

# Courier

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY CIRCLE

November 2025

## MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear Circle Members,

You will note that this letter is coming from presidents, in the plural. And it's not the first time Circle has had co-presidents. With much gratitude to Margaret Schatz (left) for continuing on as a "Co" this program year, she is joined by Sally Sprowl (right) who is new as a "Co" but not new to the Circle executive board. Additionally, Circle's tradition continues of having a very talented board, which creates an interesting, educational, entertaining and convivial year for all Circle members – not to pass up mentioning our service activities – scholarships to deserving Northwestern students who are also on NU's staff, quilts that are given to not-for-profits and our holiday donations to Northwestern Settlement.

Please enjoy perusing this issue of the *Courier*; there is a lot of valuable information including coverage of some past events, as well as future ones. You will be able to read about last summer's potluck supper, the fall luncheon and the recent quilt show, along with photos. You will also find information about our Holiday Party



and upcoming annual service project, Adopt-a-Family, for Northwestern Settlement, which will kick off soon.

As we go forward throughout the program year, it is important to check emails frequently to learn about more events and activities that come up throughout the year.

If you have not yet had a chance to turn in your membership dues for this program year, please mail a check for \$25 to our treasurer, Jeanne Fitzpatrick, at 6401 Lincoln Avenue, Unit 205, Morton Grove, IL 60053.

With our best wishes to you for this fall season and the coming holidays,

**Margaret Schatz**

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## MISSION

The mission of University Circle is to provide opportunities for Northwestern University women to participate in service, scholarship, and social activities that enhance the University community.

## MEMBERSHIP

If you know of a woman who is interested in becoming part of University Circle, please bring her along to a special interest group or general membership program. You may also contact Jane Dowding at 847-736-9064 and she will happily send membership information out by mail. You can find membership information on the University Circle web site:

[www.northwestern.edu/university-circle](http://www.northwestern.edu/university-circle)

## BOARD MEETINGS

University Circle Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of most months on the Evanston Campus. All members are welcome. Meetings typically last one hour and are always lively and fun. Please contact the president for dates, time and location, and/or if you have an item for the agenda.

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## INTEREST GROUP & PROJECT CONTACTS

<b>PIECEMAKERS QUILTERS</b>	Margaret Schatz Lonnie Dunlap
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<b>SCHOLARSHIP</b>	Debbie Crimmins
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<b>NORTHWESTERN SETTLEMENT</b>	Pat Ulmer Jeanne Fitzpatrick Sally Sprowl Margaret Schatz
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<b>INTERNATIONAL WOMEN</b>	Joan Fragen
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For information about other interest groups, please contact the co-presidents.

# YOU ARE INVITED TO THE ANNUAL CIRCLE HOLIDAY PARTY

**Wednesday, December 3**  
**5:30-7:30 pm**

**Curt's Café, 2922 Central Street in Evanston**

Appetizers will be served, and everyone is invited to bring cookies or candy to share (a half dozen).

There will also be a cookie and candy exchange for those who wish to participate.

You're welcome to bring an unwrapped toy or book for the children of families served by Northwestern Settlement. We will also be collecting checks to purchase gift cards for the families we are sponsoring. Read article below for more information about the Adopt-a-Family Program.

Piecemakers quilts that will be given to our families will be on display during the party.



**PARKING:** Free parking is available at Byline Bank across Central Street from Curt's, along with several spots behind Curt's. Parking is also available on Central Street (metered) and on Lincolnwood Avenue (free).

Circle is pleased to support Curt's Café, which has been renovated after receiving a \$2 million gift from the MacKenzie Scott Foundation.

Please RSVP by December 2, if possible, to Pat Ulmer at [pat.ulmer@gmail.com](mailto:pat.ulmer@gmail.com) or 847-682-5741 and indicate if you're bringing a sweet to share.

**Hope to see you there!**

## HOLIDAY CHEER FOR SETTLEMENT FAMILIES

— by Pat Ulmer

'Tis the season for solicitations, as we notice every time we open our mail. Circle members are so generous, and the need is so great this year, but please save a place in your heart, and wallet, for Circle's annual sponsoring of five families through Northwestern Settlement. Settlement's Adopt-a-Family Project will soon send information about the families who will be counting on us this holiday season, and I will be sharing it with you.



