

EVANSTON REVIEW

Families ring in New Year with 'first' celebration



Jeanie B! (Bratschie) of Evanston performs as part of the city of Evanston's annual "First Night" family New Year's Eve celebration on Dec. 31, 2017. (/Pioneer Press)



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Pioneer Press

Organizers of Evanston's annual family New Year's Eve celebration event anticipate that some 2,000 people turned out in the frigid cold to ring in the new year.

With several venues offering activities, including afternoon entertainment for children and their families, Emily Guthrie, vice-president of the board of directors with First Night Evanston, estimated more than 120 volunteers assisted at the annual event.

"First Night Evanston gives the audience a choice of almost 25 hours of live performances for a very reasonable fee," Guthrie said. The schedule included jugglers, magicians, musical acts and other performers.

Jeanie B! (Bratschie) of Evanston performed in the Great Hall at First United Methodist Church as part of the end-of-year event

"I love celebrating with kids any day of the year," Bratschie said. "It's my passion. I call myself a 'mu-gician,' I do magic with music."

Guthrie said a 2006 study funded by the Illinois Arts Council and the Evanston Community Foundation found that Evanston has 10 times the national average of artists living there.

"I think that's a good part of why Evanston values the arts, all the arts, so much," Guthrie said. "First Night Evanston tapped into that strength."

Karie Angell Luc is a freelancer.