

# Foundation **FOCUS**

SPRING 2024



**Don't Miss: DuPage County  
MLK Breakfast Returns!**



## **Governor Pritzker Celebrates Bright & Early DuPage's Impact**

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**Foundation**  
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# A Message from Our President & CEO

Dear Foundation Friends:

I hope your 2024 is off to a wonderful start! As we welcome spring, we are delighted to share this latest edition of *Foundation Focus*.

To begin, I am thrilled to report that we closed out calendar year 2023 with a record-breaking nearly \$13 million in grants distributed on behalf of our community, donors, and not-for-profit partners—a roughly 20% increase from calendar year 2022.

From the powerful impact being created through our discretionary grant programs like the *DuPage Community Transformation Partnership* in conjunction with the DuPage County Board, and our signature *Community Needs Grant Program*—which has been rebranded to *Community Impact*—to that of our more targeted initiatives like *Bright & Early DuPage* and *Arts DuPage*, the results of our grantmaking and collaborations have profoundly enhanced the quality of life for countless residents throughout every corner of DuPage. We are deeply proud of our collective impact. It is a testament to the power of generosity and community when inspired by a united vision.

In that spirit, it was our pleasure to serve as a lead sponsor this past January for the reinstated DuPage County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast, which enjoyed a sold-out, record-breaking crowd of more than 1,200 attendees. The event netted more than \$100,000, and its proceeds, together with an establishing gift from the Inland Real Estate Group of Companies, Inc., have been invested with the Foundation to create the *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Fund*, a new permanently-endowed community fund to provide annual grants through our *Community Impact* grant program in the areas of health, human services, and education, with a focus on supporting public charities primarily serving DuPage residents that prioritize serving Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Additionally, as highlighted on the cover, this past February our *Bright & Early DuPage* initiative was recognized by Governor JB Pritzker as part of a special celebration and press event highlighting our more than a decade of leadership in building transformational systems to ensure that DuPage children, from birth to age five, have the resources needed to thrive in kindergarten and beyond.

In starting the second quarter of the year, we are extremely excited about what we will accomplish together throughout the remainder of 2024. From forging new strategic partnerships and continuing our critical grantmaking and programs, to embarking on the creation of a new three-year strategic plan, there is much to look forward to. Meanwhile, our commitment to providing personal, high-quality charitable services and leading in delivering transformative community impact remains unwavering.

Enjoy the updates that follow. Thank you for your continued confidence, trust, and investment in our mission. We could not achieve what we do on behalf of our community without your partnership.



**Mike Sitrick, JD, CFRE**  
President & CEO

## Our Vision

To raise the quality of life throughout DuPage County.

## Our Mission

To foster philanthropy, connect donors to area needs, and build community partnerships.



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DuPage Foundation Donors Aid in Support of West Chicago Fire

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## Would you like to receive this newsletter electronically?

Email Samantha Hollis, communications associate, at: [samantha@dupagefoundation.org](mailto:samantha@dupagefoundation.org).

## Who's on the cover?

Community leaders, including key members and partners of DuPage Foundation's *Bright & Early DuPage* initiative, assembled with Illinois Governor JB Pritzker to celebrate achievements in early childhood education at a press conference held February 9 at Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley.

## Spotlight corner cover image:

Grammy-award-winning Gospel singer Rev. Darius Brooks, gave an inspiring musical tribute with the combined choirs of Cathedral of Grace St. John AME and DuPage AME churches, at the January 15 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast.

**New Funds Established (see page 13)**

# Fall Community Needs Grant Program Awards More Than \$600,000 to 46 Local Not-for-Profit Organizations



Glen Ellyn Children’s Resource Center received a \$25,000 Fall Community Needs Grant to support the academic and social emotional growth of under-resourced K-12 students. Picture taken at The Morton Arboretum. Photo courtesy of Glen Ellyn Children’s Resource Center.

During the fall 2023 cycle of our *Community Needs Grant Program* (renamed *Community Impact* as of 2024), DuPage Foundation granted \$605,600 to 46 not-for-profit organizations working in the areas of education, arts & culture, environment, and animal welfare. The following organizations received grants:

<b>Education (18)</b>	<b>\$ 278,925</b>
■ Best Buddies	10,000
■ Candor Health Education	15,000
■ Child’s Voice	2,500
■ Compudopt	25,000
■ CREO DuPage	15,000
■ DuPage Children’s Museum	20,000
■ Elmhurst Student Philanthropy Council	5,000
■ Embrace Living Communities	10,000
■ Glen Ellyn Children’s Resource Center	25,000
■ Goodwill Industries of Metropolitan Chicago	9,750
■ Green Halo Scholars	25,000
■ H.O.M.E. DuPage, Inc.	25,000
■ Innovation DuPage	20,000
■ Inside Out Club DuPage	14,175
■ Literacy DuPage	25,000
■ Resilient, NFP	25,000
■ Turning Pointe Autism Foundation	2,500
■ United States Adaptive Golf Alliance	5,000