As many of us remember, we used to buy individual and household gifts for each family. Northwestern Settlement now encourages sponsoring organizations to buy gift cards so the families can purchase the groceries and gifts

they choose for their children and spend any extra on the needs of the family. This year, your donations will provide gift cards from grocery stores and Target.

I hope you can join us for our Holiday Party at the newly renovated Curt's Café on Wednesday, December 3, at 5:30 p.m. Checks can be brought that night, payable to University Circle with a notation of Holiday Fund. If you prefer to mail a check before then, please send it to our treasurer, Jeanne Fitzpatrick, at 6401 Lincoln

Ave., Unit 205, Morton Grove, IL 60053.

In addition to your check, you can bring an unwrapped toy for the Settlement children.



# FUN CIRCLE GATHERINGS

## Summer Potluck & Fall Luncheon

– by Sally Sprowl



The luncheon at Happ Inn brought together current and new Circle members, including (left to right) Loretta Thompson-Cole, Claudia Krizek, Glenda Mockros and Bert Mount.

On a lovely summer evening—June 26th, to be precise—Jane Dowding once again graciously opened her home to Circle members for a summer potluck. Her dining room table was laden with a delicious array of summer salads, followed by all-too-yummy desserts! It was such a fun gathering of around 20 Circle friends, who were catching up on summer plans and activities. From the “buzz” of the conversations, you could tell how glad everyone was to have a chance to see each other during the summer.

And then, to start our new program year, we reconnected with about eighteen Circle members in the fall, with a seasonal “kickoff” luncheon on October 8th at the Happ Inn in Northfield. Not only did we enjoy seeing current Circle friends, but we also welcomed a number of new members: Marilyn Hall, Laurie Howick, Bunni LaBahn, Pat Mann, Loretta Thompson-Cole, and Mary Savage. As the Circle’s 2025-2026 year progresses, we will look forward to more wonderful opportunities to be together!

## Norris Center Tour & Talk

– by Kay Hamel

On September 3rd, Corbin Smyth, Executive Director of Norris Center, hosted a Circle program in and about Northwestern’s Norris University Center. He provided us with some history of student centers as well as specific information on Norris, the new Cohen Lawn and soon-to-be Pub. Our group did go down memory lane, recalling their campus experience before the landfill.

Originally, the program would have included a walk on the patio, but weather did not cooperate. Instead, we did have a great view from our conference room as Corbin pointed out the state-of-the-art lighting covers to help with “dark skies,” adjustable lighting and energy savings. Chairs and tables are being added. Landscaping is filling in. Corbin talked about the goal of providing a relaxed meeting place for NU students to gather.

The Pub is scheduled to open in January, serving beer and wine. Our audience volunteered to help with a “soft opening.” We would be perfect to provide valuable feedback. Corbin’s passion for his work showed when he told us that his family vacations do include visits to other student centers and made recommendations on where we should visit. As expected, members and guests provided an engaged audience with great questions. A good time was had by all.



Corbin Smyth talks about Norris Center’s past, present and future while Circle members take in the view.

## Behind the Scenes at Wirtz Center Costume Shop



Pam Brailey shows some of what goes into designing costumes for Wirtz productions.

– by Kay Hamel

On April 30, Circle members and guests had an up-close and personal tour of the Costume Shop and Storage at NU's Wirtz Center. The tour, led by Pam Brailey, cutter/drafter, started in the costume shop work room. Pam went through the process of creating costumes for the wonderful NU productions we enjoy together. The true hustle starts after auditions and the cast has been determined. Although the theater schedule is announced and ideas are developed early, the measuring of cast members and costume sewing starts much closer to opening. A quick turnaround is needed to meet the needs of all the productions NU offers.



There are costumes for every occasion.

NU has a rich collection of costumes from all time periods. We learned the collection is used not only for current plays but also for historical reference. The Chicago-area theater schools have a loan program to meet their needs. NU has a lot to offer!

