

Letter to the Editor: A thank you from the Evanston Community Foundation

As the quarter gets underway, the Evanston Community Foundation wants to extend our appreciation to every dancer, committee member and executive board member on a hugely successful 40th anniversary Dance Marathon. We want you to know that the community of Evanston greatly appreciates and applauds your dedication. It's not easy to quantify the impact of DM on Evanston, but the 1997-98 decision to give back to the community that you call home for your four years at Northwestern by selecting ECF as a secondary beneficiary continues to resonate.

First, the numbers themselves are impressive. ECF has now received \$1,134,739, and over the last 17 years, we estimate there have been more than 10,000 dancers engaged on our behalf.

Second, the spirit of our collaboration is inspiring. The DM co-chairs participate as full voting members of ECF's grants committee, contributing the perspectives of a younger generation and helping to allocate funds across the full range of grants that ECF awards. The largest population ECF serves is very young children. We like to think that your hard work and generosity create new opportunities for them so more Evanston children can follow your path to Northwestern and other fine universities.

Third, we've achieved great results. ECF has made grants that we wouldn't have made without your input: the 2001 social norms marketing initiative that continues to shape student perceptions of drug and alcohol non-use at ETHS today, more than a decade later. A more recent grant went to Curt's Cafe, where formerly incarcerated teens have new opportunities through training in food service and life skills alike.

Fourth, the model is worthy. Ours is surely among the largest and longest-running philanthropic partnerships of any university student body and its home community. Thanks to DM, ECF can say "yes!" more often to projects that benefit the community we share.

And just as DM is about more than money, so is the work of ECF. Like you, we are passionate about our work. Like you, we know it is important to strive for goals that seem beyond reach. There is nothing better than standing with all 1,000 of you in the early hours of a cold March morning! The 30 hours seem both unending and fleeting, but the impact of each Dance Marathon continues to reverberate throughout Evanston.

Sincerely,

Sara L. Schastok, Ph.D.

President and CEO

Evanston Community Foundation