his skills. He has done an impressive job of integrating into our community, quickly building relationships and proving himself a valuable asset to not only ATLAS, but the city of Lincoln. We appreciate his spiritual depth, relational personality, and administrative skills. Thank you for answering the call to Lincoln, Brody! We are thrilled to have you!

God can afford *His* work

Our 2018 fundraising efforts closed exceedingly well. Our efforts were blessed, raising **over double** our average monthly intake in December. We’ve been able to help hurting people, equip followers of Jesus, and unite our community, none of which would have been possible without the Lord’s provision through folks like you.

God can afford His work, this is His ministry, not ours. We also know God uses His people to bless others – and you have blessed us. We are so grateful for those who link arms with us as we continue to walk alongside people, listening, encouraging, motivating and just doing life with people who are in tough situations.

When we join together using our gifts, God works to accomplish great things – right here on our local mission-field. If you’ve considered supporting a local ministry in addition to the church you attend, your *tax-deductible* gifts to Atlas this year will be most appreciated.