

OUR neighborhood

Evanston-Northwestern
Community News
Winter 2019

NEWS

Best Practices for Worst-Case Scenarios

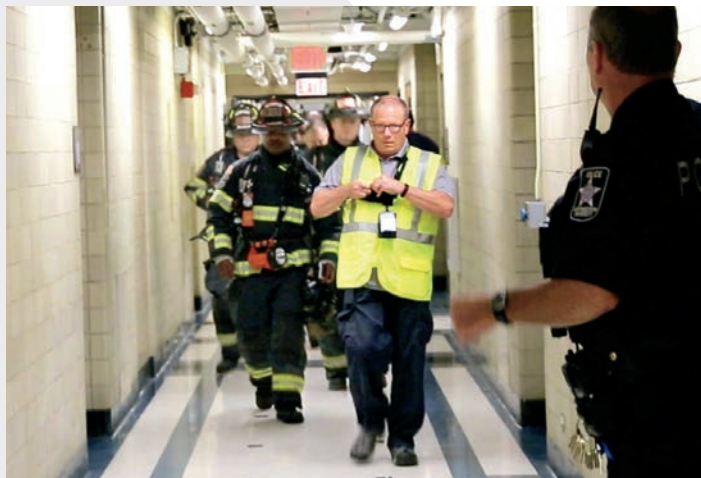
While accidents are never intended, Northwestern's Office of Research Safety plans for when they do happen.

The first few minutes of an emergency are organized confusion, no matter the cause. At a place like Northwestern, with a diverse research portfolio, an emergency could mean any number of things.

Talking with first responders outside of an emergency pays big dividends when something stressful happens.

"Firefighting and pulling people out of car crashes are offensive activities," says Michael Blayney, the executive director of research safety. "At Northwestern, we need to balance that with the nuances of our work. Part of that means better explaining to first responders what University researchers do. When someone says they spilled something that doesn't require 911, they need to feel comfortable that our decisions won't put anyone at risk."

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WARD PROFILE

Evanston's Eighth Ward encompasses the city's southwest side.

"The great Eighth, as we call it, has something for everyone," says ward alderman Ann Rainey.

With the city's first shopping center, on Howard Street, and the Oakton Historic District, the ward is also home to an indoor sports dome; Peckish Pig, Evanston's first brewpub; and North Shore Cider, the city's only cidery. The new Howard Street Theatre, a standalone venue, houses the Theo Ubiqwe Cabaret Theatre company.

At James Park, a playground, an athletic fieldhouse, basketball and tennis courts, gardens, and sledding areas are on offer. Presence St. Francis Hospital, Oakton Elementary School, and three preschool and daycare operators are also in the ward.

A number of restaurants—including bakeries and Mexican, Jamaican, French, and American fare—have emerged following the ward's economic development efforts and are fast becoming popular destinations.

Nonprofit Inspires Table Talk



What does it mean to have freedom? How does social class affect our identity? What does it mean to be good? Discussions around such universal topics regularly take place in Evanston over meals, thanks to local nonprofit Across the Table.

Founder Lauren Grossman says attendees are immediately engaged in facilitated conversation from the moment they walk in the door.

And those doors open onto myriad locales. ATT hosts dinners across the city, from private spaces in restaurants to the Evanston Art Center and even local flower shops.

"The idea is to give people the opportunity to visit spaces they'd otherwise never see, learn about them, and go beyond their comfort zone," Grossman says.

ATT began in Chicago in 2008. Now based in Evanston, it has since attracted people of all backgrounds to events with a goal

to unite people from different walks of life—who may not usually come across each other—for discussions over meals.

As a Chicago high school teacher, Grossman was often inspired by conversations with students whose backgrounds were different from hers. She wanted to give adults the same opportunity to connect through honest dialogue—which led to ATT.

Last year Northwestern donated campus space in its Black House for an ATT dinner. "It was so interesting and so relevant," Grossman says of the space. "I loved how there were students hanging around—it's really fun to absorb the feeling of a space and the community it serves."

Each dinner includes 10 to 12 guests and includes two seats each at a reduced rate to ensure anyone may participate. At the Northwestern dinner, these tickets were set aside for first-generation and low-income college students.

TO LEARN MORE about Across the Table, visit acrossthetable.org.

Black Men Lead the Conversation

In December, Northwestern partnered with Evanston Township High School to bring together students from both institutions as part of the Black Men LEAD (Learn, Engage, Achieve, Discover) initiative.

With around 10 students from Northwestern and 20 from the high school, the event afforded participants an opportunity to discuss themes common to both groups' experiences, including what it means to be a black man in their respective communities. Administrators, faculty, staff, and graduate students also participated.

