

Annual Report Winter 2023-Summer 2024



**WE ENVISION A VIBRANT, JUST, AND
EQUITABLE EVANSTON, WHERE ALL FEEL
VALUED AND A SENSE OF BELONGING.**

EVANSTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



1560 Sherman Ave, Suite 535
Evanston, IL 60201

**EVANSTON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

EVANSTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



2024 Leadership Evanston Cohort

YOUR VISION
OUR MISSION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends of the Foundation,

We are pleased to share with you our Annual Report to reflect on the transformative journey of the recent past and uplift the exciting and important work on the near horizon. Our recent efforts and achievements were not just milestones for the Evanston Community Foundation; they were manifestations of our community's collective vision and aspirations. Guided by our Annual Report theme: **"Your Vision. Our Mission"**, every step the foundation takes is in direct response to the voices, feedback, and requests from our vibrant community.

Central to our transformation this year was the profound commitment to listening—truly listening—to the diverse voices within our community. It was your insights and perspectives that inspired us to revamp our mission, vision, and value statements. This process was more than an update: it was a recommitment to our shared dreams and a reflection of our collective ethos.

A New Era of Branding: In line with the feedback received, we also embarked on a significant branding overhaul, introducing a new logo and website. This new brand identity represents not just the evolution of our Foundation but also our dedication to inclusivity, accessibility, and the reflection of our community's dynamic spirit. It's a visual testament to our ongoing dialogue with you and our shared journey towards a brighter future.

Expanding Leadership for Everyone: Perhaps most significantly, the expansion of our Signature Leadership Evanston program into the **Ubuntu Leadership Institute** was a direct outcome of the community's call for more inclusive and diverse leadership development opportunities. This initiative, designed to re-engage Leadership

Evanston alumni and broaden our reach, underscores our belief in the untapped potential within each of us. By listening to you, we recognized the need to cultivate a wider array of leaders, reflecting the rich tapestry of our community.

Cultivating Resilience Through Leadership and Listening: Our journey this year reaffirmed a core belief: the strength of our community lies in its ability to listen, adapt, and grow together. By nurturing the leadership skills of our community members in response to your vision, we're not just empowering individuals; we're fortifying the very fabric of Evanston to remain resilient in the face of challenges. Your vision has indeed become our mission, guiding us towards a future where every voice is heard, and every potential is nurtured.

As this year's Annual Report unfolds, let it be a reminder of what we can achieve when we listen to each other and move forward together. The Evanston Community Foundation is more than a sum of its parts; it is a reflection of the collective spirit and aspirations of our community. We thank you for entrusting us with your vision, and we pledge to continue our mission with renewed vigor and commitment.

Together, let's continue to shape a future that honors every voice and cultivates leadership in every corner of our community. Your vision is our guiding light, and together, we will illuminate the path forward.

In Ubuntu,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sol Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S".

Sol Anderson, President and CEO
Evanston Community Foundation

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Robby Bardwell
Senior Director of Donor Relations

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ECF

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Welcome to our new site!

**EVANSTON
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FOUNDATION**

We are proud to unveil this refreshed visual identity, symbolizing our renewed commitment to our community and its future.



A Refreshed Look, A Renewed Mission

In 2023, the Evanston Community Foundation embarked on a journey to revitalize our website and significantly enhance accessibility for all. This endeavor did more than just breathe new life into our digital presence; it sparked a profound period of self-reflection concerning our core values and identity. Embracing this challenge head-on, we meticulously revamped our mission, vision, and value statements, marking the beginning of a new branding era at the Evanston Community Foundation. We are proud to unveil this refreshed visual identity, symbolizing our renewed commitment to our community and its future.

Our Vision:

We envision a vibrant, just, and equitable Evanston, where all feel valued and a sense of belonging.

Our Mission:

Our mission is to mobilize community resources to drive systemic social change and build a thriving, resilient Evanston. We achieve this by:

- Investing in the community with a long-term and sustainable perspective
- Empowering leaders to foster innovation and collaboration
- Prioritizing community voice and choice



ECF

As we reflect on our rebranding process, we can't help but be grateful to our dedicated community members and partners who took the time to share feedback, participate in focus groups, and joined in our overall vested interest in the well-being of our community. Thanks to your contributions we can more clearly, concisely, and kindly communicate with our beloved community and uplift the impactful work of so many Evanstonians. We hope this new era of ECF feels reflective of you, your goals, and ambitions for the place we call home.

