

Thousands ring in the New Year at Evanston's 'First Night' celebration

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[Karie Angell Luc](#) Pioneer Press

An estimated 3,000 people turned out to ring in the new year at the First Night Evanston event, organizers said.



The New Year's Eve celebration offered families an opportunity to enjoy live indoor music and other entertainment, along with other programs for children.

Admission prices for families were capped so that larger ones could attend as an affordable entertainment option, said Emily Guthrie, president of the non-profit First Night Evanston Inc. board, which hosts the annual event.

Admission was \$20 to \$25 for adults and \$10 for kids age 8 and up.

"It's just such a reasonable price and that's what makes it so exceptional," Guthrie said. "We raise money through grants and local business and private donations, all going toward helping to keep the price down."

First Night Evanston kicked off midday Saturday and was held at venues surrounding Raymond Park, including First Presbyterian, Immanuel Lutheran, Lake Street, First Methodist and First Congregational churches, as well as the Music Institute of Chicago.

It culminated with a midnight singalong with sparklers -- provided by the organizers -- on the steps of First Presbyterian Church.

[Lake Forest kids ring in the new year a bit early](#)

Approximately 150 volunteers lent a hand this year, Guthrie said.

The Actors Gymnasium of Evanston performed at First United Methodist Church in the Great Hall, and many of the night's other musicians and performers were in grade or high school.

"I'm really happy that we can do what we love and share it with other people," said Martina Spiro of Glencoe, who performed with her twin sister Carly.



The Spiro sisters are 15-year-old freshmen at New Trier Township High School.

Corky Siegel and Howard Levy, harmonica musicians with a long following, have been First Night Evanston regulars and were among the live entertainers.

Carrie Ost of Evanston attended First Night Evanston with her family.

"It's always good," Ost said, smiling.

Karie Angell Luc is a freelancer.