One Team, One Mission
Marklund and Little Angels Finalize Merger

After eight months of preparation, Marklund and The Little Angels Center for Exceptional Care completed the merger of both not-for-profit organizations, effective Nov. 1. With both organizations dedicated to serving children and adults with profound developmental disabilities, the merger was a perfect fit.

“After working toward this goal since February, I am very excited that our merger finally became a reality,” said Gil Fonger, Marklund President and CEO. “I am confident that the joining of these two solid organizations is going to be very positive and make us stronger together than we could be apart. I am grateful for the positive board leadership in both organizations and for the enthusiastic support of the staff that made this day possible.”

Upon the official sealing of the deal, Little Angels was renamed the Marklund Wasmond Center, to acknowledge its rich history and founding family, as well as to conform with the naming of Marklund’s other facilities.

“Welcome to the Marklund Wasmond Center at Little Angels
one team • one mission
Making everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities

The newly expanded Marklund organization has more than 450 staff members.

All Marklund and former Little Angels programs will continue to operate in their current locations, which are:
Marklund at Mill Creek/Marklund Hyde Center
13450 Wyatt Drive, Geneva
Marklund Philip Center
164 S. Prairie Avenue, Bloomingdale
Marklund Day School
164 S. Prairie Avenue, Bloomingdale
Marklund Wasmond Center
1455 Summit Street, Elgin

“Little Angels has always been a labor of love for the entire Wasmond Family,” said Shelley Lewis, longtime executive director of Little Angels, whose parents founded that organization. “Of utmost importance to us is that we carry on my mother’s legacy of providing care and support to children and young adults with profound disabilities and complex medical needs in a place that feels like home. My family and our dedicated staff have entrusted this legacy to Marklund who shares a very similar history and passion for caring. Joining the Marklund Family feels very much like home to us and we are excited about what the future holds.”

Shelley continues to serve as administrator at MWC.

Marklund’s Geneva and Bloomingdale facilities currently serve more than 170 families in its residential, therapeutic and educational programs, and operates on a $20 million budget. The Marklund Philip Center in Bloomingdale is home to 21 medically complex residential clients, plus a developmental training program. The Marklund Day School, which serves 58 students with multiple medical needs and Autism Spectrum Disorder, is also located on that five-acre campus. The 25-acre Marklund at Mill Creek Campus in Geneva features six 16-bed residential homes, a Miracle League ball field, as well as the Marklund Hyde Center which houses seven developmental training classrooms, therapy areas, administrative offices and an indoor heated aquatic therapy pool.

The Marklund Wasmond Center at Little Angels provides services to 58 clients at its five-acre facility, operating on a $7 million budget. Located on the eastern edge of Elgin, its campus includes the Pat Wasmond Home and the Cathy Freeman Center for Developmental Training. These programs offer services for medically complex individuals with developmental disabilities including 24-hour skilled nursing care, comprehensive respiratory and therapeutic services, and social and community activities.

With the Wasmond Center having a long history in the Elgin area, Marklund looks forward to engaging local businesses and residents for volunteer and donor support.

“The Board has great respect for the long-term commitment and accomplishments of the Little Angels organization and we are excited to join forces with them in our collective mission to care for individuals with profound developmental disabilities,” said Duane J. Fitch, Board Chair for Marklund. “We are so pleased that this day has come and we look forward to continuing this important journey.”

In preparing for the merger, Marklund administrators and legal counsel completed a due diligence process which included a comprehensive appraisal of the Little Angels organization. The appraisal included assessment of such matters as financial records, building and equipment, staff organization, HR practices and benefit programs. In addition, leaders from both organizations held meetings with board members, parents/guardians, and donors.

“Nothing unexpected emerged from this process, which allowed us to confidently move ahead,” he said.

In 1954, a nurse named Claire Havenham agreed to provide foster care to a baby born with Down Syndrome and severe cardiac complications. That baby was Mark William Lund, for whom the eventual organization was named. In a similar story, in 1958, Pat Wasmond, RN, also took in a child with severe special needs, and, with her family’s assistance, established Little Angels to provide a loving home for more children like the very first little girl who touched their hearts.”
Marklund Day School makes ‘big difference’ for student

After visiting Marklund Day School two years ago, Hortencia and Jose Ibarra told themselves, “This is it.”

The Ibarra’s had been touring schools throughout the Chicago area, searching for a setting that could better meet the educational needs of their daughter, Claudia, 14, who has Down syndrome.

“We didn’t feel comfortable with many of the schools we visited – we felt like they were trying to sell us something,” Jose said. “But when we visited Marklund, we automatically felt comfortable. We saw teachers working one-on-one with students, at their level and ability.”

