



Levy Senior Center Foundation

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



learn more about our mission at: lscfevanston.org

Dear Friends,

I want to start with a memory: a perfect Friday afternoon in late July. *The Friday Farm Stand* had just wrapped up, but the courtyard was still buzzing with life. High school interns are setting up for a poker game with a handful of older adults. A local chef packing up after a free cooking demonstration. And a of couple of seniors are comparing tomatoes.

That feeling — that everyday sense of joy and deep connection — continues to represent the feeling we work to provide for all year long at the Levy Senior Center.

As Chair of the Levy Senior Center Foundation, I'm thrilled to share our 2025 Annual Report. It's a chance to look back on a year of incredible programs and essential partnerships that helped Evanston's older adults stay active, engaged, and bonded together, all thanks to the City of Evanston and so many generous donors just like you.

Your gifts kept our annual calendar vibrant and full. With your help, we funded everything from basketball tournaments and classical music concerts to lectures, writing workshops, wellness programs, and joyful intergenerational play. We grew and distributed free produce, shared recipes, delivered complimentary tech support, and continued to renovate our beloved Levy Senior Center facilities. Between the big events, we also made space for so many small moments: the chatter of Mahjongg tiles, the easy hum of a table full of members sharing brown-bag lunches in the courtyard.

Aging well is not just about physical health. It is also about feeling a sense of belonging and getting to know the seniors gathered on either side of you. Thank you for caring about all of it. Thank you for supporting our Evanston elders. Thank you for keeping this vital, life-giving work going, year after year.



With deep affection, gratitude, and great hope for the year ahead,

Judy Newton

Chair, Levy Senior Center Foundation

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Visit our website:
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

In June, our annual *Hoops for the Ages 3-on-3 basketball tournament* returned bigger than ever — this time at Evanston Township High School to handle the crowd. The tournament filled twelve half-courts with more than 350 players in age brackets from 40 to over 95, many of whom used the day as a tune-up for the *National Senior Games* in Des Moines. Co-organizers Rob Bady and Cathy Wilson, both senior players themselves, kept the morning moving from start to finish.

Beyond the court, our *Levy Longevity Series* went whole-body, whole-mind. Yoga for the Heart, a seven-week series led by Claire Mark, built heart strength and balance. Shaun Zetlin's program on strength training and emotional fitness, drawn from his book *Emotional Fitness*, built strength of body and mind.

Through our partnership with Endeavor Health, integrative-medicine specialists Dr. Leslie Mendoza Temple and Dr. Geeta Maker-Clark, joined by Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Nadia Khambati, met with Levy members across the year to discuss diet and nutrition, integrative medicine, mental wellness, gut and brain health. Khambati's 2025 sessions on the MIND Diet and Gut Health & Muscle Loss filled the Locust Room. All of these offerings built around the daily choices that help older adults keep moving and showing up.



2025 Contributions

Your generous contributions funded programs, events, and building enhancements & renovations enjoyed by our senior community. Thank you!

Total Gifts: \$283,149.56

Arts For Everyone
Dennis Newton Scholarship Fund
Fran Randall Concerts
Free Farm Stand Fridays
High Lights Writer's Workshops
Hoops for the Ages
Internship Program
Jamming Jean Concerts
Levy Lecture Series
Levy Longevity Series
Levy Special Event Series
Levy Senior Center Gardens
Northwestern Wirtz Center Theatre Tickets
Partner Programs for Seniors
Renovations to the Oak & Elm Rooms
Rothschild Enabling Garden
Talking Benches
Tech Tuesday

To see a list of our donors, please visit:
lscfevanston.org

2025 Annual Report



RHYTHM & RHETORIC



The *Jamming Jean Concert Series* filled our 2025 calendar once again with music. Crowds of every age danced, talked, and ate inside the Maple Room and out on the Levy Senior Center lawn. Our 2025 lineup included *Brass from the Past* in March and September, *The Grady Experience* in June, *South Boulevard Band* in September, and *The Midnight Sun* in December. Hecky's Barbecue and Tacos 606 fueled the crowd. Funk, soul, blues, roots, rock, and jazz, all in one season.

