



# Levy Senior Center Foundation

**2024** ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends:

Every time I walk into the Levy Senior Center, I feel it—that vibrant hum of conversation and connection that makes this place more than just a building. It's a community hub, a second home, and a counterweight to senior isolation. It's your ongoing generosity that makes this all possible.

As Chair of the Levy Senior Center Foundation, I'm proud to share our 2024 Annual Report, a reflection of lives touched, histories shared, and the joyful, purposeful aging we continue to support through our public and private partnerships and targeted underwriting.

Last year, your gifts helped us do so much for older adults. We sponsored everything from concerts to cooking demos, bilingual yoga classes to storytelling workshops, free theater tickets to an annual basketball tournament that allows older adults to qualify for the National Senior Games. We also completed or made notable progress on essential upgrades to some of the Center's most popular spaces, adding both beauty and functionality for our members to enjoy. Through it all, we celebrated growing older, together, in the City of Evanston.

Thank you for being a part of this vital work. Thank you for caring about our elders and the challenges so many of them often face. Finally, thank you for helping us foster a community full of dignity, joy, and dynamic relationships.

With love, gratitude, and great hope  
for the year ahead,



Judy Newton  
Chair, Levy Senior Center Foundation

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## Learn More

Visit our website:  
[lscfevanston.org](https://lscfevanston.org)

## Support from Nonprofits

*We are committed to building connections with fellow Evanston nonprofits. Through collaboration and support for each other's shared goals, we are able to provide additional opportunities for our older population.*

# FITNESS & FUN

Basketball is more than a game, it's an exuberant physical language full of creativity and cooperation. That shared spirit ran high during our third annual *Hoops for the Ages* senior basketball tournament last spring. Hosted, in part, at the Levy Senior Center and proudly underwritten by the Foundation, the tournament featured more than 300 mostly-local male and female players, ages 40 to 90, with eleven Foundation-sponsored teams going on to the National Senior Games.

Beyond basketball, we also funded numerous classes and talks to enable our seniors to learn, share, and remain joyful, active, and engaged. Cardio drumming, bilingual yoga, a hybrid *Levy Longevity* lecture on aging well from Dr. Leslie Mendoza Temple—by supporting programs like these, we promote holistic health and happiness for older adults.

As for capital improvements, last year we focused on upgrading some of the Center's most beloved spaces, including the personal training room and game/card room where members gather to build strength, socialize, and play.

**“I thoroughly enjoyed the bi-lingual yoga class. It was nice to have it presented in two languages. The music was uplifting.”**

**— Claudette Doss**



# RHYTHM & RHETORIC



From live funk to classical music, provocative lectures to hands-on workshops, the Foundation helped bring more than two dozen performances, talks, and interactive programs to the Center in 2024.

Our *Jamming Jean* concerts again drew revelers of all ages to the Levy Senior Center's building and grounds. Performers included Gerald McClendon, the Derrick Procell Band, Second Hand Soul, and Midnight Sun. Guests sang, danced, picnicked, and enjoyed food from Evanston's Cocina Azteca and Hecky's Barbecue.

Our *Fran Randall* concerts, which showcase talented young classical musicians, attracted large audiences for the three live performances.



**“Sue and Shane are an incredible pair. They created a safe environment for everyone to be vulnerable, connect, and share.”**

**— Dimi Gaines**

Our *Levy Lectures* and *Levy Longevity* series informed and entertained with a variety of live, virtual, and hybrid offerings, including:

- Two in-person *Levy Longevity: Journey's End* series on end-of-life transitions, led by certified death doula, Shay Springer.
- Four virtual *Levy Lectures* and *Levy Longevity* programs on The Beatles, Cherokee history, building relationships, and how to plan for the changing physical, emotional, and cognitive needs of aging seniors in practical ways.
- A six-week improvisational storytelling in-person workshop, *Levy Longevity: The Big Flex*, led by Chicago writer Shane DuBow and Second City improv legend Sue Gillan.



# PROSE & PLAYS

Theater and participatory storytelling remained essential components of the Foundation's underwriting in 2024.

Our longstanding collaboration with Northlight Theatre continues to make live music more accessible to our Levy Senior Center members with free tickets to five unique shows.

