

# North by Northwestern

Dance Marathon 2016 kicks off with speeches from beneficiary representatives

By [Caroline Spiezio](#)

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Dance Marathon kicked off with speeches from secondary beneficiary Evanston Community Foundation representative Monique Jones and primary beneficiary Blessings in a Backpack liaison Shannon Fitzgerald.

Evanston Community Foundation works to bring equal opportunities and improved quality of life to Evanston residents.

“A little bit of funding has started a great big conversation, and it’s all because of you,” Jones said.

Fitzgerald spoke after Jones. Met with a roar of cheering, she began by thanking the dancers and the leaders of DM, calling the relationship “more than a partnership.”

“I’ve cried with some of you, I’ve laughed with some of you and in about five minutes I’m going to dance with all of you,” she said.

Blessings in a Backpack provides elementary school children across America with food on weekends when they don't have access to free or reduced price school meals.

For SESP junior Jacob Rosenblum, Fitzgerald’s speech was a reminder of the organization's real impact for children who do not have access to food.

“I love the work they’re doing, and the cause is why I did DM this year,” he said.

Block 1, themed “Baby Got Back[pack],” kicked off after the speeches promptly at 7 p.m. with none other than Sir Mix-A-Lot’s “Baby Got Back.”