

OUR neighborhood

Evanston-Northwestern
Community News
Summer 2017

NEWS



Rebuilding Together

John, a longtime Evanston resident who'd been housebound for years, couldn't believe it when he heard that volunteers would be cleaning up the jungle of weeds and waste in his yard. Maria, a neighbor who provided daily care for John, assured him it was really going to happen.

Just a week before the big day, John unexpectedly passed away. He left his house to Maria, who joined the volunteers the next weekend as they dug up tree roots and cleaned gutters, slowly revealing a home long shrouded in shrubbery.

The work last spring was part of Northwestern University's second Rebuilding Together event, which improved four Evanston homes in need of repair at no cost to homeowners. A nonprofit group, Rebuilding Together draws on a network of both skilled and unskilled volunteers and receives support from contractors, local businesses, and civic and faith-based organizations.

Northwestern's volunteer team of more than 75 included members of the University's facilities management department, who lent their extensive carpentry, repair, and maintenance skills, and student athletes from Northwestern men's swim team. Other volunteers helped with yard work, cleanup, and painting.

Homes needing repair are often owned by seniors on fixed incomes who want to stay in their neighborhoods but need a little help. "These are people who serve as anchors in their neighborhoods," says John D'Angelo, Northwestern's vice president for facilities management. "They're important senior members of the community who still contribute to their block and their neighborhood. Now they can be a neighbor just a little bit longer."

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WARD PROFILE: SEVENTH WARD

Home to many residents, businesses, and popular destinations, Evanston's Seventh Ward curves around the northeast corner of the city.

"The Seventh Ward contributes to Evanston's vibrancy with a bit of everything," says ward alderman Eleanor Revelle.

With homes among gardens and parks, along with a public golf course, much of the area has a residential, suburban feel.

The thriving Central Street business corridor fuels the local economy and fosters job growth. Many businesses are anchored in the community and have been passed down within families for generations.

The ward is also home to a hospital, several District 65 schools, the Evanston Art Center's new facility, landmarks like the Grosse Point Lighthouse, public transit stops, and Northwestern's Evanston campus.

"We work together to address the challenges that come with the many diverse uses of our ward and enjoy sharing the result with the rest of the community," Revelle says.

Upcoming improvements, such as extending protected bike lanes on Sheridan Road, will continue to enhance the ward's commitment to sustainability and livability.

Summer ABCs

For five weeks this summer, Evanston teenagers helped incoming kindergarten students learn the alphabet. The ABC Boosters program partners young children with high schoolers from Evanston's Youth Job Center, who work with the children to help them recognize their letters and improve literacy.

The program is part of a citywide goal to ensure students enter school ready to learn, says Sheila Merry, executive director of Evanston Cradle to Career. Over the summer, each high schooler tutors three to five children in basic early literacy skills at sites around the city. And, Merry says, "it's a summer job for the high school students, who are trained by library staff."

“Spending the summer making sure children are ready to be in school gives them a greater push.”

Formed through a partnership of organizations across Evanston, Cradle to Career includes Northwestern, the park district, the police and health departments, the public library, and nonprofit groups—all with a priority to close the achievement gap among Evanston schoolchildren. In 2012, an anonymous donor charged one of those nonprofits—the Evanston Community Foundation—to develop a plan to support early childhood literacy.

"We convened our partners to discuss the best use of the funds," says Monique Brunson Jones, the foundation's president, "and the public library suggested a summer learning program."



Studies show that children can lose up to two months of academic skills during the summer, and disadvantaged students experience this loss more significantly due to disproportionate access to summer enrichment experiences.

The foundation is focused on every child being ready for kindergarten and every youth being ready for work, Brunson says, and the Boosters program helps accomplish both goals. "The Evanston school districts, the library, and the Youth Job Center all understand that when children are not prepared for kindergarten, it takes them longer to reach their goals," she adds. "Spending the summer making sure they're ready gives them a greater push."

In 2016 the Boosters employed 29 teenagers who worked with 69 incoming kindergartners. For extra practice, young children receive a family literacy kit from the Evanston Public Library so they can work on their ABCs with parents, too.

TO LEARN MORE about ABC Boosters, email [Laura Antolin](mailto:lantolin@cityofevanston.org), children's outreach librarian, at lantolin@cityofevanston.org.

Becoming Gentlemen

Sixteen 12-year-old boys from Evanston's Nichols Middle School learned about becoming adults in a new pilot program last spring. The Officer and Gentlemen Academy, a partnership between the Evanston Police Department and District 65, mentored boys in sixth through eighth grades.



responsibility," Howard says. Activities included lessons on tying a tie and using chopsticks at a fine-dining restaurant, along with working together to complete a ropes course.