Hortencia recalled how Marklund stood out: “It had a friendly environment and a family feeling,” she said. “We had a sense of comfort and security – Claudia instantly felt right at home.” The Ibarras believe the dedication and personalized approach of Marklund teachers and staff make Marklund a perfect school for their daughter.

For example, as Claudia transitioned to Marklund, she had difficulty leaving home and boarding the school bus. To help, Paula Bodzioczk, Marklund’s director of education, and Angie Williams, instructional coach, went to the Ibarra’s home to get better acquainted with Claudia and her home environment. They created a plan with visual prompts to help her adjust to her new schedule.

Marklund teachers and staff also worked with Claudia to help her feel more at ease around students who have multi-needs. “She used to panic when she saw students in wheelchairs – she felt like they were suffering,” Hortencia said. “Now when she sees individuals with disabilities out in public, she greets them and no longer is afraid. She has learned that we all have different needs, but we are all the same. She shows great empathy for others.”

In addition, the Ibarras have come to appreciate the individualized approach of Marklund Day School. “We trust the teachers and staff,” Jose said. “They have taken the time to get to know Claudia and provide the supports she needs to succeed.”

Before, the Ibarras struggled to get Claudia to go to school. But now, she gets up and is eager to go. She rides the bus one hour each way, but her parents say it is worth it. “She is very happy,” Jose said. “Marklund has made such a big difference.”

“I would recommend Marklund to anyone,” Hortencia added. “At Marklund, kids come first.”

The Marklund Day School is a non-public ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) approved program in Bloomingdale that provides high-quality individualized education and vocational programming for students, ages 3-21 with mild to complex disabilities, including autism. To learn more about Marklund Day School, visit: www.marklund.org

Winery Gifts
Give Back to Marklund

Ordering wine for your holiday party, family gathering or as corporate gifts this year? Please remember that if you order from Aspen Lane Wine Company – Marklund will receive a donation for every bottle you purchase.

Owner and wine-maker Bob Evansky can also create custom labels for your company or family for personalization, as shown in the below photo, or you can keep his unique labels honoring children with developmental disabilities (also shown).


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Wines include:
- Whites - Sauv Blanc, Riesling, Chardonnay, and Rosé
- Reds - Pinot Noir, Syrah/pepper, Barbera, and Pinot Noir

Email Bob today at bob@aspenlanewinecompany.com or visit www.aspenlanewinecompany.com for special pricing and more information!

Saturday, February 4, 2017
6:00 pm – 12:30 am
Marriott Chicago Downtown on the Magnificent Mile!

Step back in time to the Roaring Twenties, when prosperity and jazz were all the rage, women celebrated new “flapper” fashions and modern ideals, the Charleston was on every dance floor and speakeasies were the place to be. We will embrace the lavishness of this unforgettable era during “The Gatsby Ball,” Marklund’s 21st Annual Top Hat fundraising gala.

Enjoy a night of abundance featuring a cocktail and gaming hour, decadent dinner, and exciting auction and raffle packages, all wrapped up in beautiful Art Deco décor. Dance the night away to the intonations of a live band and welcome in the new day with delicious fare served up at midnight.

For more information or to make your reservations, please visit www.marklund.org/tophatball.
Imagine if the entire course of your life changed this morning.

The event could be something significant, but it could also be something seemingly small — if you turned left instead of going straight on your drive to work, or if you missed the train by 30 seconds. You may suddenly find yourself on an entirely different path than the one you envisioned. What would you do?

This is the question that many families at Marklund have faced. Whether their child suffered a traumatic birth or an unexpected accident, all have found their lives forever altered. But thanks to the kindness of people like you, when parents need help to care for their child, they can turn to Marklund.

Beth experienced a life-altering tragedy when eight months pregnant with her daughter, Ashley. She was in a horrific car crash — hit head on by a drunk driver. Not only was Beth crushed from the waist down and pinned in her car, but the impact severed baby Ashley’s umbilical cord. Ashley began losing oxygen to her brain from the moment of impact until she was delivered. Ashley sustained permanent brain damage and was profoundly disabled.

Though their lives were transformed, Beth and Ashley had a tight bond. Ashley developed a joyful personality and outgoing nature. If an activity allowed her to meet new people, she was in! Vacations, shopping trips, amusement parks, camping with her family — she was always at the center of activity!

