

OUR neighborhood

Evanston-Northwestern
Community News
Winter 2018

NEWS



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Nichole Pinkard

associate professor of learning sciences at Northwestern’s School of Education and Social Policy

Coding in the Classroom

This past December, Evanston elementary and middle school students pursued computer coding challenges as part of the new Code65 program, a monthlong computer science initiative.

Driven by Evanston/Skokie School District 65’s EvanSTEM project, in partnership with Northwestern University’s Digital Youth Network (DYN), Code65 is designed to introduce students to key coding skills, inspire creative and critical thinking, and help them create—rather than just use—technology.

While the Code.org annual Hour of Code Nationwide Challenge recommended starting with an hour, Code65 took that a step further by offering students a month of coding challenges at 13 district schools, using an online learning portal powered by DYN, a platform designed to help children become digitally literate.

Code65 is “a creative way to make sure all students have opportunities to learn coding skills that are grounded in content and contexts that they find meaningful and enjoyable,” says DYN cofounder Nichole Pinkard,

associate professor of learning sciences at Northwestern’s School of Education and Social Policy.

After poring over the Hour of Code activity catalog, the DYN team selected activities representing five categories of coding: iPad friendly, Snap/Scratch, mobile apps, Javascript, and Python. The team also sprinkled a few entry-level puzzles created by Northwestern faculty into the mix.

Throughout December, students in second through eighth grades pursued the activities in either their coding, library, or math

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WARD PROFILE: THIRD WARD

Home to many residents and businesses, Evanston's Third Ward runs along the city's southeast corner.

It also includes a portion of Evanston's beachfront. "So much of why people live here is the access to the lake all year round," says ward alderman Melissa Wynne.

The ward has a metropolitan feel, which some residents attribute to its collection of small businesses and easy access to transit. The Metra and CTA stations at Main Street are a source of growth and access for the ward, both for residents commuting to Chicago and Chicagoans who are visiting.

"Over the years, the two train lines have really shaped who lives in the Third Ward," Wynne says.

Main and Dempster Streets are home to two of the city's major commercial districts. Known together as the Main-Dempster Mile, the districts include shops and restaurants, nonprofits, and arts and culture organizations.

Live-music venue SPACE is also located in the ward, bringing world-class performances to Evanston audiences.

Lighting the Way

Last year marked the seventh that representatives from the city of Evanston and members of the Northwestern community undertook a "light walk" to identify dark areas of the city and streetlights needing repair or replacement.

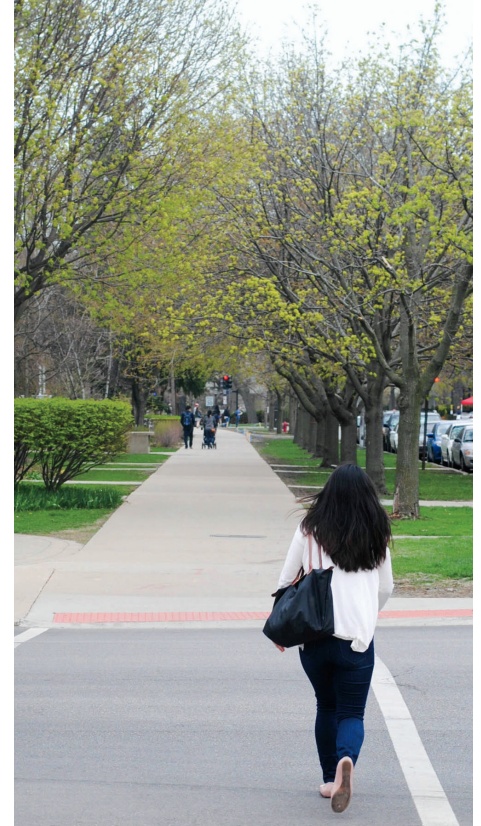
In 2010, the University's Associated Student Government (ASG) surveyed students to identify neighborhoods surrounding campus where they felt unsafe walking at night. With the data, ASG decided on a light walk including both city officials and students to determine where lights could be installed, replaced, or repaired.

"It's become very collaborative over the past seven years," says Jillian Gilburne, a sophomore and deputy chief of staff for ASG. The 2017 light walk included representatives from ASG as well as Northwestern's Student Affairs, Neighborhood and Community Relations, and University Police and from Evanston's transportation division and police department. The group took note of light outages, trees or hedges that blocked light, and instances of light diffusers needing cleaning.

"It was literally pitch-black along Noyes Street," Gilburne says. "If you live on north campus, that's where a lot of the student housing is. People are regularly walking back from the gym or Tech at night. It was shocking how little light there was." The walk resulted in 32 recommendations to the city.

"It's a collaborative project," Gilburne adds, because the city and Northwestern make the repairs. "Evanston is a beautiful city. Students being out and walking around at night is making the city safer because we're paying attention to things like well-lit sidewalks. It's beneficial across the board."