Indoors year-round, the *Fran Randall Concert Series* brought award-winning young classical musicians into the Maple Room, close enough to hear the subtle fret work on stringed instruments.



Beyond music, the *Levy Lecture Series* brought a strong lineup of speakers. Highlights from 2025 included:

- *Antiques and Heirlooms* with Gary Piattoni, Evanston-based appraiser and longtime Antiques Roadshow veteran, on the stories behind treasured objects.
- *Myths of Grammar* with author and New Yorker cartoonist Sophie Lucido Johnson, moderated by Shane DuBow, on language, diction, and punctuation as windows onto cultural priority and irrepressible human change.
- *Memoirs & Memories* with writer-editor Emily Stone and Shane DuBow, on the value of personal storytelling for legacy and intergenerational connection.
- *Myths in American History* with historian Joyce Haworth, exploring the role of not-quite-true stories in American history.
- Momma Kemba in living-history portrayals of Sojourner Truth (Black History Month, February 4) and Ida B. Wells (Juneteenth).
- Paddy Lynn as Irena Sendler, illuminating courage in the face of injustice.

“Jamming Jean is the best fun-filled celebration of music, movement, and togetherness. Everyone is encouraged to just get up and dance. I *never* want to miss it!” — Jerdine Nolen

Levy Senior Center Foundation



PROSE & PLAYS

In February, a special screening of *Evanston's Living History*, the documentary by Evanston filmmaker Craig Dudnick, drew a full house to Bobby's Room. The 57-minute film tells the story of Anthony Crawford's family, who fled racial violence in South Carolina and found refuge in Evanston, and the African American community's long fight for justice that followed. A Q&A with Dudnick followed the screening. Levy member Sharon Meyers multimedia presentation, *How Living and Learning in Kyoto Can Inspire Us All*, introduced participants to Japanese rituals, customs and the joys of immersion in new cultures offering.

Our partnerships with Northlight Theatre and Northwestern's Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts kept Levy members in the audience all year, with free tickets and behind-the-scenes talks with company members.

Northlight's *High Lights Writing Workshops* also continued, led by professional teaching artists. Across the year, members met in small groups to draft, share, and get feedback on plays, personal stories, and poetry from instructors and peers. For many, these workshops have become an annual source of inspiration for producing new work.



“The Levy Senior Center Foundation is a beacon of opportunity for the Senior community. The offerings are wide and diverse. The Levy Senior Center Foundation enhances the lives of our Seniors!”

— Gerri Sizemore

BUDS & BLOOMS



Two new hands-on classes brought twelve members each into Levy's craft rooms and blooming central courtyard. A *Terrarium workshop*, with the Evanston Ecology Center, taught members to plant tiny gardens in glass — small succulents, loose gravel. A *Mosaic workshop*, led by Skokie-based artist Kristin Dann Conneely, met across four sessions. Members worked with glass, broken tile, beads, and found materials, building mosaics onto river rocks and taking the finished pieces home.

Outdoors, the courtyard also became the Levy Senior Center's warm weather living room. The Foundation funded summer internships for several area

high-school and college students, who worked the *Friday Farm Stand* in the morning and ran intergenerational *Courtyard Games* with members in the afternoon. Fundamentals of Poker, Uno, Scrabble, plus a variety of board games for visually impaired players.

In the Hulda B. and Maurice L. Rothschild Enabling Garden, a smaller addition: irises and peonies planted in memory of Carole K. Levy, wife of founder Joe Levy. The flowers came from her own garden, transplanted when her home was sold.

On warm days, the courtyard kept filling. Members brought lunches. Staff from the *Seniors-Only DMV*, now housed inside the Levy Senior Center, came out to enjoy the weather. These gatherings continued, daily, whenever the weather allowed.