Another year of *High Lights Writing Workshops* underwritten by the *Dennis Newton Scholarship Fund* and hosted virtually by Northlight teaching artists, invited dozens of new and returning members to share personal stories, give and get editorial feedback, and build community on the page.

Through a new partnership with Northwestern's Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts, we expanded our community partnerships with 600 free tickets for our members to attend eight different plays and one puppet show.

**I took my 9-year-old granddaughter to the Wirtz's "Wong Kids in the Secret of the Space Chupacabra, Go!" It was a great treat and we had a wonderful time.**

**— Litrea Hunter**





# BUDS & BLOOMS



The scent of lavender, the shush of wind through native plants, the glint of decorative glass mosaics, and the soft sounds of cafe chairs pulled close. Research shows that thoughtfully designed gardens and community green spaces can help reduce stress, elevate mood, and strengthen social ties, particularly among older adults.

With these benefits in mind, the Foundation—with help from Nature's Perspective Landscaping, the Garden Club of Evanston, and a dedicated team of City custodians and green-thumb volunteers—completed its multi-year restoration of the Rothschild Enabling Garden in 2024. Nestled in the Center's

courtyard, the space now features refurbished tables and chairs, a working irrigation system, wider pathways and raised plant beds for greater accessibility, pollinator-friendly blooms to attract butterflies, and new planters filled with bright annuals and fragrant herbs to delight the senses. For Evanston's older adults, the garden now offers a peaceful place to sit, connect, and commune with nature.

To celebrate, we hosted a courtyard garden party. With music by Howard Levy 4 and food by Michael's Catering, we honored the contributions of Cie Bond, Donna Frett, Mary Collins, and so many others who've helped us revitalize the Center's grounds.



# FOOD & FRIENDSHIP

Last year's *Farm Stand Fridays* at the Center were better than ever. To fight food insecurity, we gave out over 300 pounds of free produce, some of it grown onsite in eight edible garden beds, each devoted to a different culinary tradition in our community.

With help from Evanston Grows, the Garden Club of Evanston, chef Tom Carlin, and our new paid intern program, our *Farm Stand* distributed fresh veggies, shared recipes, hosted cooking demos, and fostered connections. We also published a new Garden Fresh Recipes book and donated leftover produce to local shelters.

Finally, we launched an exciting new initiative called *Talking Benches*. Led by Evanston pediatrician, Lynn Chehab, the initiative paired older adults with high school students for guided conversations. Sparking intergenerational dialogue, these pairings filled the Center with new energy, warmth, and storytelling.

**“The farmstand has become a special little community where seniors come for fresh veggies and friendships.”**

— Mary Collins



## 2024 Contributions

*Your generous contributions helped to fund programs and events enjoyed by our senior community. Thank you!*

### **Total Gifts: \$100,904.16**

Arts For Everyone  
Bilingual Community Yoga  
Chef Q Cooking Class  
Dennis Newton Scholarship Fund  
Fran Randall Concerts  
High Lights Writer's Workshops  
Hoops for the Ages  
Internship Program  
Jamming Jean Concerts  
Levy Farm Stand  
Levy Lectures Series  
Levy Longevity Series  
Levy Senior Center Gardens  
Northwestern Wirtz Theater Tickets  
Partner Programs for Seniors  
Talking Benches  
Tech Tuesdays

*To see a list of our donors, please visit: [lscfevanston.org](https://lscfevanston.org)*

# HIGHLIGHTS & HITS



Additional Foundation-supported highlights from 2024:

- The *Dennis Newton Scholarship Fund* continued to cover travel costs for Levy members to attend a variety of off-site events, including White Sox games, architectural boat tours, and visits to the Shedd Aquarium and Lake Geneva.
- Our *Heaven Can Wait* program, also supported by the *Dennis Newton Scholarship Fund*, continued to cover Levy Senior Center memberships for more than a dozen seniors aged 90 and up.
- *Tech Tuesdays*, our popular one-on-one tech support sessions, continued to help our seniors stay connected in a digital world.



**“I really enjoyed working with the seniors to help solve their technical difficulties and fears. I benefited as much from the experience as they did.”**

— Josh L.



## LSCF Mission

The Levy Senior Center Foundation, a 501(c)(3), operates to improve the quality of life for Evanston seniors by soliciting monies to supplement the Levy Senior Center's operating budget. In partnership with the City of Evanston, we seek to improve the Center, its programs and resources.