

EVANSTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



YOUR VISION OUR MISSION

Laying the Groundwork
for Local Systemic Change



ANNUAL
REPORT
2024

A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends of Evanston Community Foundation,

We are proud to share our 2024 Annual Report: *Your Vision, Our Mission: Laying the Groundwork for Local Systemic Change*.

This past year, we embraced the theme “*Your Vision. Our Mission.*” by elevating the voices of our community partners, neighbors, donors, and friends. These insights challenged us to listen more deeply, act more boldly, and lead with greater purpose.

As a result, we reimagined our grantmaking cycles to create a more streamlined, equitable process that better connects with marginalized communities. We also quadrupled our investment in local leadership, opening new pathways for emerging leaders to shape Evanston’s future.

Throughout it all, we remained committed to serving as trusted stewards of our community’s shared assets — ensuring every action we take helps build a stronger, more equitable Evanston.

We are honored to serve a community of engaged citizens who believe in the power of belonging and who strive for an Evanston where every voice matters. Guided by the three pillars that anchor our work — advancing justice, investing in Evanston, and empowering leaders — and energized by your vision, we move into 2025 with renewed hope and determination.

Together, we are not just imagining a more vibrant, just, and equitable Evanston — we are building it.

With Gratitude,

Sol Anderson, President & CEO

Sharon Robinson, Board Chair



Sol Anderson,
President & CEO



Sharon Robinson,
Board Chair



Our Impact

OUR MISSION

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

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

OUR VISION

We envision a vibrant, just, and equitable Evanston, where everyone feels valued and a sense of belonging.



2024 HIGHLIGHTS



\$1.3 Million in ECF led grants, 50% of which were recommended by the Community-Led grants committee.



\$3.2 Million in total grants (including Donor Advised Fund grants).



Provided Community-Led grants to 25 Evanston nonprofits and grassroots groups, 61% of this funding was unrestricted.



15 of our Community-Led grantees were grassroots organizations.



Expanded Leadership Evanston to the Ubuntu Leadership Institute (ULI) initiative, quadrupling our leadership programming.



Introduced first bilingual Community-Led Grant cycle in ECF's history.

Your Community Foundation



Sol Anderson
President & CEO



Alondra Apuli
Major Gifts Officer



Robby Bardwell
Sr. Director
of Development



Jenna Beltrano
Director of Programs,
Grantmaking



Karli Butler
VP of Community
Leadership & Investment



Lauren Davis
Program Manager -
Leadership



Cynthia Dominguez
Chief Operating
Officer



Keyana King
Executive
Assistant



Rebecca Parmet
VP of
Development



Frank Nieto
Database
Associate



Andrea Schroering
Accounting Manager



Nadia Spock
Donor & Fund
Services Manager



Jenny Valdés Del Valle
Bilingual Program
Manager - Grantmaking



Julie Villagomez
Director of
Operations



Akilah Wilson
Sr. Communications
Manager

**WE'RE HERE
FOR GOOD**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Cindy Castro

Bettye Cohns

Robert Easter

Matt Feldman

Linda Gerber

Sandeep Ghaey

Sarah Gordon - Treasurer

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Chris Rothwell

Marcel Sallis

Larry Singer - Past Chair

Anne Vela-Wagner

Michael Walker

Bryant Wallace - Secretary

Eric Witherspoon

INVESTING IN EVANSTON



For now and for generations to come, we strive to be a supportive partner to Evanston's people, non-profit sector, grassroots groups, and small businesses with a charitable purpose.

EMPOWERING LEADERS



We are committed to expanding leadership development opportunities and building a culture that embraces the knowledge and skills of all Evanstonians.

ADVANCING JUSTICE



We are committed to making systemic change in Evanston, including channeling resources to parts of our community that have been most impacted by historical injustices.





Supporting Grassroots Organizations to Drive Meaningful Impact

Our mission is to mobilize community resources to drive systemic social change and build a thriving and resilient Evanston. One of the ways we do that is through our **Community-Led grantmaking**. Based on community input, review, and feedback, we are putting dollars in the hands of nonprofit leaders that are closest to Evanston's most pressing needs. By taking this community-led approach, we have been able to successfully incorporate the input of our neighbors with the needs of our nonprofit community.

“But, what about the organizations that are making an impact without an official 501c3 nonprofit status?”