The academy ran for 12 weeks, concluding with a graduation ceremony. Northwestern staff

Led by Nichols Middle School principal Adrian Harries, Evanston police officer Adam Howard, and District 65 student engagement coordinator Bryon Harris, the academy gave students the opportunity to interact with community leaders who taught them about leadership and entrepreneurship, etiquette, life skills, and the importance of building positive relationships.

volunteered for the academy's pilot phase, and the program may expand to more Evanston schools in the future.

"As influential figures in education and law enforcement," Howard says, "we felt compelled to educate, inspire, and empower our youth to strive for success."

"Our objective is to bridge the gap between confidence and success," says Howard, a member of the police department's community policing unit. "We strive to inspire our young men to establish a lifelong brotherhood and develop strong leadership qualities."

At the once-a-week sessions, students were required to wear a shirt and tie. "This not only educates them on the importance of dressing professionally but also establishes



TO LEARN MORE about the Officer and Gentlemen Academy, email Bryon Harris at harrisb@district65.net.

CONNECT WITH US

Our email newsletter includes a monthly Northwestern events calendar. Email Carol Chen at carol.chen@northwestern.edu to sign up.

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 northwestern.edu/communityrelations or contact Neighborhood and Community Relations executive director Alan Anderson at alan.anderson@northwestern.edu or 847-467-5762.

STAFF PROFILE: GREG KLAIBER



Northwestern welcomes Evanston native Greg Klaiber as director of emergency management.

Klaiber leads the University's

mitigation and preparation plans for hazards that can threaten the campus community, including severe weather, natural disasters, active violence, and chemical spills.

He trains staff to implement an emergency response framework and manage the University's emergency operations centers. Klaiber also works closely with Evanston's police and fire departments to share information and resources.

"Our preparations enhance the community's ability to persevere through both foreseeable and unexpected challenges," he says, "and help ensure the safety of all who live, study, and work on campus."

Klaiber looks forward to working with campus and community partners to continue to strengthen Northwestern's resiliency.

TO LEARN MORE about Northwestern's emergency preparedness, visit northwestern.edu/emergency-management or email gregklaiber@northwestern.edu.

Volunteers Help Evanston Neighbors

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Sharon Riley, executive director of Rebuilding Together North Suburban Chicago, looks forward to continuing the partnership with Northwestern and Evanston, saying that “it’s an honor to have so many dedicated volunteers who are passionate about improving the homes and lives of some of our neighbors in greatest need.”

“I have yet to get to the end of a build day, even though we’re sweaty and tired, when I wasn’t in tears,” D’Angelo says.

One repaired home is owned by a retiree who had worked in the community for several years. Now on a fixed income, she was unable to afford essential repairs. Volunteers rebuilt her damaged and hazardous back porch and stairs, replaced an old backyard fence, and repaired broken gutters.

Another of this spring’s repairs was to a metal accessibility ramp that had developed holes, causing the resident to be thrown out of her wheelchair. Volunteers rebuilt the ramp, allowing the resident increased mobility.

Audrey Thompson, ombudsman for the City of Evanston, helps identify homes that need assistance. “These residents have sometimes outlived their own children and relatives,” she says. “When they’re on a fixed income, they can’t get large repairs completed.”

Thompson also receives referrals from aldermen, who don’t want to see their constituents displaced. “It helps the overall neighborhood when we’re able to say this isn’t a problem property anymore,” she says.

For Maria, seeing her neighbor’s beloved home restored was bittersweet. “Mr. John said that it was too nice to be true,” she said to volunteers, “but I do not have words to explain how nice you are.”



TO LEARN MORE about Rebuilding Together, contact Jessica Bollhoefer, director of strategic initiatives in facilities management, at jessica.bollhoefer@northwestern.edu.

EVENTS

'KITS, 'CATS, AND KIDS BLOCK PARTY THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 4:45–7:30 P.M.

Sherman Avenue between Church and Clark Streets. Kick off the school year with a rollicking free celebration of Evanston and Northwestern.



MEN'S FOOTBALL **NORTHWESTERN VS. BOWLING GREEN** SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 6:30 P.M.

Ryan Field. Cheer on the 'Cats at home as we celebrate Evanston Day. Ticket prices vary.

COMPANY
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3–
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19
Barber Theater, 30 Arts Circle Drive. Watch Stephen Sondheim’s trailblazing dark-comedy musical about a confirmed bachelor and his married friends. Tickets \$6-30.