TO LEARN MORE and to get involved, email asg-communityrelations@u.northwestern.edu.



CONNECT WITH US

Our email newsletter includes a monthly Northwestern events calendar. Email Shayla Butler at shayla.butler@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.

Renovations at ETHS's Beardsley Gym

When the complete renovation of Northwestern's Welsh-Ryan Arena was announced in 2016, the University needed to find temporary homes for its teams that played there.

"We looked into a variety of locations, including other area colleges," says Mike Polisky, Northwestern's deputy athletic director of external affairs. "We gave our basketball, volleyball, and wrestling programs the pros and cons and a chance to give us their thoughts on where they wanted to go."

The women's volleyball and basketball teams unanimously selected Evanston Township High School's Beardsley Gymnasium. "This was about as convenient as it could get," Polisky says. "It keeps the

student athletes in much more of a routine, since we don't have to worry about driving downtown."

With the decision made, Northwestern had to work out a rental agreement, as per NCAA rules, at market value. The relationship helped to build upon the University's ongoing partnerships with the high school. According to ETHS athletic director Chris Livatino, the funds from the rental afforded the school the opportunity to renovate its gym.

"The rental's been really helpful," he says. To meet college basketball requirements, the court had to be extended by three feet, necessitating repainting the lines and moving the baskets. In so doing, the school had to get new equipment, replacing baskets that he says were probably well over 20 years old.

"The scoreboard was about 17 years old, and we were looking to replace it with a video board to begin with," Livatino adds. "This worked out really well to provide a venue for Northwestern with a video board, because I know that was important to them."

The renovation of Welsh-Ryan Arena, scheduled to be completed in fall 2018, includes enhancements that will benefit student athletes—and Wildcats fans—for generations to come, with facilities where they can develop their skills year-round.

"They've been amazing," Polisky says of ETHS. "Our programs have felt great about it, our fans felt great about it, and it's such an intimate gym that offers a great game-day experience. It's been a wonderful partnership."

“It’s been a wonderful partnership.”

Mike Polisky
Northwestern's deputy athletic director of external affairs



Coding

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classes. They could also build their coding skills at home via the Code65 website and in after-school programs hosted by YMCA MetaMedia, Family Focus, the Evanston Public Library, and Youth and Opportunity United.

The schools with the highest percentage of students registered to complete an hour of code and who finished the competition could win up to \$1,000 for a charity of their choice.

“We were thrilled to partner with District 65 and EvanSTEM on Code65,” Pinkard says. “It was a great collaboration to help promote and enrich computer science education here in Evanston.”

In all, 78 percent of district students signed up for and used the Code65 platform, with strong participation from every school in the district and all targeted grade levels. Students engaged in over 13,000 coding activities and earned 1,300 digital badges that highlighted their multiple coding languages and skills.



“Code65 is really just the beginning for this platform, as students will be able to explore their interests in a number of diverse online learning activities,” says Kirby Callam, project director of EvanSTEM, an initiative to improve access for students who have traditionally underperformed or been under-represented in STEM fields. “We’ll link these activities with their accomplishments in out-of-school programs so they can begin building a portfolio of achievements, skills, and competencies to take with them into high school and beyond.”

TO LEARN MORE about Code65, email [Nichole Pinkard at nichole.pinkard@northwestern.edu](mailto:nichole.pinkard@northwestern.edu).

EVENTS

REBUILDING TOGETHER SATURDAY, APRIL 28

Volunteer with us as we make needed repairs to the homes of some of our Evanston neighbors. RSVP to shayla.butler@northwestern.edu.

87TH ANNUAL WAA-MU SHOW: **MANHATTAN MIRACLE**

FRIDAY, MAY 4–SUNDAY, MAY 13
Cahn Auditorium

Days before opening, a failing melodrama finds itself in need of an overhaul, while a Parisian ballet troupe is left without a theater in the wake of a devastating fire. The troupes combine their talents and create a new show with song, dance, and drama. Visit wartz.northwestern.edu/waamu. Tickets are \$6–\$30.



MEN'S BASEBALL **NORTHWESTERN VS. IOWA** SUNDAY, MAY 13, 2 P.M.

Rocky and Berenice Miller Park
The 'Cats are celebrating Mother's Day at the ballpark! Join us for special events including the opportunity to play catch with Mom on the field after the game. More information at nusports.com. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for youth.

STAFF PROFILE: LA TANYA SIMMS

Northwestern welcomes La Tanya Simms as senior director of capital programs in its facilities management department.

Simms ensures that Northwestern's many design and construction projects go according to plan.

She works closely with city leaders from Evanston and Chicago to make certain that up to 100 projects at any given time comply with local, state, and federal requirements.



With the University's goal of expanding its involvement with local and women- and minority-owned businesses, “every time we contract with vendors we have the opportunity to potentially increase that engagement,” Simms says.

TO LEARN MORE about Northwestern Facilities Management, visit www.northwestern.edu/fm/.