This question became a focal point of our 2024 grantmaking efforts as we worked to make our funding more accessible. As such, we proudly expanded our Community-Led grantmaking cycles to be available to grassroots organizations with an operating budget under \$500,000.

This expansion of our Community-Led grantmaking cycles underscores our gratitude to the changemakers in our community. Collectively, these entities not only represent some of the best parts of Evanston, but are also often the first line of defense in times of health, environmental, and social crises.

For now, and generations to come, we strive to be a supportive partner to Evanston's non-profit sector, grassroots groups, and small businesses with a charitable purpose.



We invested
\$638,143
through 27 Community-Led grants to 25 organizations.
15 of these organizations were grassroots organizations.

WHY WE CARE:

We are dedicated to leading philanthropic mobilization strategies that are carefully crafted to respond to the most pressing and emerging needs in our community, for today and years ahead.



Expanding Leadership for All

Marked by the launch of Leadership Evanston (LE) in 1992, the Evanston Community Foundation boldly embarked on a journey to harness the brilliance and experience of our community to strengthen Evanston now and forever. For over three decades, LE has provided Evanston with skilled and knowledgeable individuals who take responsibility for the community and its future. Now, 32 years later, we are proud to build on this legacy via our newest initiative, the Ubuntu Leadership Institute (ULI). Through ULI we look forward to continuing to embrace the knowledge and skills of our community members and, moreover, make leadership accessible for all.

UBUNTU LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE AN ECF INITIATIVE

LEADERSHIP EVANSTON

Signature Leadership Evanston is a 10-month learning program that immerses participants in Evanston's history while providing an opportunity to take on a community-based project of their choice.

LEADERSHIP CIRCLES

Our Leadership Circles provide space for Evanston's professionals to network and connect with respective groups.

BOARD LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Board Leadership Training is a cohort style professional development program that equips community members for service on local government and nonprofit boards, taskforces, and commissions.

LEGACY LEADERS NETWORK

Legacy Leaders Network is an online digital platform that allows LE Alum to connect to unique learning and networking opportunities.

ULI officially launched at the foundation's Community Impact Celebration held on November 7, 2024. In addition to uplifting the work and impact of our talented community partners and grantees, we were proud to introduce exciting new programming such as: **Board Leadership Training**, **Leadership Circles** affinity groups, and **Legacy Leaders Network**—an exclusive online digital platform for LE alum.



2024 Leadership Evanston Participants

Click the play button to watch a short ULI announcement video.



WHY WE CARE

Empowering a network of socially conscious and community-oriented leaders is critical to advancing a just and resilient Evanston. While we don't know what the challenges tomorrow will bring, we do know the path to a sustainable future will demand diverse, equitable leadership across all parts of our community.

OUR PATH
TO ULI



“I thought I already knew everything about Evanston. I’ve lived here all my life! It’s sometimes good to be wrong. There was a lot I didn’t know about city government. For the first time I got to see how all the pieces of Evanston fit together. I got to see the bigger picture.”

-Denise Martin

1990

ECF launches an annual nonprofit workshop series that highlights the need for community-centric leadership development.

1992

ECF welcomes first Leadership Evanston Cohort led by Carol Mullins.

1999

Marybeth Schroeder is hired as Leadership Evanston Director. Schroeder goes on to serve the Foundation and the Community as the VP of Programs for over 20 years.

2014

Jennifer Moran begins serving as Director of Leadership Evanston.

2016

ECF reaches new milestone with over 600 LE graduates.

2022

ECF celebrates 30th Leadership Evanston anniversary & Karli Butler is named Director of Leadership Evanston.

2023

ECF convenes an ULI taskforce in response to community-need for more leadership development programming.

2024

ECF officially launches ULI initiative while the 32nd class of LE graduates and is welcomed into our 850+ strong LE alumni network.



2024 Leadership Evanston Public Service Honorees

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)





Language Equity in Grantmaking

Padres Empoderados — which translates to “Empowered Parents” — is a local grassroots organization offering vital mental health workshops and trainings entirely in Spanish. Like many grassroots organizations, Padres Empoderados sought financial resources from the foundation to continue their work. However, the already daunting task of completing a grant application was found to be especially challenging due to a language barrier as a Spanish speaking organization.