Between struggling to arrange care for Ashley and tending to Ashley’s brothers, Matt and Jarod, Beth needed a bigger circle of support. That’s when she found Marklund. Beth knew right away it was the right place for Ashley, one where she would be safe and secure. Ashley moved in when she was nine years old, and has been a very cheerful Marklund resident for over 20 years.

One word — incredible. That is how Ashley’s father, Doug, describes the care that his daughter receives at Marklund. When we asked Doug to remember back to when Ashley moved to Marklund, he instantly recalled how she improved. “The changes have been absolutely tremendous!” With the care and therapy Ashley received, she communicated more and became more expressive. This allowed her to have more engaging experiences with her family—from shopping and dining at restaurants to traveling to various zoos across the Midwest. As Doug said, “This is what we were hoping for in her life.”

Ashley instantly fit in and has made lots of friends at Marklund!

• Therapies: At Marklund, we provide our residents with an array of therapies, including occupational, physical, aquatic, speech, recreational, and music therapies.

• Everyday Life: Ashley thrives on the amount of activity and social interaction at Marklund. Our mission is to make “everyday life possible” for everyone we serve, and a big part of that is providing lots of opportunities for FUN! She has the option to participate in over 60 activities each month, including volunteering as a part of our Community Integration Program. As an “extra special” outing each year, Ashley attends our annual Top Hat Ball with her family. She loves dressing up and meeting other guests.

• Quality Care: Most importantly, Ashley receives the “Marklund Standard of Care.” Beth describes that as knowing that Ashley is “completely safe.” By ensuring standards like 24/7 nursing care, skilled therapists in every field, and staffing levels that are twice the state minimum — Marklund provides unparalleled care. In order to provide this standard of care for each resident, Marklund must raise $17,000 per client each year. You are the reason our 174 residents can receive exceptional care each and every day.

While Ashley’s life changed in an instant, she not only persevered, she did so with a spirit of joy. In this season of generosity and gratitude, you can share in that joy with Ashley and our 173 other residents. With your gift, you can make “everyday life possible” for everyone at Marklund.

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To give online, please follow the QR code or visit https://support.marklund.org/joy

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NATIONAL GARDEN LABORATORIES

NATIONAL GARDEN LABORATORIES
A record-breaking day for Marklund’s 5K!

They came. Some ran, some walked, others rolled. With close to 600 participants, Marklund’s 4th Annual Run, Walk & Roll triumphed at the finish line with a record $59,000 net revenue raised.

Two hundred volunteers supported the effort before and during race day, while many Marklund staff members put in extra hours to make sure clients had a chance to take part as well.

A special thanks goes to the presenting sponsor, Fitch Healthcare, as well as the many businesses and individuals who signed on as sponsors, and the runners/walkers who took on individual fund-raising efforts. Thanks also to Team Triumph Chi-Town Chapter, for donating racing wheelchairs for our clients use, and bringing volunteers to run the 5K with them. Thanks to their efforts, we had the largest contingent of “rollers” in our 5K race history.

“We had a beautiful day for this event, and are so grateful to everyone who took part and who helped out,” said Stephanie Heinz, race director. “We especially appreciate our neighbors in the Mill Creek subdivision for being supportive, especially those who came outside and cheered for the participants as they passed their homes.”

Thank you to our sponsors!

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New REST e-course opens the door

The REST (Respite Education & Support Tools) Program is pleased to announce the implementation of a new online education course, designed not only to inform participants about respite care, but to give healthcare professionals continuing education credits.

The REST Essentials® e-Course offers the opportunity for students to gain a strong command of the ten core competencies of respite, as defined by the National Respite Guidelines. Topics covered include: what a family might need/expect when caring for their loved one, how to provide meaningful, goal-oriented experiences for care receivers, and how to ensure a safe and healthy environment.

This new course is offered through the Continuing Education Institute of Illinois, which has approved 1.5 Continuing Education (CE) hours for those who pass the program. The course is appropriate for healthcare professionals who wish to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of respite, as well as family, friends and volunteers who want to provide respite in a supervised group setting, such as adult day care and other drop-off programs.

“We are thrilled to provide this new learning opportunity for healthcare professionals, as well as those interested in respite care,” said Lois Sheaffer, REST program director. “The course opens the door for more individuals who want to expand their knowledge of respite care, and make a positive impact on caregivers in their community.”

REST is an evidence-supported training program that prepares individuals to conduct respite training for persons who wish to become REST Companions®. These respite workers support those who are caring for people with disabilities and health care needs across the lifespan.

To enroll in the REST Essentials® e-course, visit: geroed.networkofcare4elearning.org. The cost of the course is $29 with CE hours or $15 for those not seeking credit. For more information about the REST Program, visit restprogram.org.