**Highwood Public Library & Community Center to Partner with**

**NorthShore University HealthSystem to Help Ensure Health Equity**

*$578,000 from NorthShore’s Community Investment Fund will help underserved community members to receive the education and access to mental health services they need*

**Highwood – March 1, 2022 –** Highwood Public Library & Community Center announced receipt today of $578,000 from NorthShore’s Community Investment Fund (CIF) to increase preventative health knowledge, mental health awareness and services, and reduce barriers so that underserved individuals can access health care options. As one of the first to partner with NorthShore through its CIF, the library will work collaboratively to connect community members with the resources they need to ensure health equity.

For years, the Highwood Public Library & Community Center has provided health literacy education and access to preventative health resources. The library is a trusted resource that is well-positioned to address the needs as expressed by the community. In response to a local community struggling with emotional health needs that have been exacerbated by the global pandemic, our organization is sharpening its focus on mental health services. Funding will allow the library to hire highly qualified staff to conduct counseling, case management and lead support groups. It will also enable the library to educate and connect individuals with the resources and knowledge necessary to manage stress, anxiety and depression, ultimately helping them to increase their resiliency.

NorthShore, including Swedish and Northwest Community Healthcare, selected Highwood Public Library & Community Center as one of seven local organizations across Lake and Cook Counties to collaborate on programs that enhance health and wellbeing, advance health equity and support local economic growth. As a prominent feature of their recently finalized merger, NorthShore and Edward-Elmhurst Health each committed $100 million through their Community Investment Funds, which will generate millions of dollars annually, to benefit their respective communities.

“We recognize Highwood Public Library’s important role in building trust within the largely Hispanic community through their existing educational programs and resources. The Community Investment Fund will help expand their outreach and services,” said Gabrielle Cummings, President, NorthShore Legacy Acute Care and Highland Park Hospital.

"In the Latino culture, mental health is stigmatized, preventing individuals from seeking the services they need. The Highwood Public Library & Community Center is a safe space where families feel comfortable expressing their needs and seeking the support necessary to overcome challenges. We are establishing best practices that reimagine what libraries can be to their communities," said Carmen Patlan, Executive Director of the Highwood Public Library and Community Center.

“Our Community Investment Fund is built on the principle that the more we connect and invest in our communities, the better we all become,” added Cummings. “We aim to be a true catalyst for change—putting our talents, unique capabilities and resources to work by collaborating with local organizations, like Highwood Public Library, through creative partnerships for the benefit or our communities.”

To learn more about NorthShore’s commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Community Investment Fund, click [here](https://www.northshore.org/diversity-inclusion/). To learn more about the Highwood Public Library & Community Center’s impact on the community, click [here](https://highwoodlibrary.org/).

**About NorthShore – Edward-Elmhurst Health**

NorthShore – Edward-Elmhurst Health is a fully integrated healthcare delivery system committed to providing access to quality, vibrant, community-connected care, serving an area of more than 4.2 million residents across six northeast Illinois counties. Our more than 25,000 team members and more than 6,000 physicians aim to deliver transformative patient experiences and expert care close to home across more than 300 ambulatory locations and eight acute care hospitals – Edward (Naperville), Elmhurst, Evanston, Glenbrook (Glenview), Highland Park, Northwest Community (Arlington Heights) Skokie and Swedish (Chicago) – all recognized as Magnet hospitals for nursing excellence. Located in Naperville, Linden Oaks Behavioral Health, provides for the mental health needs of area residents. For more information, visit [NorthShore.org](https://www.northshore.org/), [SwedishCovenant.org](https://swedishcovenant.org/), [NCH.org](http://www.nch.org/) and [EEHealth.org](https://www.eehealth.org/).