As a foundation, we quickly recognized this as an opportunity to deepen our commitment to community and examine our relationship to equity — in this particular case, language equity. This led us to a groundbreaking decision to proudly launch our first-ever fully bilingual Community-Led grant cycle. Not only were our 2024 Community-Led Grantmaking applications available in Spanish but, the entire grant cycle, from promotion to review.



Padres Empoderados at a Mental Health Workshop

This achievement underscores our commitment to boldly creating a just and resilient Evanston where every voice is heard, and every person has equitable access to the opportunities that ECF provides. For Now, Forever, and For Everyone.



Jenny Valdés Del Valle, Bilingual Program Manager - Grantmaking

WHY WE CARE: A NATIONAL & LOCAL ISSUE

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the current number of Spanish speakers in the US comes second to only Mexico; and is set to rise as the US becomes an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-lingual nation. Moreover, Evanston’s Latino population has doubled since the year 2000 and currently stands at 12.6% of all Evanston residents. We’re committed to meeting the ever-changing needs of our community’s landscape and ensuring equitable access to ECF’s resources.

2024 Grant Recipients – \$1.3 Million in ECF Grants

Congratulations to our 2024 Grant Recipients. We are so grateful for your partnership in creating a vibrant, just, and equitable Evanston!

**Indicates grants recommended by Community-Led grants committee*

E-TOWN INNOVATION GRANTS*

Club Tree'd House
Evanston First Alliance
Padres Empoderados
Books & Breakfast
Evanston Health Department
Boys Hope/Girls Hope of Illinois
Center for Independent Futures
Farmworker & Landscaper Advocacy Project
PEER Services, Inc.

EMERGING NONPROFITS/ GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION GRANTS*

Artsie, Inc.
Evanston Latinos
Evanston ASPA
Latinos en Evanston Northshore
Family Promise Chicago Northshore
Kuumba Evanston
Open Studio Project
Padres Empoderados
Purple Line Adventure Play
Tech Allstar

NONPROFIT GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS*

Books & Breakfast
Erie Family Health Centers - Evanston/Skokie
Farmworker & Landscaper Advocacy Project
Infant Welfare Society of Evanston
James B Moran Center for Youth Advocacy
McGaw YMCA
Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum
Young, Black, & Lit

BUILDING THE FUTURE GRANTS

Farmworker & Landscaper Advocacy Project
Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum
Interfaith Action of Evanston
Open Studio Project
Shorefront Legacy Center



COLLECTIVE & ENDURING INITIATIVES

Connections for the Homeless
YWCA Northshore
Reparations Stakeholder Authority of Evanston

COMMUNITY CATALYST GRANTS

City of Evanston
Evanston Cradle to Career
Evanston Early Childhood Council Fiscal
Sponsors: Childcare Network of Evanston
Evanston Community Cooperative
Open Studio Project
Evanston Public Library
Mudlark Theater
Shorefront Legacy Center

ROOT2FRUIT BOOTCAMP

C&W Foundation
Evanston Grows
Evanston CASE
Evanston Latinos

PARTNERS FOR THE FUTURE GRANT

Rebuilding Exchange



OUR PARTNERS

Our work is made possible by partners like you.
Thank you for your support in 2024!

GRANTMAKING PARTNERS

The Airey Family	Joe “Butch” Martin Fund
B&J Fund	Northwestern University Dance Marathon (NUDM)
The Brenner Family	Plumtree Fund
David D’Arcy and Judy Freitag	Rotary Club of Evanston
Equity and Opportunity Fund	Rubens Family Foundation
Julie Fenton and Stuart Chanen	Renee Schleicher
Hagerty Altenbernd Fund for Evanston	Rosie Rees and Gene Servillo
Cheryl Kaplan	Kristen and Michael Watson
L&JB Community Fund	Weisblat Family Fund
Jessie and Douglas MacDonald	Aaron William Davidson Fund
The Mammel Foundation	Rosenbaum Witt Family Fund

THE IMPACT COLLECTIVE

Did you know you can support our mission year-round by joining The Impact Collective? Become a monthly donor now and be a part of a community that nurtures the future of Evanston. *For Now, Forever, and For Everyone!*

MAKE AN
IMPACT!