Members of the Collective, a group for black men at Northwestern, were among the attendees. Begun in 2017 and now in its second academic year, the Collective regularly comprises 20 to 30 students who meet weekly to talk about issues around race in college.

"We deal with what it means to be a black man, the experience that we share," says Derick Wallace, the group's president. "A big topic is talking about the ways that we're oppressed by certain institutional forces, but also how we oppress others and are privileged in other regards."

A Northwestern senior, Wallace says the high school and University communities cohabitate but seldom intermingle: "Northwestern is very much in the consciousness of the larger Evanston community, but

as students, we often don't access that portion of Evanston. We wanted a partnership to better understand what it means to be a Northwestern student and an ETHS student.

"It ended up being really great, because it's so rare for black men in high school and professional careers to all be in the same space," he adds. "It was a mix of people with different backgrounds and perspectives. We're already thinking about having a symposium next year, but it was important to start small."

The Black Men LEAD initiative is supported in part by catalyst funding from the Joe "Butch" Martin Family Fund as well as funding from Northwestern through a Daniel I. Linzer Grant for Innovation in Diversity and Equity.

Members of the Collective are now looking forward to continuing to meet with ETHS students and are thinking of new events—perhaps a monthly book club or an open invitation to Collective meetings.

"I definitely want to continue having these conversations," Wallace says.

TO LEARN MORE about Black Men LEAD, contact Kristen Perkins at kristen-perkins@northwestern.edu.

STAFF PROFILE: CRAIG JOHNSON



In September, Craig Johnson was named senior vice president for business and finance. In this role, he collaborates with the

provost to direct the University's business and financial operations.

Johnson, who holds two degrees from Northwestern, has served the University for more than 18 years in key budgetary and administrative capacities, including chief operating officer for the Feinberg School of Medicine.

"I'm honored by the opportunity to serve my alma mater in this role," he says. "Having spent many years studying at Northwestern and having worked at the Evanston and Chicago campuses, I look forward to continuing to build relationships with University stakeholders, while also supporting our vital external partnerships."



Office of Research Safety

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Lab safety measures protect researchers and students and are also required by various government regulations. With its motto “extraordinary science done safely,” the research safety office identifies potential hazards and risks in basic science research at Northwestern and develops effective, practical solutions.

After joining Northwestern in 2012, Blayney devised the office’s first series of simulation exercises in 2015. They have since become a popular annual event involving the Evanston fire department, a regional hazardous materials team, and other agencies that provide mutual aid.

For 2018, the chemistry department allowed use of its instructional labs, with real chemicals in workstations for the fire service to identify. Blayney says that while responders are taught how to use their

instruments, actually testing in a controlled setting is unique.

“It’s practical to give the fire department an opportunity to practice skills,” he adds, “but they also get to learn more about our research environment. As a prominent neighbor in the community, Northwestern has an obligation to help responders figure out what’s going on.”

Last year the office also developed a pocket guide on the phases of any incident, including whether to “report or alarm.” Responders at Northwestern’s dispatch center gather information about incidents and use guidelines to determine whether emergencies should be escalated. Some need a response from the fire department, for instance, while others may not.

“That’s where training becomes important,” Blayney says. “Is this going to get worse if not dealt with aggressively? Is someone hurt and we need to get them out? Once we know they’ve been tended to, the situation changes. Our biggest concern is the protection of our faculty, staff, and students—we can deal with property loss.”

The office will begin working on 2019 drills this winter, with preparations becoming more intense in summer to be ready for three days of exercises in August.

“It’s neat to talk with first responders outside of an emergency, and that pays big dividends when something stressful happens,” Blayney says. And it’s paid off in another way: many firefighters say the drills are their favorite training activity of the year.

TO LEARN MORE, visit researchsafety.northwestern.edu.

EVENTS



MEN’S BASEBALL NORTHWESTERN VS. UIC TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 3 P.M.

Rocky and Berenice Miller Park. Cheer on the ‘Cats at their home opener. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for youth. See NUsports.com.

ACROSS THE TABLE MONDAY, APRIL 8, 6 P.M.

Black House, 1914 Sheridan Road. Join a dinner and discussion about how money affects who we are, our relationships, and how we choose to live. Visit acrossthetable.org for more information and to register.

88TH ANNUAL WAA-MU SHOW FOR THE RECORD FRIDAY, MAY 3–SUNDAY, MAY 12

Cahn Auditorium. In an age when women fight to be heard, a New York journalist endeavors to chronicle the lives of three of history’s most incredible women. Though these women dedicated their careers to changing the world, their stories have been all but erased from history. Now one woman’s quest to reveal their lives will end up shaping her own. Tickets \$10–\$30.

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 Dave Davis at dave.davis@northwestern.edu or 847-467-5762.