OUR NEW VALUES

As we continue our journey towards making Evanston a place where everyone can thrive, we've embraced a new set of values that reflect our renewed commitment to the community. Our recent rebranding wasn't just about a new look; it was about redefining our core beliefs and how we aim to create impactful change.

Introducing our new values: **Collaboration, Community, Innovation, Resilience, and Joy**. These values are more than just ideals; they are the foundation of every initiative we undertake and every partnership we forge.

COLLABORATION

We have more power together than we could ever have alone, and our community's greatest strength is its diversity of voices. We gather nonprofits, businesses, advocates, and civic leaders to share perspectives, resources, and learnings—working shoulder-to-shoulder towards a stronger Evanston for all.

COMMUNITY

Everything we do is rooted in the dynamic community we call home. Founded by a small group of Evanstonians who pooled together what they could to invest in change, communal action runs in our blood. Our focus is not a single issue, but everything Evanston.

INNOVATION

With the strength of our community behind us, we're fearless in the face of any challenge the future might throw at us. Our spirit of experimentation and appetite for fresh ideas aims to inspire new thinking and bold action from the people whose passion and creativity make Evanston a beacon of progress. Let's reimagine what's possible, together.

RESILIENCE

The challenges we face as a community can't be solved in a day or month or even a year. That's why we're in it for the long-haul, committed to igniting sustained change over time. We drive community-led investments, advocacy and education targeting the root causes that keep Evanston from living up to its ideal of equity for all.

JOY

We believe there is joy in the hard work of creating lasting change. This joy comes from seeing our shared humanity. By holding onto joy, we inspire our community of supporters to believe in new possibilities for the future and mobilize our neighbors to work together towards a stronger city.



PARTNERING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION:

Here at the Evanston Community Foundation, our commitment to the community is simple. We are dedicated to listening, learning, and implementing the feedback, desires, and needs of our community. A feat only made possible by the incredible partnership of community members like you! Whether you join our efforts as a taskforce member, survey responder, or donor your partnership is priceless. Read on to see how partnering with the Community Foundation can ensure a lasting impact on your community!

UBUNTU LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

EXPANDING
LEADERSHIP FOR
EVERYONE!

Perhaps the most praised and prominent aspect of the Evanston Community Foundation has been our Signature Leadership Evanston programming. For 33 years, Signature Leadership Evanston has served as a launchpad for community-led innovation and connection, resulting in numerous notable and impactful projects in Evanston.

However, instead of simply celebrating these achievements, we listened to the voices within our community. Both LE alumni and prospective participants have consistently asked for more opportunities for engagement and a more diversified slate of leadership development programming



It is from that feedback and type of community engagement that the Ubuntu Leadership Institute was born. After months of brainstorming, researching, and testing ideas, we now proudly present: The Evanston Community Foundation's Ubuntu Leadership Institute.

A leadership development institute designed to meet our leaders at every stage of their leadership journey and mold the next generation of community-centered leaders. Please visit evanstonforever.org to learn more about the institute's offerings.



Ubuntu Leadership Taskforce:

Karli Butler – *ECF Staff*

Peter Braithwaite – *Community member*

Cindy Castro – *ECF Board member*

Bettye Cohns – *ECF Board member*

Lauren Davis – *ECF Staff*

Linda Gerber – *ECF Board member*

Michael Miro – *Community member*

Melissa Molitor – *Community member*

Nathan Norman – *Community member*

Monique Parsons – *Community member*

Bryant Wallace – *ECF Board member*

Akilah Wilson – *ECF Staff*



“Community made this happen. This institute is a culmination of every conversation, suggestion, and frustration shared with the ECF team. Our hope is that every LE alum who advocated for more programming and points of engagement feel a sense of pride and ownership when thinking of the Ubuntu Leadership Institute. We did this with you, for you, and because of you.”



Karli Butler
Sr. Director of
Community
Leadership

Turning Grief Into Service: Honoring a Son's Big Heart

On July 29, 2009, Joyce Davidson suffered an unimaginable loss when her only child, Aaron, passed away suddenly due to an asthma attack. During a period of deep grief, Davidson sought a meaningful way to honor Aaron's memory.

The opportunity came during a workshop for bereaved parents, where a presenter encouraged them to think of what most represented Aaron. The answer was clear: Aaron had a big heart. Inspired by this, the presenter advised, "Serve with a big heart!"

