

# OUR neighborhood

Evanston-Northwestern  
Community News  
Summer 2016

NEWS

“ There’s a lot of resources at your fingertips that would normally cost, like, thousands of dollars. I’ve made friends here, and it’s nice because everyone is the same age.”

Kaila  
McGaw YMCA MetaMedia participant



## Building Creativity and Confidence

“ My parents have computers but nothing like this,” says Kaila, a seventh-grader at Evanston’s Chute Middle School. She uses the technology at the McGaw YMCA’s MetaMedia center after school.

“We really strive to make this a youth-driven space,” says Sarita Smith, McGaw’s director of youth enrichment. “This isn’t standard programming—it’s based on youth interest and what they’re into.”

The MetaMedia space aims to make learning fun, with students free to explore without worrying about making mistakes.

Some students come ready to build their own computers, while others just want to hang out. One student, using an idea from a do-it-yourself magazine, disassembled an iMac computer to create a fish tank. Other students have coded their own websites and produced videos, and the music studio instructor rarely needs to be in the studio because students have learned so much.

MetaMedia got its start through a partnership between McGaw, Northwestern’s FUSE program, and the nonprofit Youth and Opportunity United (Y.O.U.).

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WARD PROFILE: FIFTH WARD

### Just a few blocks west of campus lies Evanston's Fifth Ward.

The diverse, vibrant area faces challenges, including economic inequality, but is committed to improving the community.

"The Fifth Ward believes in owning our blocks and neighborhood," says ward alderman Delores Holmes. "As residents, we all have to commit to the concept of 'My Yard, My Block, My Ward, My Community' in order to have a stronger, safer city today and in the future."

To that end, a new recording studio for youth at Gibbs-Morrison Cultural Center, supported by Northwestern, will soon open, increasing opportunities for residents.

Nearby, the nonprofit agency Y.O.U. is building a 12,600-square-foot facility. Its labs, gathering spaces, and teaching garden will support Evanston children's growth and curiosity.

A grassroots movement in the ward aims to take collective ownership of local problems and solutions, particularly regarding violence. The city's Evanston Own It program encourages residents to be more engaged in all aspects of community life to ensure everyone lives in a safe environment.

Faith leaders are key partners in this initiative and recently hosted Evanston Sings, a charity choir concert featuring 250 volunteer performers. Proceeds were donated to the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program to support jobs for at-risk youth.

## Summer Jobs for Evanston Teens

Each summer, Northwestern provides seasonal jobs and internships for Evanston high school students. Some of these students work at the University through the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program. Since 1992, the program has addressed the need for summer jobs for at-risk youth, providing nine weeks of entry-level work experience, life skills training, mental health counseling, and financial literacy guidance.

Procurement and Payment Services is one of the many Northwestern departments that participated in the program this summer. The department's 2016 intern, Tianna Henry, will be a junior at Evanston Township High School, and her goal is to attend Northwestern after graduating.

"Tianna did everything, from working with small businesses in Evanston to understanding how the bid process works at Northwestern," says Gwen Turner, director of procurement diversity. "She gave us as much as we gave her."

**“We needed an intern, and we thought this would be a great opportunity not only to engage someone who lives in Evanston but also to enhance our relationships with the community.”**

**Gwen Turner**  
Director of Procurement Diversity,  
Northwestern University

Henry says her experience at Northwestern has been valuable: "I've learned more about becoming a team player."

Many departments also hire local high school interns outside the mayor's program. The Office of General Counsel hosted Spencer Nabors, who graduated from ETHS this year and is interested in a law career. Her internship has been an opportunity to get a preview of a legal environment.

"Spencer is an amazingly talented individual whose work has been outstanding," says Philip Harris, vice president and general counsel. "She has truly been an asset to our team."

Nabors is thankful for the opportunity. "The team of leaders I have learned from has been exceptional," she says. "I feel more prepared now to pursue my career aspirations."

**TO LEARN MORE** about the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program, call Kevin Brown, youth and adult program manager for Evanston, at 847-448-8042.



Recent ETHS graduate Spencer Nabors hopes her internship in Northwestern's Office of General Counsel will pave the way toward a career in law.

## MetaMedia

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Active McGaw members Chuck Lewis and Penny Sebring helped create MetaMedia after being inspired by a similar space for high schoolers at Chicago's Harold Washington Library. "I thought MetaMedia would be a way to reconnect McGaw with middle school students and to stimulate further collaborations," Lewis says. "It's proving to be successful in doing both."

Through their Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation, they donated more than \$1 million toward a community effort to build young people's skills in science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM).

Northwestern helped by applying its interest-driven FUSE programming to the new space. Developed at the University's School of Education and Social Policy, FUSE's research-based programs engage preteens and teens while fostering skills in areas such as robotics, electronics, biotechnology, and app development.