<b>Arts &amp; Culture (21)</b>	<b>\$ 215,175</b>
■ Anima - Glen Ellyn Children’s Chorus	10,000
■ BrightSide Theatre	25,000
■ Buffalo Theatre Ensemble	25,000
■ College of DuPage Foundation	25,000
■ Darien Arts Council	2,500
■ Downers Grove Choral Society	2,500
■ DuPage County Historical Museum Foundation	2,500
■ DuPage Symphony Orchestra	22,200
■ Elmhurst Art Museum	25,000
■ Elmhurst Centre for Performing Arts	2,500
■ Elmhurst Choral Union	5,000
■ Elmhurst Pride Collective	10,375
■ Glen Ellyn-Wheaton Chorale	5,000
■ Lisle Community Band	2,500
■ Naperville Art League	11,500
■ Opera for the Young	2,500
■ Paramount Theatre	2,500
■ Salt Creek Ballet	10,000
■ Spirito!	5,000
■ Wheaton Drama, Inc.	16,100
■ Young Naperville Singers	2,500

<b>Environment (4)</b>	<b>\$ 77,500</b>
■ SCARCE	25,000
■ The Conservation Foundation	25,000
■ The Morton Arboretum	20,000
■ Three Fires Council, Boy Scouts of America	7,500

<b>Animal Welfare (3)</b>	<b>\$ 34,000</b>
■ A.D.O.P.T. Pet Shelter	10,000
■ Hinsdale Humane Society	14,000
■ West Suburban Humane Society	10,000

To view the full detail of the above grant awards, visit [dupagefoundation.org/FallGrantRecipients](https://dupagefoundation.org/FallGrantRecipients).

Applications for our *Community Impact* grant program are accepted twice per year and are reviewed by our Grant Committee, consisting of Foundation trustees and volunteers from throughout DuPage County. The Committee then makes grant recommendations to our Board of Trustees for approval.



Additional contributions from local donors and DuPage Foundation donor-advised funds helped increase our Fall 2023 *Community Needs* grant budget by \$236,200. The following donors and donor-advisors helped fund approximately 76 percent of eligible requests. Without their support we could have only funded 47 percent of eligible requests received:

- Anonymous (1)
- Andi Stelzner Fund
- Beth and Dan Maguire Family Fund
- Betty W. Smykal
- Donor-Advised Fund for Needy Children
- Effort Counts Twice Fund
- History DuPage Fund
- JCS Arts, Health and Education Fund
- Joan Morrissey
- Langert Family Foundation
- Martha Johnson Fund
- Molex
- Pane e Pesci Fund
- Phil and Judy Barnett Family Fund
- Robinwood Legacy Fund
- Shebik Family Fund for Basic Human Needs
- Sue Wallace Fund

## Community Impact

Effective January 1, our *Community Needs Grant Program* was renamed to *Community Impact*, underscoring our commitment to delivering robust, coordinated impact focused on improving and enriching the quality of life for our community and its residents.

Beginning in fall 2024, grants from the Program's arts & culture category will be awarded under the banner of DuPage Foundation's *Arts DuPage* initiative. To learn more about *Arts DuPage* or to apply for funding, visit [dupagefoundation.org/ArtsDuPage](https://dupagefoundation.org/ArtsDuPage).

The Foundation's upcoming spring *Community Impact* grant cycle is for local not-for-profits serving DuPage County in the areas of health & human services. For more information, please visit [dupagefoundation.org/CIGP](https://dupagefoundation.org/CIGP). ■

## Making a Difference: *Meet the Langerts*

The powerful impact donors like Andy and Candy Langert are able to make through DuPage Foundation makes all the difference in the missions of the not-for-profit organizations we support. Andy and Candy raised their five children in Downers Grove before moving to Oak Brook. They have their own family foundation, but choose to work with DuPage Foundation to help them identify and fund local needs.

“Our foundation is just over two years old,” said Andy. “We lack the resources and experience necessary to be helpful to people in need and to improve our community. DuPage Foundation effectively identifies and evaluates grant opportunities, which is extremely valuable to us as donors.”

Dan Cronin, former chairman of the DuPage County Board, introduced the Langerts to DuPage Foundation. “I was immediately impressed with DuPage Foundation’s knowledge and approach to helping people in need and improving our community,” added Andy.

“We love helping donors discover their passions and identify funding opportunities of interest to them,” said Barb Szczepaniak, DuPage Foundation vice president for programs. “There’s a lot of synergy that can come from partnering. Donors value it because they often learn about needs and projects they weren’t aware of. And it helps us tremendously because there are always more worthy requests than there are funds available through our discretionary grant budget.”