evanstonforever.org/giving

SELECT “RECURRING DONATION AMOUNT” TO JOIN THE IMPACT COLLECTIVE

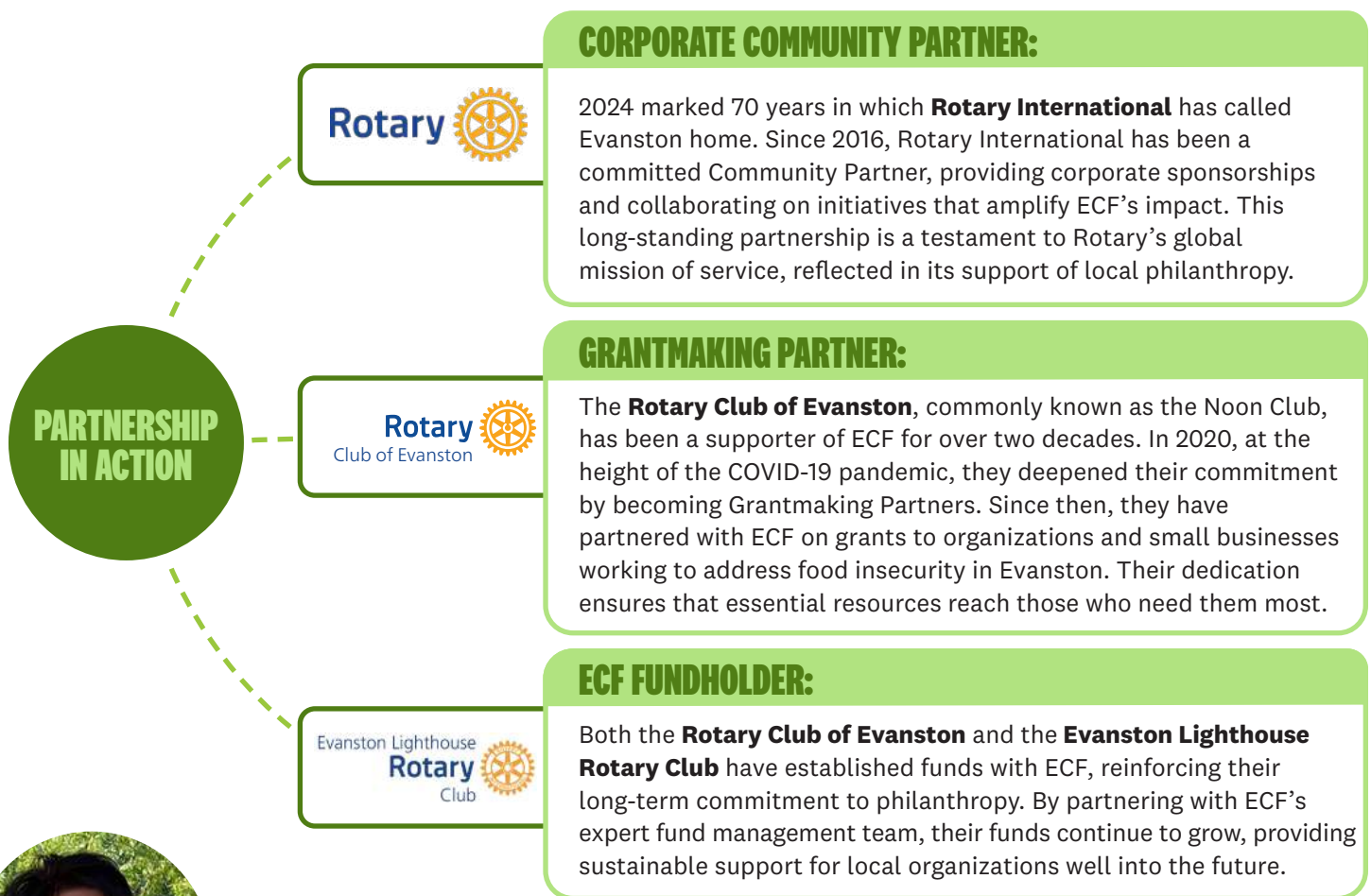
CORPORATE COMMUNITY PARTNERS





Rotary x ECF

Rotary—through its global headquarters and local clubs in Evanston—is a dedicated partner in strengthening our community. Across multiple touchpoints, Rotary International, the Rotary Club of Evanston (Noon Club), and the Evanston Lighthouse Rotary Club work alongside the Evanston Community Foundation to expand philanthropic impact, foster local leadership, and ensure sustainable support for organizations addressing critical needs. Their commitment is woven into the fabric of ECF’s mission, building a thriving and resilient Evanston.



