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Evanston Community Foundation announces more than \$800,000 in annual grants

Katie Pach/Daily Senior Staffer, [Kristina Karisch](#), Assistant City Editor

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Evanston Community Foundation president and CEO Monique Brunson Jones speaks at an event Tuesday. ECF announced more than \$800,000 worth of grants at an annual celebration.

The Evanston Community Foundation awarded a number of strategic grants at an annual celebration on Tuesday. Members of ECF presented awards at the ceremony — held at The Crystal Ballroom and Lounge, 529 Davis St. — and announced grants for local community organizations. The grants totaled more than \$800,000, according to a news release.

“In our 30th year, it’s very exciting that we are growing the grants

that the Foundation has awarded since it began,” vice president for programs Marybeth Schroeder said in the release. “The amount nonprofits are receiving is the highest ever ... allowing us to be even more responsive to the needs and opportunities in Evanston.”

At Tuesday’s event, ECF president and CEO Monique Brunson Jones said while her organization functions as an intermediary, it also builds relationships with donors who want their contributions to remain in Evanston.

“Evanston is a system that cannot be pulled apart,” Jones said. “(ECF) not only funds programs and ideas, we work closely with organizations over time in trusted relationships to get it right. ... Our middleman role affords us the opportunity to help organizations build their impact, grow effectively, advocate for change, collaborate and partner efficiently.”

ECF awarded \$333,435 in responsive grants to 26 organizations that serve Evanston residents at Tuesday’s ceremony. Northwestern University Dance Marathon has partnered with ECF — its secondary beneficiary — since 1997 and contributed \$109,000 to this year’s responsive grants.

NUDM’s executive co-chairs serve on ECF’s responsive grants committee and help select annual recipients. This year, grants were awarded to organizations like Connections for the Homeless, the Erie Family Health Center and the Evanston Public Library, among others.

SESP junior Jamie Newman, one of the executive co-chairs, said NUDM’s partnership with ECF allows students to step out of the “Northwestern bubble.”

“This partnership gives our dancers a chance to break out of this

bubble and give back to the community that we love to call home for these four years,” Newman said.

Executive co-chair and Weinberg junior Daniel Nussbaum also shared NUDM’s primary beneficiary for next year, Cradles to Crayons, at the event. Cradles to Crayons provides young children who are either homeless or come from low-income families with essential items, such as clothes and books.

“Our tagline for NUDM 2018 is ‘Grow Together,’” Newman said. “What that means is that we are so excited for NUDM, Cradles to Crayons and ECF to grow together this year.”

Email: kristinakarisch2020@u.northwestern.edu

Twitter: @kristinakarisch