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Philanthropy under one roof Pair of foundations launch new joint office in downtown Waukegan

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Laura Wasilewski June 13, 2008

WAUKEGAN - The food and drinks were flowing, but the power of the partnership was the buzz on everyone's lips.

Donors and recipients alike gathered for the recent open house showcasing the new downtown office shared by the Lake County Community Foundation and the Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County.

"I think one of the reasons why we thought this was important was a statement to the community that the role of philanthropy is really important," said Betsy Dietel, executive director of LCCF. "Having two entities under one roof is more important than having separate offices."

Recipients of the grants discussed their own partnerships as well. Marty Williams, director of Park Place Senior Services, and June Gold, development officer for the American Cancer Society, were awarded grants by the HFNLC recently. They agreed that their HFNLC grants allowed their organizations to work together.

The \$25,000 grant awarded to the American Cancer Society allows the expansion of a patient navigation services system that provides constant information channels to patients diagnosed with cancer who have questions and need resources, Gold said.

Meanwhile, Park Place's \$15,000 grant will give underserved senior citizens education and medical screening, Williams said. "(Park Place's) medical screenings can alert seniors to cancer," said Gold, who added that people could then receive information from the American Cancer Society as a result of their grant.

Although both foundations previously shared offices in Gurnee, both felt that the move to Waukegan was important. "One of our roles was to shine a spotlight on the county," Dietel said. "While we all live in separate villages and parts of the county, we are one county."

Ernest Vasseur, executive director of the HFNLC, also wants to continue growing the downtown area. "We are hoping that this will attract other businesses, whether it's clinics, mental health facilities, or others," he said. "We want them to say, 'Hey, this is exciting. Let's see if that's something we can do, too.'"