IMPACT COLLECTIVE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Linda Gerber, Secretary of the **Evanston Lighthouse Rotary Club** and a dedicated ECF Board Member, embodies the Rotary spirit of service. As an Impact Collective member, she champions ECF’s mission with her ongoing, monthly support—ensuring that philanthropy remains a driving force for change in Evanston.

Rotary’s multifaceted partnership with ECF is a powerful example of collective impact—working together to build a stronger, more resilient community for all.

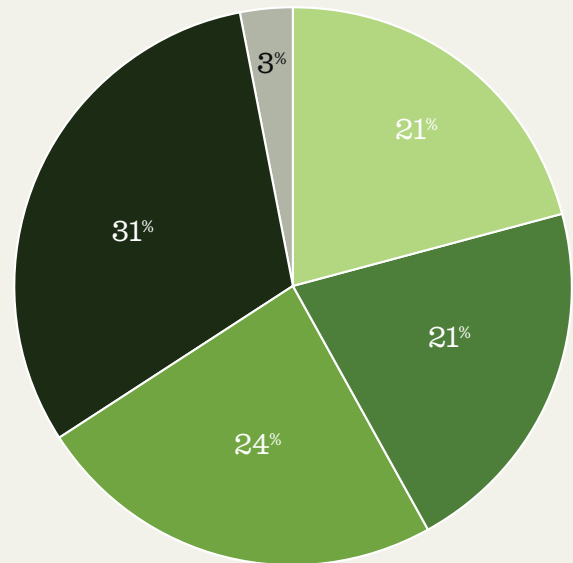
Our Financials

2024 REVENUE & EXPENSES:

NET ASSETS	2024*	2023
Assets	44,916,265	38,909,023
Liabilities	13,398,349	10,921,086
TOTAL NET	31,517,916	27,987,937
REVENUE	2024*	2023
Contributions	7,209,214	4,188,103
Program Revenue	(281)	(9,933)
Investment Results	4,293,787	3,329,042
TOTAL NET	11,502,720	7,507,212
EXPENSES	2024*	2023
Program	4,746,327	3,597,744
Management	630,361	526,258
Fundraising	397,104	314,675
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,773,792	4,438,677
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	5,728,928	3,068,535

*Unaudited financials

2024 FUNDS UNDER MANAGEMENT



\$44.3 MILLION PORTFOLIO

- Agency Funds (88 funds for 26 organizations, \$13.8M)
- Fields of Interest Funds (21 funds, \$10.7M)
- ECF Unrestricted Funds (17 funds, \$9.4M)
- Donor Advised Funds (37 funds, \$9.1M)
- Donor Designated for Organizations (17 funds, \$1.3M)



Cynthia Dominguez
Chief Operating Officer

“We truly approach all relationships as partnerships. We lead boldly with our commitment to racial justice, leveraging resources in a multitude of ways to support nonprofits, donors, and the community as a whole. Whether you’re a donor looking to get in touch with what Evanston’s greatest needs are, or if you’re a nonprofit seeking how to use financial tools to build long term sustainability, ECF’s broad scope and depth of knowledge allows us to support many needs. And we’re always adjusting to where community needs us most.”

-Cynthia Dominguez



Ralph Segall
Investment Council Chair

“Many people have asked us how the developments in Washington have affected how we manage the Foundation’s investments. We tell them that ‘Evanston Forever’ is more than part of our e-mail address; it is an underlying element of our investment philosophy, and our investment horizon extends far beyond the current events occurring there.”

-Ralph Segall

\$3.2 million in total grants
(including Donor Advised Fund grants)



WATCH NOW:



Liz Jansen, Community Impact
Celebration Speech, 2024

**“THE EVANSTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
IS NOT YOUR TYPICAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.
THEY REALLY HAVE AN EAR TO THE GROUND AND
KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING IN COMMUNITY.”**

Liz Jansen,
Co-Founder, Women Unite! &
ECF Community Partner



For Now, Forever, For Everyone

evanstonforever.org