

# friends,

In 1986, when our founding donors invested in the Foundation, they knew we would help make Evanston a Good Place For All. They knew we would support all the good work happening here. Thirty years later, we are stronger than ever and excited about continuing to affect change with real plans and real results.

Since accepting leadership of the Foundation, I have come to identify with the integrity of Evanston through the many optimistic conversations I have had with members of the community. I have heard your voices, your vision, and your hopes for the future.

Some of those hopes are illustrated in the new stories in this special edition of the Annual Report, which lists the Foundation's donors from September through December 2015. (Going forward our Annual Report will list donors who make gifts during one complete calendar year.) We hope these stories will inspire you to make a gift to the Foundation this spring.

As we look forward, we understand

# for all

the ample opportunity we have to use the resources in our community to address the challenges of our most vulnerable residents. The time is now to challenge the status quo and reenergize our strategies, and we need your ideas. We invite you to become more familiar with us, and to express your voice, your vision, and your hopes for the future of Evanston.

We are listening and appreciate your support in making Evanston a Good Place For All.

With gratitude,

*Monique B. Jones*

Monique B. Jones  
President and CEO



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## conversation starter

With Foundation support, the Piven Theater Workshop's recent production of *Dead Man Walking* became much more than a play.

Thanks to a 2015 responsive grant, the theater was able to team up with other local organizations to craft the Quality of Mercy Project, a community programming initiative that helped Evanstonians explore the play's timely subjects of capital punishment, justice, mass incarceration, racial inequality, forgiveness, and compassion.

In planning the program, Piven Executive Director Leslie Brown drew on relationships she developed in the Foundation's Leadership Evanston program. After just a few phone calls, she had lined up the project's five main community partners: the James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy, the Evanston Arts Center, Literature for All of Us, the Chicago Innocence Project, and Evanston Township High School.

### community talk-backs

Each week of the play's run, representatives from a different partner organization participated in after-show talk-backs, explaining how their work relates to the issues explored by *Dead Man Walking*.

As the Quality of Mercy Project gathered momentum, other community organizations came aboard. As a result,

our grants  
bring local  
organizations  
together, allowing  
them to do more  
good for more  
of Evanston



Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty* on which the movie and play are based, visited Evanston for the Quality of Mercy Project and opening of *Dead Man Walking*.

the Project also included a free series of talks, panels, and performance nights, held at sites like the Evanston Public Library, Bookends and Beginnings, Rotary International, and Curt's Café. Topics included "The Black Male Experience in Evanston," "Youth, Stereotyping, and Criminalization," and "Life and Death in the Criminal Justice System."

In addition, the 2015 responsive grant helped ETHS teachers develop a new

curriculum focused on the themes of *Dead Man Walking*, and a "morning activism boot camp" for students interested in making their voices heard throughout Evanston.

"Thanks to the Foundation, we were able to make the play the center of a larger conversation across the whole community," says Brown. "It's been so inspiring. And it's definitely not a one-off. These are partnerships we will keep building on."



## investing with Evanston

Last December, the Second Baptist Church of Evanston entrusted the Foundation with \$336,000 from their Ione S. Brown Scholarship Fund, hoping not just to see their money grow, but also to help support our good work in the community.

“This is a longstanding fund our church uses to help local students attend college,” says Pastor Michael Nabors. “But until recently it was mostly sitting in certificates of deposit, earning very low interest.”

After exploring multiple investment options, the church decided the Foundation was the best fit. “It’s

not just about the higher rate of return,” says Nabors. “It’s about everything else ECF is doing, what they’re investing in, and what they’re all about. ECF is looking out for our youth, for senior citizens, for the whole community. Just by having our money there, we’re contributing to their work, which feels good.”

### inspiring fund

This is the second largest fund a nonprofit has ever entrusted to ECF.

“We’re very satisfied so far,” says Nabors. “We hope other houses of worship see how well it works out for us and follow in our footsteps.”