To learn more about donating to or through DuPage Foundation, visit [dupagefoundation.org](https://dupagefoundation.org) or call 630.665.5556. ■





# DuPage Community Transformation Partnership

## Upcoming Grants

The *DuPage Community Transformation Partnership* (DCTP), a five-year, \$10 million grant program between DuPage County and DuPage Foundation, has released guidelines for its next rounds of Immediate Intervention and Transformational grant opportunities.

To date, nearly \$6.2 million has been committed to DuPage County not-for-profits. A full list of DCTP grantees, along with grant guidelines, application deadlines, and evaluation criteria can be viewed at [dupagefoundation.org/DCTP](http://dupagefoundation.org/DCTP).



*DCTP 2023 Immediate Intervention Grantee Glen Ellyn Children's Resource Center received \$50,000 to support mental health and resilience by expanding summer programs and social emotional learning initiatives.*



*DCTP 2022 Transformational Grantee Teen Parent Connection received \$257,500 to expand mental health and case management support to address the increased intensity of mental health needs of adolescent parents.*

### Key 2024 Dates for Immediate Intervention Grants:

- **Friday, May 24 – Application due by 5 p.m.**
- **Grants awarded in August**

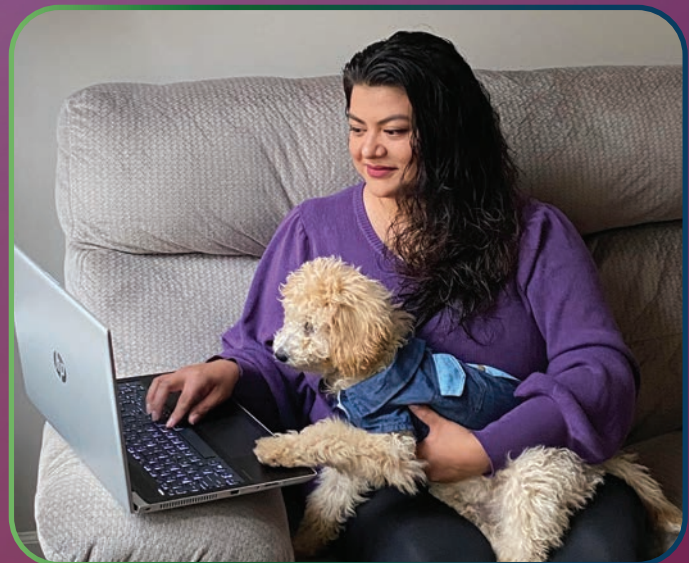
Immediate Intervention grants are intended to provide financial resources that enable organizations to respond to the immediate needs of their clients and/or to quickly increase capacity of the organization to deliver efficient services.

### Key 2024 Dates for Transformational Grants:

- **Friday, April 19 – LOI due by 5 p.m.**
- **Friday, July 19 – Applications due by 5 p.m.**
- **Grants awarded in September**

Transformational grants are one- or two-year grants intended to support evidence-based programs that focus on long-term solutions to build capacity, improve efficiency, and ensure efficacy of programs that support DuPage County residents.

The DCTP supports social service not-for-profit organizations that provide assistance in the areas of food insecurity, housing instability, mental health, and substance use disorder.



*DCTP 2023 Immediate Intervention Grantee Northeast DuPage Family & Youth Services (NEDFYS) received \$120,000 to provide mental health counseling and support for youth and families in DuPage County that will improve mental wellness and strengthen family relationships.*



# The Impact of DCTP

With 53 DuPage County not-for-profit organizations having received substantial support from the *DuPage Community Transformation Partnership* (DCTP) since its inception in 2022, there are countless stories of impact to tell.

Two of those stories involve help delivered in the area of food insecurity to Loaves & Fishes Community Services and Humanitarian Service Project (HSP), both providing hunger relief to those in need.

Between 2022 and 2023, Loaves & Fishes saw the utilization of its Food Assistance Program skyrocket from 3,000 people a week to 8,000 people. HSP did a month-to-month comparison between January-April 2022 and January-April 2023 that showed a nearly 70 percent increase in households utilizing its grocery distribution service in 2023.

"We have been experiencing record growth in families needing assistance," said Mike Havala, president & CEO of Loaves & Fishes Community Services. "Presently, we are serving over 8,000 people a week, which is almost triple the number we served just two years ago. With the purchase of a new electric van through this grant, we have been able to expand our capacity to provide healthy food to more food insecure families. We are tremendously grateful for this support."

In response, both Loaves & Fishes and HSP identified the need for cargo vans to keep up with the pandemic-driven increase in demand, and submitted grant applications to the DCTP.