Motivated by this idea, Davidson embraced service to keep Aaron's spirit alive but initially struggled to find a straightforward path to start. In April 2021, a friend introduced Joyce to the Evanston Community Foundation (ECF). After attending a webinar and delving into ECF's resources, including their annual report and list of grantees, Davidson discovered how ECF's mission resonated with her own dedication to community needs.

Driven by this alignment, on July 29, 2021—the twelfth anniversary of Aaron's death and Joyce's birthday—the AWD Fund was established at ECF. The foundation made a significant effort to launch the fund on this poignant day.

This fund not only supports organizations the parent had already been involved with, but also helps discover new efforts, like "Life Without My Child."

Creating this legacy in Aaron's name was a profound step. Joyce has committed to personally finance the AWD Fund annually, enabling ECF to continue its impactful work. This dedication ensures that the fund can help sustain the vital services that benefit the Evanston community, thus honoring Aaron's memory through continuous, heartfelt service.



Joyce Davidson and Jamie Cherry, 2023 Grant Awards Ceremony

“

“I had been trying to figure out a way to honor his legacy ... and I pray a lot of mornings about how I can give with a big heart. To me, that is his legacy—giving with a big heart.”

Joyce Davidson
ECF Grantmaking Partner
Aaron William Davidson Fund

LIFE WITHOUT MY CHILD

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

JAMIE CHERRY



In 2015, Jamie, an Evanston resident, faced a heartbreaking loss when her son passed away.

Overwhelmed with grief, Jamie searched for local resources to help mothers who had experienced similar losses, but she found no existing support groups. Fortunately, someone recommended the Evanston Community Foundation to her. Unsure of what to expect, Jamie made an appointment to meet with the Community Foundation. The process was straightforward—she called, set up a meeting, and soon began brainstorming ideas for a support group with the foundation’s staff. By sharing her personal story and showing the strength to be open about her grief, Jamie helped create ‘Life Without My Child’—a dedicated support group providing a supportive space for mothers like her to cope with the devastating experience of losing a child.

Jamie’s courage and her collaboration with the community foundation brought this important resource to life.



Jamie Cherry, 2023 Grant Awards Ceremony



IN LOVING
MEMORY OF
JAYLEN DEANDRES
HARRIS

“

“I cried not for me but, for those that would receive all of the good things that would come with this grant.”

Jamie Cherry, Grantee Life Without My Child



SCAN THE QR TO WATCH A VIDEO OF HOW JOYCE AND JAMIE WORKED WITH ECF TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY

Anne Keeps Making a Difference: The Power of a Planned Gift to ECF's Forever Fund

Anne Stevens was a woman of remarkable dedication and generosity, whose legacy continues to make a profound impact on her community. Serving as a Grantmaking Partner, Anne reviewed countless proposals, ensuring that the most deserving initiatives received the necessary support. Over the years, her donations cumulatively amounted to nearly \$200,000 to the Evanston Community Foundation (ECF) since she created her fund in 2004.

Understanding the importance of legacy, she named ECF as the beneficiary of her IRA. Upon her passing, a significant portion of her IRA was directed to ECF, specifically contributing \$100,000 to the Sara Schastok Fund. This fund, named in honor of ECF's remarkable Founding President and CEO, is a crucial part of the Foundation's Forever Fund, and ensures that ECF can continue to serve the community

exceptionally and indefinitely.

Anne's bequest guarantees that as she is remembered, she will continue to support the causes she cared about, providing an estimated \$5,000 a year posthumously.

Anne Stevens' story is a testament to the profound impact one individual can have through **thoughtful and strategic philanthropy**. By making a bequest gift, like Anne, you can create a lasting legacy that supports the causes you care about for generations to come. Her life and legacy remind us that through planned giving, we can ensure our values and commitments live on, perpetually benefiting Evanston.



YOU BRING THE VISION. WE BRING THE IMPACT.



MAKE AN
IMPACT!



SELECT "RECURRING
DONATION AMOUNT"
TO JOIN THE IMPACT COLLECTIVE

Grant Highlights:

ECF is proud that our grantmaking is truly community-led, where a diverse cadre of Evanston community members evaluate and rate proposals, and then recommend them for funding. The grant proposals that the committee has put forth this year are already beginning to uplift lives, strengthen neighborhoods, and build a more just Evanston.

E-TOWN INNOVATION GRANTS

Invests in initiatives that prioritize BIPOC* voices and promote equity in the community. Through our strategic investments, we aim to create a more inclusive and vibrant Evanston that celebrates diversity.