Nkosi Evans, Ione S. Brown Scholarship recipient, and Reverend Dr. Michael C. R. Nabors of Second Baptist Church in the chapel of the historic church.

## cultivating vision

Every year, our Leadership Evanston program graduates another class of community members newly equipped to pursue local change. Since 1993, over 650 people have graduated; nearly 80% still live or work in Evanston. Years later, alums credit the experience with shifting the way they think about making a difference and giving them the tools to take action.

Rick Kinnebrew: “I was working at the Evanston Public Library, trying to launch an early childhood literacy project. Before Leadership Evanston, I would deal with hard problems by putting my head down and working harder. Afterward, I learned to look up, look around, and find local partners with similar goals. Soon the library had teamed up with Head Start and District 65, and my dream project had become a reality.”

Michael Walker: “The connections I made helped me find my way into the local conversation about how to help first-generation college students. I joined Evanston Scholars as board president the next year, working with Steve Newman, the program’s founder and a fellow Leadership Evanston alum. Now, five years later, we’ve helped 114 ETHS graduates apply to, prepare for, and enroll in college.”

Monique Parsons: “By getting me to look at Evanston and its challenges through a different lens, Leadership Evanston definitely laid the foundation for my decision to run for the District 202 school board. Now I’m helping to set policies that affect all Evanston’s children.”

Rick Kinnebrew and storytime at a local early childhood center.



investing with the Evanston Community Foundation means supporting the programs and leaders fighting our greatest challenges

report of the  
investment committee

summary of financial data

as of December 2014 and 2015, in thousands

net assets	unaudited 2015*	2014
Assets	\$ 19,299	\$ 20,391
Liabilities	(3,284)	(3,287)
Net assets	\$ 16,015	\$ 17,104
revenues		
Contributions	\$ 1,908	\$ 2,716
Program revenues	63	75
Investment results	(212)	841
Total revenues	\$ 1,759	\$ 3,632
expenses		
Program services, including grants	\$ 2,362	\$ 2,456
Management and general	274	247
Fundraising	212	198
Total expenses	\$ 2,848	\$ 2,901
increase in net assets		
Revenues over (under) expenses	\$ (1,089)	\$ 731

Audited financial statements and Form 990 are available for review at the Foundation office and on our website, [evanstonforever.org](http://evanstonforever.org)

\*Our 2015 audit will be completed in June 2016

2015 financial review

Gifts to the Foundation’s board-directed and agency endowments increased \$350,000 in 2015. Overall contributions declined due to two factors: 1) the anticipated phase out of the Illinois Early Childhood Fellowship project that generated roughly \$850,000 in 2014 grants compared to \$350,000 in 2015, and 2) more than \$550,000 to establish new donor advised funds in 2014 did not recur in 2015.

As reported by the investment committee below, 2015 was a difficult year for investors, including the Foundation. We held the spending rate from our endowment steady at 5%, maintaining the perspective that over time, our portfolio returns will support judicious spending to meet ongoing community needs. The combination of the Foundation’s -1.6% investment return and ongoing spending resulted in 2015 expenses exceeding revenues.

2016 outlook and results through March 31

The global financial markets went on a roller coaster ride in the first quarter of 2016, dropping sharply in almost every market, geographically and by asset type, through mid-February. On a dime, sentiment turned, and many markets recovered to finish essentially unchanged. Viewed point-to-point, the U.S stock market was flat and interest rates declined slightly, both suggestive of an economy improving but at a modest pace. For the quarter, the Foundation portfolio was up 1.62% aligning with the blended benchmark return of 1.61%.