*Humanitarian Service Project received a \$70,000 DCTP grant to purchase an electric van and charging station.*

"With the continued increase in demand for food and basic needs support, we have taken on more "food recovery" trips to meet the needs of seniors, children, and their families that are suffering from hunger," said Kristin Senne, executive director of Humanitarian Service Project. "The purchase of an electric van, and installation of a charging station, for grocery pick-ups, and deliveries has allowed us to meet that growing demand, and deliver to those who are homebound or without transportation."



Loaves & Fishes received an \$85,000 grant for a van and liftgate, and HSP received \$70,000 for its electric van and charging station.

To learn more about the nationally-recognized *DuPage Community Transformation Partnership* and all of its grantees, visit [dupagefoundation.org/DCTP](https://dupagefoundation.org/DCTP). ■

## NCTV "Spotlight" on: DuPage Community Transformation Partnership

Our gratitude goes to Naperville Community Television (NCTV17) for its ongoing support of our work in the community, particularly of the *DuPage Community Transformation Partnership* (DCTP). We recently appeared on NCTV's "Spotlight," and were interviewed by host, Jane Wernette. She spoke with our President & CEO Mike Sitrick, and DuPage County Board Member and Human Services Chair Greg Schwarze, who both talked about the impact of the DCTP and the innovative partnership DuPage County and DuPage Foundation have together. The full interview can be viewed at [dupagefoundation.org/DCTP](https://dupagefoundation.org/DCTP). ■



*Left to right: DuPage Foundation President & CEO Mike Sitrick, DuPage County Board Member Greg Schwarze, and Jane Wernette at the recent taping of NCTV's "Spotlight," featuring the DCTP.*



# The DuPage County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast Returns to a Record Crowd

The re-established DuPage County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast took place January 15, at Drury Lane, with a sold-out crowd of more than 1,200.

Originally started in 1994 by Dr. William Carroll, president emeritus of Benedictine University, the Breakfast became an annual event that drew more than 1,000. Upon Dr. Carroll's retirement, the event went away.

The Inland Real Estate Group of Companies, Inc. re-established it by working in partnership with more than 280 community leaders to form the DuPage County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Committee, led by Co-Chairs Regina Brent, founder & president of Unity Partnership NFP, and Dan Wagner, senior vice president of government relations at Inland.



*Grammy-award winning Gospel singer Rev. Darius Brooks, pastor of Grace Central Church in Westchester, gave an inspiring musical tribute with the combined choirs of Cathedral of Grace St. John AME and DuPage AME churches.*

Dr. King visited DuPage County in 1967, giving a speech at North Central College. “As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. himself believed, we want DuPage County to be a ‘beloved’ community,” said Co-Chair Dan Wagner. “It’s not just about DuPage, but also the world.”

“This breakfast was incredibly inspiring because it engaged people from all backgrounds and sectors of our community,” said Mike Sitrick, DuPage Foundation president & CEO. “I can’t think of another event in our county that achieves that on this scale. The more we can rally and inspire our fellow civic leaders, area businesses, religious groups, philanthropists, volunteers, and neighbors to connect and invest in collectively solving challenges and pursuing opportunities on behalf of our shared community, the greater success and prosperity we’re all going to enjoy together.”

All net proceeds from the Breakfast went to the *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Fund* of DuPage Foundation, a permanently-endowed, community fund, seeded by Inland to augment DuPage Foundation’s *Community Impact* grant program in the areas of health, human services, and education, with a focus on supporting public charities primarily serving DuPage County residents that prioritize serving Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. More than \$100,000 was netted from this year’s Breakfast for the new endowment fund, with \$10,000 of that reserved for initial grantmaking in 2024.

To learn more about grant opportunities, visit [dupagefoundation.org/CIGP](https://dupagefoundation.org/CIGP). ■



*Left to right: Dr. William Carroll, president emeritus, Benedictine University; Dan Wagner, event co-chair and senior vice president of government relations, The Inland Real Estate Group of Companies, Inc.; Mike Sitrick, president & CEO, DuPage Foundation; and Regina Brent, event co-chair and founder & president of Unity Partnership NFP.*

The program included blessings from eight local religious leaders of various faiths, followed by introductions, an award presentation recognizing national civil rights activist Bob Zellner, and remarks. It concluded with a musical tribute to Dr. King led by Rev. Darius Brooks and the combined choirs of Cathedral of Grace St. John AME and DuPage AME churches.



# Governor Pritzker Celebrates Bright & Early DuPage's Impact

A celebration of collaboration and impact in early childhood education took place with Governor JB Pritzker on February 9 during a press conference at Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley in Villa Park. Representatives from the Foundation and our *Bright & Early DuPage* (B&ED) initiative, along with members of the Villa Park Area Early Childhood Collaborative, joined the Governor, members of his cabinet, other state and local elected officials, and area families for the event.

