

# Nonprofits take stock of past year

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"It doesn't make sense to keep hanging on to it," Thayer said of the property, admitting the move had been contemplated for more than a decade, when the in-school delivery model ramped up. "Last year we were only delivering about 25 percent in the building. Building utilization was only like 15 percent."

The timing finally seemed right to sell, she related, and prospective buyers were waiting. Among them was the humane society.

"They can expand their operations," Thayer said. "Most of the cash (from the sale) is going to go right back into the endowment in our goal for the organization to be sustainable forever."

There was also transition at the top, with Thayer succeeding R.J. McMahon at the helm of RCC.

"It was pretty smooth," Thayer said, noting she'd served on staff for six years.

She credited the board of directors with providing crucial strategic and fiscal leadership, with many of the newer members well-connected Hinsdaleans.

"It's really just a more locally based board, and that's very, very promising for us," Thayer said.

The agency reaches all but three school districts in DuPage County. Teachers and parents are being leveraged to help reinforce the sex education series — Puberty, Life Begins and Teen Sexual Health — as well as heroin addiction prevention materials.

"They really get three different experiences: one time with the (RCC) educator, one time with the teacher and we're increasing parent programming," Thayer said. "We want to make deeper connections with the student."

## Wellness House

Wellness House Executive Director Jeanie Cella said the 28-year old organization is always seeking to support more people on the cancer journey. And 2017 was no exception.

"We've moved beyond our walls and are offering our programs to underserved areas," Cella said of the partner sites outside of Hinsdale where the organization has gained a presence. "Instead of building buildings that cost a lot to build and maintain, we've decided very strategically to make the best partnerships we could."

Those include medical centers, YMCAs and other places more accessible for residents than a trek to Hinsdale.



"We really grew. We saw a 62 percent increase in visits at our 13 partner locations in the Chicagoland area," Cella reported.

There was also success in broadening the support base through that outreach.

"We know that, in some of the areas, there are more opportunities with respect to where funders want their dollars to be driving impact," Cella said. "They're very excited about taking a program that's almost 28 years old and sharing it."

She said the Hinsdale facility also saw a 10 percent boost in visits over 2016. Moreover, it could finally boast a full staff.

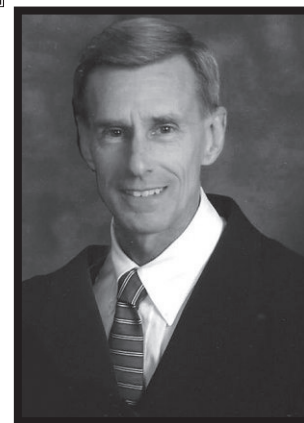
"That was a big deal. I think that was the first year in a long time," she said. "We know our quality programs are partly due to the high quality people we have."

While the expanding influence is rewarding, Cella said the organization needs to make sure it doesn't overextend.

"We don't want to grow too fast. We want to pace ourselves," she said. "You have to keep moving and figuring out how you're going to be able to sustain this growth."

The most-ever 3,088 registered walkers/runners in the annual Walk for Wellness was an increase of 38 percent over 2016's participation, and the \$637,000 raised was a 25 percent jump.

"There was such an outpouring from this community," Cella said, citing a large contingent walking for 10-year-old cancer patient Brooks Tonn of Hinsdale, who passed away last month. "I'm in awe of the community spirit that rallies around people."



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I had interviewed more than one Realtor and I have said many times that I am so grateful that I chose you in the end.

— Deborah and Henry Acuna

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