FOOD & FRIENDSHIP

Friday Farm Stand kept its weekly rhythm through another growing season. In partnership with Evanston Grows and the Garden Club of Evanston, the Foundation gave away hundreds of pounds of fresh organic produce to neighbors in need, some of it grown on-site in the Levy Senior Center's eight raised garden beds. Each bed honors a different food tradition from Evanston's senior community, with names like Nonna's Marinara, Three Sisters, Grandma's Root Cellar, and American Soul Food.

This year, a coffee partnership with Curt's Cafe served the line waiting for produce. Curt's is the local nonprofit that trains at-risk young adults through work and life-skills programs, and it brews coffee at the Levy Senior Center every Friday. Guest chef Tom Carlin joined our farm stand crew every other week to showcase new recipes and answer member questions about cooking techniques. The Foundation also released a new farm-stand cookbook full of recipes drawn from farm stand regulars, plus a new set of tote bags perfect for carrying away fresh produce. The conversations carried well beyond the stand.

Talking Benches, the intergenerational program launched in 2024 with Dr. Lynn Chehab, continued pairing members with high-school students for guided talks. *Bring Back Scrabble* and a growing *Crossword Club* revived word games as a weekly habit. Mahjongg for Beginners attracted new players who quickly became regulars.



These moments of food and talk strengthened the Levy Senior Center community. Sitting across the table from

LEGACY & LAURELS

In 2025, Foundation Chair Judy Newton was honored with two community awards.

The Aging Well Award, given each year by the City of Evanston to an older adult whose work and advocacy have made life better for area seniors, was presented to Judy on June 13 at the Jamming Jean concert in James Park, with *The Grady Experience* on stage.

The Corinne Passage Spirit of Evanston Award, the Chamber of Commerce's yearly nod to a local hero who embodies the spirit of the town, was presented to Judy at the Chamber's MashUp event in October.

For Judy, the work is also personal. Her family's connection to the Levy Senior Center reaches back to its origins. That history shows up today in the Foundation's daily work: fighting isolation, helping people stay active, and pushing back on the old idea that age means narrowing instead of growing.

The Foundation was equally grateful for the contributions of this year's partners. A \$5,000 grant from the Garden Club of Evanston let us keep planting and improving the Rothschild Garden — one of the Levy Senior Center's most loved spaces.



HIGHLIGHTS & HITS

A few more memorable highlights and hits from 2025.

The Marx Family Game Room (formerly the Elm Room) reopened as a refreshed card room. New flooring, shades, countertops, cabinets, tables, and chairs plus five new photographs from a local nature photographer who wishes to go unnamed. In honor of their donation, the room has been renamed to represent the former local family whose gift made the renovation possible.

The Oak Room reopened as a revamped personal-training space, with new flooring, shades, cabinets, and a full set of new equipment: mirrors, free weights, TRX straps, and Pilates rings. Members can now book 30- or 60-minute one-on-one sessions with personal trainers.

Nature's Perspective Landscaping kept tending the Rothschild Garden and the front grounds with the care and community feel that have become their signature. Five new paintings by acclaimed local artist Walter Burt Adams were added to Bobby's Room, the Marx Family Game Room, Craft Room B, and the Locust Room, home to Pilates, Zumba, and other fitness

classes. Adams's work, much of it depicting Evanston street scenes from the 1930s through the 1970s, has been part of the Foundation's permanent collection for years, thanks to Adam's long ties with the Levy family.

Tech Tuesdays continued to represent one of the most useful weekly programs the Foundation supports. Two hours every week with Josh Lieber, free to all Levy Senior Center members. Phones, tablets, logins, password resets, scams, video calls. Members sign up at the front desk or call in for tech support, helping seniors stay connected in the digital age.

The Dennis Newton Scholarship Fund kept covering day-trip costs to outside cultural events, and the *Heaven Can Wait* program kept covering free Levy memberships for members aged 90 and older.

As always, the Foundation remained committed to expanding access to the programs and spaces that let our Levy Senior Center members continue to learn, grow, and age gracefully in a supportive community of older adults.



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.