For more than a decade, B&ED has led DuPage County communities in building transformational systems to ensure young children and their families have the resources needed to thrive in kindergarten and beyond.

The impact of local collaboratives building bridges and providing equitable, accessible early childhood programs was highlighted by the Governor, who also talked about making Illinois the best in the nation in all early intervention and childhood services.

With the help of area donors and community partners, the Foundation created a \$6 million permanent endowment to support early childhood and has invested in bringing together local schools, government, businesses, and community organizations to secure the futures of our youngest residents and put them on a path to lifelong success. To date, nearly \$3 million has been granted from B&ED to provide seed funding and ongoing support for eight DuPage early childhood collaboratives that address the barriers and needs within their respective communities.



*Foundation President & CEO Mike Sitrick addressed local leaders at the early childhood education collaboration celebration and press conference with Illinois Governor JB Pritzker on February 9 at Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley.*

**“It’s local collaboratives that build bridges and fill the gaps between resources and the people who need them the most,”** said Governor Pritzker. **“That’s exactly why we are all grateful that DuPage Foundation, a longtime champion for children, established the Bright & Early DuPage initiative, providing grant funding to local community organizations to help establish, build, and maintain early childhood collaboratives. To the DuPage Foundation team, thank you for continuing your investment in early childhood. We are making real progress and we couldn’t have done it so far without you, and we need you going forward.”**

To learn more about *Bright & Early DuPage*, visit [dupagefoundation.org/BrightAndEarly](https://dupagefoundation.org/BrightAndEarly). ■

## Wheaton Public Library Honors DuPage Foundation at Its Centennial Celebration

This past fall, Foundation agency endowment fund partner Wheaton Public Library celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary during a special event held at its facilities with friends and supporters.

During the program, Library Director Betsy Adamowski presented special recognition awards to Library partners in three categories: Past, Present, and Future. Foundation President & CEO Mike Sitrick received the “Future Award” in “recognition and appreciation of your unwavering support, visionary guidance, and dedicated service to the Wheaton Public Library.”

The Foundation has partnered with the Library since 2016 to manage its suite of five endowment funds. Sitrick has played a key role in working with Adamowski and the Library’s Board to help them launch and grow the Library’s endowment program.

We congratulate the Library on its momentous milestone and remain honored to support it in fulfilling its mission of connecting the community to literacy, information, ideas, and experiences. ■



*Wheaton Public Library Director Betsy Adamowski presents DuPage Foundation President & CEO Mike Sitrick with the Library’s “Future Award” at its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.*



*Event table hosted by DuPage Foundation Board Vice Chair Bill Blum. Pictured top row, left to right: Jen Blum, Jennifer Jones, Kim McGaw, Kelly Gallaher, and Lauren Waight. The bottom row, left to right, shows Dave Jones, Terry Gallaher, Bill Blum, John McGaw, and William Waight.*

## Annual Benefit: Under the Sea Raises A Record-Breaking \$625,000

**D**uPage Foundation celebrated an evening of community philanthropy at its Annual Benefit: *Under the Sea*, on Saturday, November 4, at The Westin Chicago Lombard, with nearly 350 guests in attendance.

With support from donors, community partners, and sponsors, the event grossed a record-breaking \$625,000 for our operations and programs. This funding is critical in helping the Foundation carry out its work of raising the quality of life throughout DuPage County.



*Felix And Fingers Dueling Pianos entertained the guests.*

During the event, more than \$160,000 was contributed through a paddle raise, thanks in part to a generous \$50,000 matching challenge provided by Duly Health and Care, Earl and Kay Harbaugh of St. Charles, and Joe and Amy Weidenbach of Naperville.

"It was a spectacular night of celebration in which our community showed up in force to support our work," said Mike Sitrick, DuPage Foundation president & CEO. "The generosity of our friends and partners exceeded expectations and reaffirmed the incredible spirit of giving that defines our community. Together, we are building a stronger, more vibrant DuPage County through our collective impact."

Guests enjoyed a feast inspired by the sea along with live music and dancing provided by Felix And Fingers Dueling Pianos, who also led a game of "Name That Tune." Congratulations to the first place winners of that game, the table of Busy Butternut, led by Cynthia Hyett, who recommended 360 Youth Services to receive a \$1,000 grant from DuPage Foundation. ■

**Save the date for the 2024 Benefit:  
Saturday, November 9, 2024.**





Rick Eertmoed and Cynthia Hyett.



Event table hosted by Wheaton Bank & Trust and Wintrust. Left to right: Gwen and Chet Henry, Justin Klestinski, June DiNardo, Nadine and Bob Hutchinson, John and Christine Hughes, Mary Korenic, and Matt Gaines.