Books & Breakfast	The Fatherhood Collective	Mitchell Museum of the American Indian
Center for Independent Futures	iKandi Hair Studio	Purple Line Adventure Play
Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)	Kuumba Evanston	Sokana Collective
Evanston ASPA	James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy	Young, Black, & Lit
Evanston Scholars	Life Without My Child	Youth Technology Corps NFP
Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project-FLAP	MenTal Wealth Advocates	YWCA Evanston/North Shore

**ECF uses the term BIPOC to highlight the unique history of oppression and continual, systemic discrimination that Black and Indigenous people experience within a U.S. context. These systems, built on white supremacy culture, impact all People of Color. As such, ECF prioritizes organizations led by and/or centered on the voices of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian community members, and those impacted by multiple intersectional systems of oppression.*

NONPROFIT GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS

Supports a thriving nonprofit sector in Evanston by investing in nonprofits' organizational capacity and sustainability.

Connections for the Homeless
Curt's Café
Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project-FLAP
Infant Welfare Society of Evanston
McGaw YMCA
Trilogy, Inc.
Youth Job Center

COLLECTIVE AND ENDURING INITIATIVES

The Community Foundation brings together nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders to address challenges and change systems over the long term in Evanston.

Clear Language Lab Partnership
Literary Works

Guaranteed Income Pilot Program
Northwestern University with City of Evanston and Evanston Community Foundation

Multi-Year General Operating Grant
Reparations Stakeholders Authority of Evanston

Savings for Success- Children's Savings Accounts Program
YWCA Evanston/North Shore with Evanston/Skokie School District 65, Evanston Community Foundation, Literacy Works

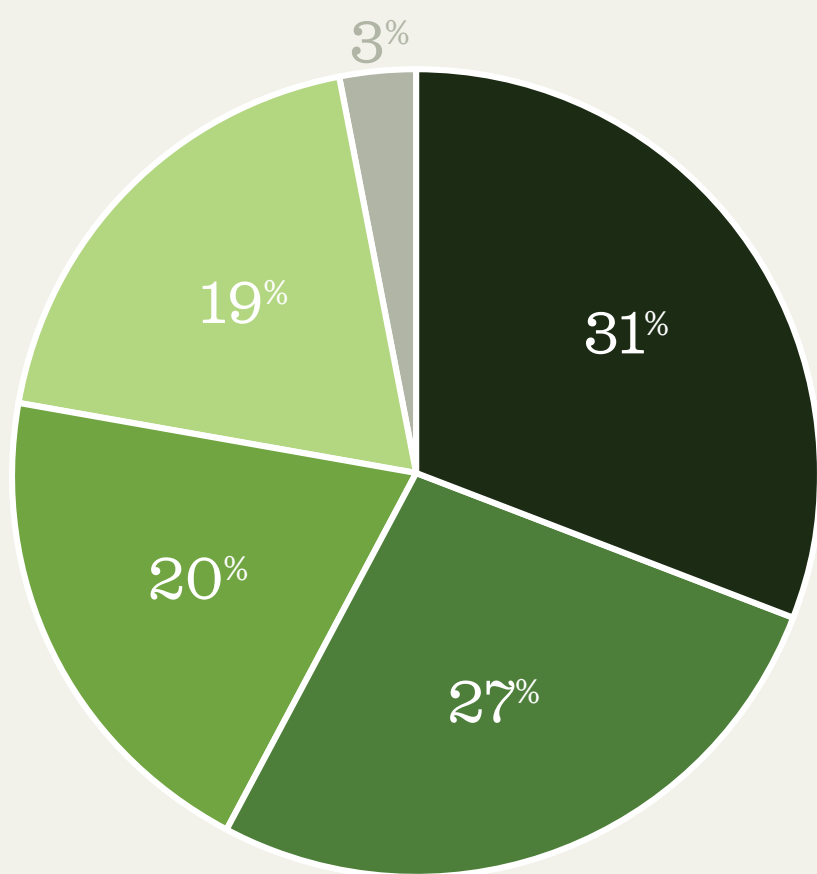


2023 INVESTMENT RESULTS

Ralph Segall,
Investment Council Since 1988,
ECF Board Chair 1992-1996

In our outlook for 2023, we wrote: “A song from the 60’s told us that ‘Mama said there would be days like this.’ Mama was a good student of financial markets!” But what Mama really didn’t know was just how volatile financial markets would prove to be in 2023. About the time these words were written, an incipient bank panic, prompted by the failure of Silicon Valley Bank, was nipped in the bud by swift countermeasures taken by the Federal Reserve to flood reserves into the banking system. Shortly thereafter, major announcements about Artificial Intelligence and its commercialization were made, and the rest was history.