"MetaMedia truly speaks to the power of partnership to build a transformational learning environment for our community's youth," says Y.O.U. executive director Seth Green. "Kids are growing their minds, their creativity, and their confidence here in spectacular ways."

Most attendees come from Evanston, but the space is open, free of charge, to anyone in grades six through eight. With the program's motto of "hang out, mess around, geek out" in mind, instructors create tinkering stations that often involve multiple STEAM concepts.

"When it opened, MetaMedia met a critical need in Evanston," says McGaw president and CEO Mark A. Dennis Jr. "These young people are building positive relationships with peers and staff, all while being exposed to academic skills that will boost their chances of future success."



On an average day, 30 to 50 young people "hang out, mess around, and geek out" in the MetaMedia space at Evanston's McGaw YMCA. More than half of the city's 2,500 middle school students have come to the center at least once.

Beyond building skills, another goal is to create pathways to classes at Evanston Township High School.

Smith hears the same comment again and again from people who'd been to McGaw before MetaMedia. "They constantly say they wish this had been here when they were kids," she says. "It feels great to know we are providing not just a safe space but also an opportunity to bridge the digital divide."

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**TO LEARN MORE** about MetaMedia, visit [mcgawymca.org/metamedia](http://mcgawymca.org/metamedia) or call 847-475-7400.

### CONNECT WITH US

Our email newsletter includes a monthly community events calendar. To sign up, email Carol Chen at [carol.chen@northwestern.edu](mailto:carol.chen@northwestern.edu).

Do you have a business or non-profit in Evanston? We can help increase your visibility, facilitate connections to the Northwestern community, and find student volunteers.

For details, visit our website at [www.northwestern.edu/communityrelations](http://www.northwestern.edu/communityrelations) or contact Neighborhood and Community Relations executive director Alan Anderson at [alan.anderson@northwestern.edu](mailto:alan.anderson@northwestern.edu) or 847-467-5762.

## Divvy Rolls into Our Community

Then Divvy stations opened in Evanston in July, including two on Northwestern's campus. The popular bike sharing service allows riders to take half-hour trips, borrowing and dropping off bikes at any available station. More than 500 rides were logged in the first week.

The University partnered with the city by sponsoring two campus stations, one near the Technological Institute and a second near Norris University Center.

Another station at Sheridan Road and Chicago Avenue, near the Weber Arch, is also convenient for students and faculty.

"It's through our partnership with Northwestern that we were able to increase the total stations in the city from 8 to 10," says Katherine Knapp, transportation and mobility coordinator for the city of Evanston.

In 2014, a group of Northwestern engineering students worked with city staff for a class project analyzing potential bike travel demand. They generated ideas for campus



locations, and their proposals, along with data from Divvy, were used to determine actual station sites.

Knapp says the city views the Divvy system as inclusive of Northwestern but ultimately beneficial to the larger community. "For people who don't use a car as their primary mode of transportation, it's a tool they can use to get around, and it helps create a more robust transportation ecosystem."

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**TO LEARN MORE** about Divvy in Evanston, visit [BikeEvanston.org/Divvy](http://BikeEvanston.org/Divvy) and follow [@BikeEvanston](https://twitter.com/BikeEvanston) on Twitter.

### STAFF PROFILE: GWEN TURNER



Northwestern welcomes Gwen Turner as its new director of procurement diversity.

Turner helps the University create inclusion and opportunities for diverse vendors, including local and small businesses and those owned by minorities and women. Northwestern's collaboration with diverse businesses supports the creation of jobs and increases access to education and healthcare in the community.

The University values innovation from its vendors, Turner says, noting that she looks for partners who are willing to be nimble and focused on quality.

"I do the work I do because it brings real impact," she adds. "It's great to be part of a process that allows Northwestern to create, develop, and support small businesses that fuel the local economy."

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**TO LEARN MORE** about Northwestern's procurement process for small and diverse businesses, reach out to Turner at [gwendolyn.turner@northwestern.edu](mailto:gwendolyn.turner@northwestern.edu) or 847-467-6333, or visit [northwestern.edu/procurement/vendors](http://northwestern.edu/procurement/vendors).

### EVENTS



#### COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 7-8 P.M.

Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Parasol Room. A discussion between residents and Northwestern representatives about preparations for the school year.

#### EVANSTON MASHUP

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 5:30-9 P.M.

Norris University Center, East Lawn. An Evanston business and community mixer featuring conversations, food, and music.

#### KITS, CATS, AND KIDS BLOCK PARTY

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15,

4:45-7:45 P.M. Downtown Evanston (Sherman Avenue and Clark Street). A family-friendly celebration of the partnership between Evanston and Northwestern.



#### EVANSTON DAY FOOTBALL GAME

NORTHWESTERN VS. DUKE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 7-10 P.M.

Ryan Field. Northwestern celebrates Evanston and city leaders as the Wildcats take on the Blue Devils.