From left to right: Patty Gustin, Shalini Dixit, and Ajay Dixit.

Event Sponsors of DuPage Foundation's 2023 Annual Benefit:

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# The Power of Discretionary Endowments

Community foundations play a vital role in rallying people to collectively invest in addressing the greatest challenges and opportunities within our community. Often, they lead in championing collaborative solutions to pressing needs and can efficiently pool resources to fuel charitable investments that create lasting, positive change.

At DuPage Foundation, we excel in matching the passions and resources of our community with local needs and opportunities, fostering lasting, substantive impact to preserve and enhance the quality of life throughout DuPage County, both now and for generations to come.

A key element of our grantmaking strategy is to use our “discretionary endowments,” affording us maximum flexibility to target our responses. A discretionary endowment at DuPage Foundation is a permanent, community-focused fund that is invested and generates annual distributable income, which our Grant Committee and Board of Trustees then use to award grants from our discretionary grant programs.

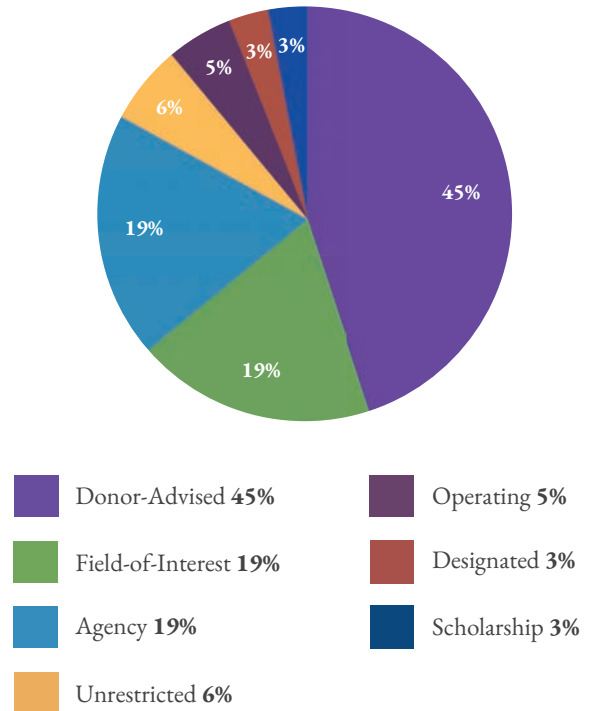
Discretionary endowments are critical to helping us respond efficiently and effectively to emerging local needs and fund new opportunities for our community year after year.

As responsible stewards of our discretionary endowments, we exercise prudent financial management to ensure the longevity of these funds and maximize their impact over time.

Of our current assets, which total more than \$135 million, 24% of our assets (\$33.4MM) consist of discretionary endowments. Although during our last fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, we granted \$12.6 million in total on behalf of our donors, not-for-profit partners, and community, only approximately \$800,000 was available for discretionary grantmaking through our signature *Community Impact* grant program (formerly *Community Needs*). Fortunately, area donors and donor-advised fund representatives helped us bolster this amount by providing nearly \$600,000 in supplemental funding. This allowed us to award nearly \$1.4 million and meet nearly 75% of eligible grant requests. But the needs of our community keep growing.

## Percentage of Foundation Assets by Fund Type

As of June 30, 2023



As DuPage’s champion for philanthropy, we are committed to building our discretionary endowments with you and other community partners to deliver the level of targeted impact our residents and not-for-profits are counting on.

With more than one in four DuPage households struggling to meet basic needs, the time to go *All In for DuPage*, together, is now.

To learn more about how you can join us in helping secure our community’s future through the power of endowment, please contact **Michael Trench**, vice president for advancement, at **630.665.5570** or **michael@dupagefoundation.org**. Together, let’s **keep doing a world of good in our own backyard**®. ■



# DuPage Foundation Mourns the Loss of Friend and Advocate George N. Gilkerson, Jr.

**D**uPage Foundation mourns the loss of our friend and advocate, George N. Gilkerson, Jr. who passed away on December 10, 2023, at the age of 78. He was the beloved husband of Cheryl Gilkerson for 42 years, and a loving father and grandfather.

A longtime resident of DuPage County (Glen Ellyn), George graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accountancy in 1967, followed by his Juris Doctor in 1970. He practiced law for 47 years, and served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney before retiring with the law firm Dykema in 2013.

George was an avid champion of DuPage Foundation. He served as a Trustee from 1998 – 2007, including a stint as chair from 2001 – 2004. In 2010, he was named a Trustee Emeritus by the Board and most recently served as a consultant and liaison for the *JCS Arts, Health and Education Fund*, which supports instrumental music, cultural, health, educational, artistic, and other charitable organizations serving the needs of DuPage County residents. George was also a proud member of the Foundation’s *Legacy Society*, which honors individuals and families who have included the Foundation as a beneficiary in their estate plan to support their community and favorite charities.