At the time of the above, the stock market was unchanged for the year and bond prices were down. Immediately thereafter, however, both the stock and bonds markets went on a great run, accelerating even more in the fourth quarter. This second surge was over expectations that the Federal Reserve would start reducing interest rates as inflation appeared to be slowing down to their targeted range. When the total returns were tallied at year-end, the broad U.S. stock, as measured by the Wilshire 5000 Index (ECF’s benchmark for domestic equities) was up 26.1% and the bond market, measured by the Bloomberg—Barclay’s Aggregate Bond Index was up 5.53%. Although a dramatic advance, it was not an even one. Seven stocks in the S&P 500 Index rose over 70% last year, while the other 493 were up around 13%. As reported, the S&P Index rose 26% heavily influenced by the weight of the largest seven names. Measured by taking each stock at the same weight, the index was up 14%, respectable but not spectacular.



2023 FUNDS IN \$37.1 MILLION PORTFOLIO

- Agency Funds (44 funds for 26 organizations, \$11.6M)
- Fields of Interest Funds (20 funds, \$9.8M)
- ECF Unrestricted Funds (15 funds, \$7.4M)
- Donor Advised Funds (38 funds, \$7.1M)
- Donor Designated for Organizations (18 funds, \$1.2M)

2022-2023

Financial Data Summary

Net Assets	2023*	2022
Assets	39,051,978	34,975,020
Liabilities	11,020,391	10,055,618
Total Net	28,031,587	24,919,402

Revenue	2023*	2022
Contributions	4,057,215	3,403,548
Program Revenue	203,614	-41,979
Investment Results	4,586,303	-4,143,293
Total Revenue	8,847,132	-781,724

Expenses	2023*	2022
Program	3,986,699	3,697,050
Management	477,279	442,603
Fundraising	318,822	295,658
Total Expenses	4,782,800	4,435,311

Change in Net Assets	4,064,332	-5,217,035
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*Unaudited financials



2024 INVESTMENT OUTLOOK

Optimism in the financial market was running high as the year began on the promise of cuts in interest rates. To stay with our musical metaphor tradition, the relevant melody was “Fly Me to the Moon.” Data reports since the beginning of the year have suggested an economy that is not likely to come down for a landing anytime soon but to instead remain strong. Unemployment is down and wage growth is solid. To be sure, this is good news for the economy, but to the markets, paradoxically, it may not. This is leading the Federal Reserve to temper expectations of imminent rate cuts. The possibility that interest rates will stay unchanged or perhaps even rise is causing financial markets to pause.

What is an investor to do? Fortunately, for those whose investment objectives do not require active trading to be successful, the answer is simple. (Not easy to do, mind you, but simple to say.) Understand what this pool of capital is expected to provide, develop an asset allocation framework that gives you some confidence that those objectives are attainable, build it out, watch over it—not too anxiously, but nonetheless attentively—and let it grow and thrive.

Your Community Foundation



Sol Anderson
President & CEO



Robby Bardwell
Sr. Director
of Development



Jenna Beltrano
Program Officer,
Thriving Nonprofits



Karli Butler
Sr. Director of
Community Leadership



Rebecca Cacayuran
Sr. Vice President for
Community Investment



Lauren Davis
Program Officer,
Community Leadership



Cynthia Dominguez
Vice President of
Finance and Operations



Frank Nieto
Database Associate



Rebecca Parmet
Vice President
of Development



Andrea Schroering
Accounting Manager



Nadia Spock
Campaign Manager



Jenny Valdés Del Valle
Program Officer, E-Town



Julie Villagomez
Director of Operations



Akilah Wilson
Sr. Communications
Manager

**WE'RE
HERE
FOR
GOOD**

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Bettye Cohns

Bob Easter

Linda Gerber

Sandeep Ghaey

Sarah Gordon

David Graham

Lee Hart

Alli Henry

Barbara Hiller

Bart Rocca*

Chris Rothwell

Marcel Sallis

Anne Vela-Wagner

Michael Walker

Bryant Wallace

Todd Wiener*

Eric Witherspoon

*Board member term ended in 2023

“As Board Chair, I am committed to ensuring that ECF continues to provide valuable resources to Evanston. I believe that our work is critical to the success and growth of the community, and I am dedicated to seeing it through.”

Sharon Robinson
Board Chair



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