

OUR neighborhood

Evanston-Northwestern
Community News
Fall 2019

NEWS

Northwestern Academy Supports Evanston Students

Northwestern Academy–Evanston, a free college-access program for underserved, high-achieving students at Evanston Township High School, helps academically motivated students from low- to modest-income backgrounds successfully enroll in and graduate from colleges or universities that best meet the students' needs and interests.

The corresponding Northwestern Academy for Chicago Public Schools program began in 2013 with a similar mission. That program serves CPS students from homes with limited financial means who don't attend a selective enrollment school. Run by Northwestern's School of Education and Social Policy, both programs are offered at no cost to families and are "aligned around



the same objectives, design, and students we are trying to support," says SESP dean David Figlio.

Formerly called Project Excite, the Evanston academy uses a comprehensive approach to offer academic advising, college test preparation and visits, summer classes and enrichment programs, tutoring with Northwestern students, and opportunities for personal development. It also supports families during transitions from middle to high school and high school to college.

Both programs aim not just to prepare students to get into and succeed in college, Figlio notes, but also to lead once they get there. "As you hone your passions, develop critical thinking skills, and build on your leadership qualities in the next stage of your education, you'll be able to change lives, communities, and organizations for the better," he told this year's graduating class.

"I met a lot of very smart peers, and the program introduced me to a community of very determined and like-minded students," says Joshua Sekyere, 18, a recent

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Small Loans for Small Businesses

“The students were amazing—I can’t tell you how much I appreciate their help and support.”



The student-run nonprofit Lending for Evanston and Northwestern Development (LEND) provides small loans, known as microcredit, and business development services to help Evanston entrepreneurs build their businesses. The student volunteers are supervised by a board of business professionals, including the nonprofit’s founders.

“Since we’re working with real money, it’s important that we’re supervised by people with experience in the industry,” says LEND member Femke Munting, a Northwestern junior majoring in neuroscience and economics.

The group grants loans of up to \$10,000 to minority- and women-owned businesses. Between 15 and 20 students work at the nonprofit in any given year, accepting recommendations from city aldermen and others for businesses to fund. Students then build their own financial models and meet with business owners over the course of a few months.

The program grants one to two loans per quarter, with the average loan around \$7,000. “We charge a low interest rate, and half goes back if the loan is repaid on time,” Munting says.

“We don’t give the max every time,” she adds. “It’s important that business owners have a reason and that we’re not burdening people with an unnecessary loan. We’re really a last resort—providing a tiny influx of capital to build the business, something they may not be able to do without our services.”

A recent loan helped Evanston restaurant Tomato Fresh Kitchen purchase a new refrigerator—a direct impact on the business, rather than just an influx of money, Munting notes.

“LEND has been an incredible partner in helping us start and grow our business,” says Tomato owner Tania Merlos-Ruiz. “The students were amazing—I can’t tell you how much I appreciate their help and support.”

LEND undergraduates consult advisers from Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management, who assist the students with day-to-day questions and strategy. Although run by students, the group is technically a nonprofit; members plan to create an affiliated student group on campus to expand its capacity.

“We want to grow into a place where we can develop students’ interest in the community in more wards than just downtown Evanston,” Munting says. “My hope is that we’ll grow to maybe 60 or 80 people with the student organization.”

“It’s great to work with people in the community and see things changing and happening around you, but there’s also this very high standard, because Northwestern students always want to do everything 110 percent. We want to provide the highest level of service for these people doing great work, while also making sure we get out of the Northwestern bubble and do more in the community.”

TO LEARN MORE about LEND, visit lende Evanston.org.

Neighborhood Watch

Evanston's Citizen Police Academy gives people who live or work in the city a deeper understanding of its police department.

In weekly 2½-hour sessions over three months, academy participants get an in-depth view into such law enforcement topics as criminal investigations, crime-scene processing, and use-of-force guidelines.

"It's an opportunity for citizens who live or work in Evanston to learn more about the police department and get a behind-the-scenes look at what we do," says Enjoli Daley, the department's community engagement and programs coordinator.

Held twice a year, the 13-week program has 25 to 30 people in each class. Members of Northwestern's University Police usually visit during a class session, and the academy holds its graduation event on Northwestern's Evanston campus.

In addition to learning about how the department works, Daley says participants also do more hands-on activities, "like mock crime scenes and shoot-don't shoot scenarios,"

in which participants see what goes into decisions about what type of force may need to be used.

"It's always interesting for people, when put in a stressful situation where they have to make a hard decision, to see how difficult that can be," she says.

Open to those age 18 and older, the free program sees participants from all walks of life. "Sometimes there are people who've maybe had not-so-good experiences with police and want to learn more," Daley says. "The academy helps us build relationships with the community, and the community gets to know us better.

"There are always changed perspectives," she adds, noting that most participants share that the academy has been an eye-opening experience. "They get to see officers in a different light—it's an opportunity to see we're all in the same game."

TO LEARN MORE and to register, visit cityofevanston.org.



STAFF PROFILE: ALEX DARRAGH



Northwestern welcomes Alex Darragh as its new vice president for facilities. Leading a staff of almost 350, he is responsible for campus planning,

capital project management, energy and sustainability planning, operations and maintenance, and other key functions.

Darragh, who earned a master's degree in urban policy planning from Northwestern in 1980, says he is honored to serve the University and be part of a world-renowned institution.

"The opportunities open to Northwestern in the near and long term are very exciting," he says. "Facilities has the expertise and dedication to support the broader University community in fulfilling its mission and vision."

Darragh joins Northwestern with four decades of experience in corporate real estate, strategic planning, organizational development, real estate finance, and investment.

In addition to his Northwestern degree, he earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Queen's University in Ontario. He lives in Evanston with his wife, Linda, a clinical professor at the Kellogg School of Management.

Northwestern Academy

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ETHS graduate who plans to study engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "It also helped me navigate the whole college process, which would have been much harder without the support I was given."

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.

Northwestern president Morton Schapiro notes that one of the most important ways universities can serve society is by working to expand opportunities for students from city schools. "I'm moved when I listen to academy graduates talk about how much it meant for Northwestern to believe in them," he says, "and how that allowed them to

believe in themselves."

Students can apply to the program in eighth grade. To be eligible, they must be willing to participate in formal and informal learning experiences, take advantage of academic supports, and meet program criteria.

The first class of students that received four years of support from Northwestern Academy-Evanston graduated in 2018. Those eight students all went on to four-year colleges and universities, including College of the Holy Cross, Cornell University, Ohio Wesleyan University, and the Universities of Arizona, Iowa, and Redlands.

TO LEARN MORE and to apply, visit academy.northwestern.edu/for-evanston-township-highschool.

EVENTS

IMAGINE U: WINNIE-THE-POOH

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1–
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17

Wallis Theater, 1949 Campus Drive
Join Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends on a fun-filled musical journey about the importance of friendship. Tickets \$6–\$12.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL NORTHWESTERN VS. LEWIS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 7 P.M.
Welsh-Ryan Arena, 2705 Ashland Avenue
Cheer on the 'Cats in their first home game of the season. Ticket prices vary.

NORTHWESTERN JAZZ ORCHESTRA THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 7:30 P.M.

Galvin Recital Hall, 70 Arts Circle Drive
The jazz orchestra performs music for the holidays. Tickets \$4–\$6.

MEN'S BASKETBALL NORTHWESTERN VS. HARTFORD

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1 P.M.
Welsh-Ryan Arena, 2705 Ashland Avenue
Cheer on the 'Cats against Hartford. Ticket prices vary.