2015 review

The Foundation portfolio earned -1.6% in calendar 2015. For the three years ending December 31, 2015,

the annualized rate of return was 5.7%, ahead of our endowment spending rate of 5%, net of inflation. Our 2015 returns did not reach our 5% spending rate nor did they match the Blended Benchmark Index we use, which earned 0.1% in 2015, and 8.0% for the three-year period. For two of our standards of measurement, these results are sub-par. We have asked ourselves, as we always do, what we are doing right and what we are doing wrong. Our conclusions are that our approach remains sound and our process remains durable.

longterm favorable results

We note that our returns relative to our peers remain favorable (see graph, right), not just for the recent term but for the long term as well. Similarly, we have earned more than the Blended Benchmark if we adjust for the risks assumed. Ours is a much more efficient portfolio, when adjusted for risk. This is not a small item in an environment in which returns on all asset classes have been shaped mostly by the efforts of global Central Banks. Since the end of the Great Recession in 2009, the Banks have kick-started their economies by means of propping up financial asset prices.

Please note that the 10-year returns in the graph, which include the downturn in 2008, provide the best of the relative performance returns, suggesting that an adherence to considerations of risk is more important than chasing short-run results.

\*The Foundation’s Blended Benchmark is the weighted average of the market indices used by the investment committee to measure portfolio performance and includes the Wilshire 5000 Index, the MSCI-ACWI Index of global equities, the Barclays Capital Aggregate Bond Index, and the J. P. Morgan Global Bond Index.

investment performance

average annual return since portfolio inception in 1988 through December 31, 2015

Evanston Community Foundation  
National median: all community foundations  
National median: community foundations with \$5M to \$24.9M in assets





2015 grants and distributions from all funds: \$1,085,610

communityworks  
\$291,130 26.8%

responsive grants  
\$289,740 26.7%

root2fruit  
\$109,471 10.1%

community catalyst  
\$7,000 0.6%

designated funds  
\$157,311 14.5%

donor-advised funds  
\$230,958 21.3%

2015 grants from donor-advised funds

grants recommended by donor advisors and approved by the Foundation board: \$230,958

grants to evanston area service organizations: \$178,678

Actors Gymnasium	\$ 894
Better Media Alliance	894
Beyond the Baby Blues	100
Center for Independent Futures	55,000
Connections for the Homeless	200
Curt's Cafe	500
Evanston Children's Choir	200
Skokie Community Fund	894
Evanston Community Foundation (ECF)	20,500
ECF Grantmaking Partners	56,250
Evanston Community Television	894
Evanston Dance Ensemble	500
Evanston Environmental Association	200
Evanston Parks Foundation	1,600
Evanston Public Library	400
Evanston Scholars	1,144
First Night Evanston Inc.	250
Girls Play Sports, Inc. NFP	894
Ines Sommer and Terra Brockman Film Production	1,000
Infant Welfare Society of Evanston	894
Interfaith Action of Evanston (IAE)	1,194
Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation	9,000
Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art	250
McGaw YMCA	1,000
Mental Health America of the North Shore	894
Mudlark Theater	1,144
Northlight Theatre	2,394
Northwestern University Bienen School of Music	1,000
Open Studio Project	250
PEER Services	894
Piven Theatre Workshop	894
PrismPathways, Inc.	894
School for Little Children of Evanston	2,862
Senior Connections	894
The Talking Farm	200
Turning Point Behavioral Health Care Center	1,000
Warren W. Cherry Preschool	1,000
Youth & Opportunity United (Y.O.U.)	7,606
Youth Job Center	1,200
YWCA Evanston/North Shore	900

grants to metropolitan chicago organizations: \$ 28,094

grants to organizations outside our area: \$ 24,186



Monique B. Jones, Evanston Community Foundation President and CEO and Michael Brody, Foundation Chair.

Foundation board of directors

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cover: Stephanie Quan, President, Ladies Auxilliary, Second Baptist Church, and Nkosi Evans, SBC Ione S. Brown Scholarship recipient.

writing: Peter Carleton Baker

design: chrismar mardock  
communication design

principal photography:  
William Burlingham

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1560 Sherman Avenue, Suite 535, Evanston, Illinois 60201