We were brought "behind the curtain" to see the actual storage of rows and rows and rows of costumes in two areas of the Wirtz Center. It was quite impressive. Our tour leader Pam commended us on our great questions. A truly engaged and interested group. We were inspired to attend plays in current production and sign up to get Wirtz Center emails with more information at [wirtz.northwestern.edu/subscribe](http://wirtz.northwestern.edu/subscribe).



**Congratulations to Circle's three scholarship recipients for 2025!** We had the pleasure of meeting them at Circle's annual meeting and scholarship reception in May. Shown above (left to right) are Kathryn Zamiela, Shakena (Kena) Bilbrew, and Samuel Ampaw, along with Soo La Kim, assistant dean in the School of Professional Studies.

### Remembering Our Circle Friends

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of two Circle friends who passed away recently.

**Bob Fragen**, spouse of long-time NU Circle member Joan Fragen, passed away on July 26, 2025. Bob, himself, was also a more recent member of NU Circle. Bob was on the faculty at Northwestern University and a doctor in the anesthesia department at Northwestern's hospital. Bob's obituary can be read at [tinyurl.com/mvmz9ht3](http://tinyurl.com/mvmz9ht3).

**Pat Gaul**, a member of Circle for many years, passed away on October 19, 2025. Read her obituary at [tinyurl.com/ymwkrh63](http://tinyurl.com/ymwkrh63).



# PIECEMAKERS PRODUCE!

– by Diane Unger

Circle's quilting group Piecemakers celebrated another banner year of quiltmaking on November 5 with a quilt show at Three Crowns Park retirement community in Evanston. The quilts on display came to be through the creative efforts of 17 women, led by Margaret Schatz and Lonnie Dunlap, who worked individually at home and together at monthly meetings to create this year's stash.

Of the more than 50 lap quilts on display, five will be given to the families Circle is sponsoring in Northwestern Settlement's Adopt-a-Family Project, and the rest will go to those served by Connections for the Homeless, the nonprofit group that supports people with housing needs in Evanston and throughout the area.

Margaret reports that the quilt show was "a huge success, as we had many who came to look, admire, eat and converse. Julie Lanham, associate director of development for

Connections for the Homeless, came to see the quilts that will be delivered to Connections in the next couple of weeks and will be welcoming gifts for new residents. We also will be giving a quilt to each Settlement family. It will be so hard to choose!"

Bert Mount deserves a shout-out for facilitating the use of the venue. Thanks to Three Crowns for providing a beautiful and spacious room in which to display the quilts and visit with friends, along with a selection of beverages. Circle members provided a tableful of tasty treats.

Last but not least, Marilyn Hall provided a live demonstration of her hand-quilting technique while working on a quilt for the Fine Art of Fiber exhibition at the Chicago Botanic Garden on November 7-9. Piecemakers was well represented at this year's show, with work by Melanie Anderson, Iva Freeman, Marilyn Hall, Carol Nielsen and Margaret Schatz on display.

***Congratulations to all!***



**SUMMERTIME QUILTING.** Clockwise around the table, beginning with Margaret Schatz in front, Diane Unger, Maureen Hanrahan, Loretta Thompson-Cole, Peggy Pearson, Carol Booth, Iva Freeman, Tiffany Tuck, Carol Nielsen, Bert Mount, Lonna Horwitz, and Lonnie Dunlap. Looking on is Izzi Nielsen who is hoping to learn to quilt. Maria Poeppelmeier stepped away from the table to snap the photo.





Julie Lanham (left) from Connections for the Homeless views one of the quilts her group will receive, thanks to the efforts of Piecemakers like Carol Nielsen and Margaret Schatz.



Marilyn Hall works on her quilt, while her mother looks on.



Bert Mount, Iva Freeman, and Carol Nielsen are three talented members of Piecemakers.





**UNIVERSITY CIRCLE**

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**Courier** *November 2025*



**2026  
DATES TO SAVE**

**MARCH 7**

Potluck dinner and show

**MAY 12**

Annual meeting and  
scholarship reception