*George N. Gilkerson, Jr., JD, DuPage Foundation trustee emeritus, Legacy Society member, and liaison for the JCS Arts, Health and Education Fund.*

“George was a tireless proponent of his community, DuPage Foundation, and the arts,” said Mike Sitrick, DuPage Foundation president & CEO. “We are deeply grateful for his advocacy and leadership.”

Memorial contributions in honor of George can be directed to DuPage Foundation’s *DuPage Forever Fund* at [dupagefoundation.org/GilkersonMemorial](http://dupagefoundation.org/GilkersonMemorial) or by mail c/o DuPage Foundation, 3000 Woodcreek Dr., Ste. 310, Downers Grove, IL, 60515. ■

## Create Your Legacy through DuPage Foundation



**O**ur Legacy Society honors the generous, forward-thinking donors who have made a commitment to secure DuPage County’s future by including the Foundation in their estate plans. Ensure that your legacy will have a transformational impact on our community for generations to come by naming DuPage Foundation as a charitable beneficiary in your estate plan. The Foundation will receive, administer, and provide ongoing stewardship of your planned gift to make certain your intentions are honored.

To learn more about how you can create your own charitable legacy and join this special circle of Foundation friends who are investing in the future of our community, please contact **Michael Trench**, vice president for advancement, at [michael@dupagefoundation.org](mailto:michael@dupagefoundation.org) or **630.665.5570**. ■

## New Funds Established

Since August 2023

- Anchored For Life Fund
- Bill Doerge Excellence in Architecture Scholarship Fund
- Elmhurst Heritage Foundation - Dr. Virginia R. Stewart Memorial Fund
- Excelsior Charitable Fund
- Laura Bresnahan Bush Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Lombard Historical Society Agency Fund
- Lopez+Brosnan Charitable Fund
- Martin and Patricia Jahn Charitable Fund
- Martin and Patricia Jahn Hinsdale United Methodist Church Fund
- Mark and Kim Putbrese Charitable Fund
- Wheaton Public Library Youth Fund

# Arts DuPage at Picasso: 50 Years Later Exhibition



*Debbie Venezia, director of Arts DuPage, and John McKinnon, executive director of Elmhurst Art Museum, in front of a Pablo Picasso self-portrait at the Picasso: 50 Years Later exhibition.*

**A**rts DuPage members and friends came out en masse this past December for a festive reception and free behind-the-scenes look at the highly-acclaimed Picasso: 50 Years Later exhibition at Elmhurst Art Museum (EAM). Hosted by EAM Executive Director John McKinnon and Director of Arts DuPage Debbie Venezia, the evening began with camaraderie, holiday treats, and signature beverages in EAM's bedecked atrium and transitioned to a tour led by John and Studio Coordinator Reese Foytik. Attendees received an insider's look at the three-part exhibit featuring nearly 25 works by Pablo Picasso, along with several works by his contemporaries, including Alexander Archipenko, Wifredo Lam, and Joan Miró. A commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Picasso's death, the show is part of an international tribute honoring the famed modern artist's lasting influence and legacy.



*Arts DuPage Committee Members pictured top row, left to right: Geoffrey Bevington, Joan Morrissey, John McKinnon, Mike Sitrick, bottom row left to right: Dorothy O'Reilly, Julie Curran, Debbie Venezia, Lisa Fanelli, and Debra Vaccaro.*

The event was part of Arts DuPage's ChARTer Membership Program, an initiative that regularly schedules exclusive tours of local arts venues and provides unique arts experiences for its supporters. Members receive discounted admission

and free tours of some of the most exciting offerings in the county. Past excursions include *Frida Kablo: Timeless* at the McAninch Arts Center, *Alebrijes: Creatures of a Dream World* at Cantigny Park, and *Andy Warhol: A Life in Pop* at the Cleve Carney Museum of Art. For more information, visit [dupagefoundation.org/ArtsMembership](http://dupagefoundation.org/ArtsMembership).

## Arts DuPage Examines Arts' Greatest Challenges

A panel of the top arts leaders in DuPage County gathered on stage at the Armerding Center for Arts and Music of Wheaton College for *Arts Speak: The State of the Arts in DuPage County*, where they shared their expertise on the most pressing issues facing the arts today.



*Pictured from left to right: Moderator Debbie Venezia, director Arts DuPage, with panelists Diana Martinez, director McAninch Arts Center; Nolan McCants, photographer, The Nolan Gallery; Justin Witte, curator, Cleve Carney Museum of Art; Erica De La O, artistic director, Salt Creek Ballet; Amber Broderick, general manager, DuPage Symphony Orchestra; and Michael Wilder, Ph.D., Dean of the Conservatory of Music and Division of Arts and Communication, Wheaton College.*

The event, hosted by the Wheaton College Artist Series, drew a crowd of 50 artists, organization heads, and venue operators, who are each navigating their unique hurdles in today's climate. Attendees mingled and heard from six panelists representing various branches of the arts.

One of the key takeaways from the session was that, while ticket sales and engagement are nearing pre-pandemic levels, sponsorships and donations are falling short. This condition is exacerbated by rising production costs, meaning money received does not go as far as it used to, leaving venues in a quandary. ■

Attendees at the October Arts DuPage Month Kick-Off reception said they wanted to meet more often, so we moved swiftly and created "Arts Speak," Arts DuPage's new series of convenings designed to stimulate collaboration, generate conversations, and address the most pressing needs of the local art sector.



# Another Year of Success for NGI Charity Trivia



First place 2024 Charity Trivia winners, “Sherlock Holmies.” From left to right: Dave and Emily Mansell, Zoe and Will Finfrock, Juan Leal, and Cody Fleming.

A sold-out crowd of more than 200 attendees put their knowledge to the test and supported the *Next Generation Initiative* (NGI) at our annual Charity Trivia Night on Thursday, February 1, at Empire Burgers & Brew in Naperville. It was an evening packed with fun, friendly competition, and the chance to give back to your favorite local charity.

“This was more than just a trivia night—it was an opportunity to make a difference and have fun while doing it,” said Henry Kaskov, NGI Steering Committee chair. “It was so great to see a packed room competing in an exciting trivia battle, and contributing directly to NGI and its mission to create a positive impact within DuPage County.”

The winning team, “Sherlock Holmies,” recommended a \$2,000 grant to the Western DuPage Special Recreation Association and received a \$200 food and drink credit, compliments of Empire. The event wouldn’t have been possible without our Event Partners, Comcast, and Chris and Kaylee Phalon of Edward Jones; 2024 Silver Corporate Partner Duly Health and Care; and 2024 Bronze Corporate Partner Kaskov Valuations, Inc. ■

Memberships start at \$100/year and fuel NGI’s annual grantmaking and programs. Visit [dupagefoundation.org/NGI](https://dupagefoundation.org/NGI) to learn more.

## Our President & CEO in the News

Congratulations to Foundation President & CEO Mike Sitrick on recently being appointed to the board of directors for Choose DuPage, the collective voice of DuPage’s business community. In his new role, Mike will work with other private- and public-sector leaders to help build regional collaboration so our county’s economy continues to thrive. He is excited about the opportunity to foster greater awareness of local needs and opportunities for coordinated philanthropic impact with fellow community leaders and partners.



Additional congratulations are due to Mike for being selected as one of Crain’s Chicago Business magazine’s 2024 “Who’s Who in Chicago Business.” This recognition is a testament to the tireless efforts and contributions of not only Mike, but our entire organization, donors, volunteer leaders, and partners on behalf of our county.



Here’s to more achievements and continued success! ■

## Foundation Staff Enjoys a Belated Holiday Outing



On January 5, we had a fantastic day kicking off the new year with a morning of service at West Suburban Community Pantry, followed by an afternoon of play for our make-up holiday party at WhirlyBall of Naperville. Foundation staff works tirelessly throughout the year on behalf of our community, not-for-profits, donors, and other partners to deliver exceptional service and impact. We enjoyed spending our day working together in our amazing community! ■

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## DuPage Foundation Donors Aid in Support of West Chicago Fire Response

**F**oundation donors recently mobilized to support residents affected by the November 30 Main Park Apartments complex fire in West Chicago. The fire displaced an estimated 100 people and left 20 units uninhabitable. Requests for funding were submitted to DuPage Foundation, and received by three not-for-profit organizations, totaling \$32,600 to help support the victims of the fire.

The three not-for-profits that requested help were: WeGoTogether for Kids, Outreach, and DuPage Federation.

Grants to the three not-for-profits were made possible by generous grant recommendations from the following DuPage Foundation donor-advised funds:



*The Main Park Apartments complex in West Chicago suffered a fire in November. Photo courtesy of WeGoTogether For Kids.*

- Amethyst Fund
- Daley Family Fund
- Dare Family Fund
- DuPage Assistance Fund
- Edward & Minnie Ceragioli Fund
- Effort Counts Twice Fund
- Gene Ball Eyles Fund
- Gustafson Family Foundation Fund
- Hillcrest Fund
- Kaiser Family Fund
- Louise Ingalls MacArthur Fund
- Beth and Daniel Maguire Family Fund
- Robert and Laurie McMahon Family Fund
- Morrissey Family Fund
- Mrozek Family Fund
- Mulholland Family Fund
- Perma-Seal Fund
- Webb-Hutter Family Fund