Volunteering: A Win-Win

As the man signed in at the front desk, the receptionist asked him if he was going somewhere fun today. He replied, “It’s always a good time—we bring the fun wherever we go!”

Dan is a volunteer at Marklund, showing up every Thursday morning to the Geneva campus to help take clients on outings.

Each year, more than 3,000 people volunteer at Marklund, some coming weekly or monthly, others once a year at a special event. “Volunteers are an important part of the service we provide to the individuals in our care,” said Gil Forner, President and CEO. “They are an integral part of the Marklund team.”

With the assistance of volunteers, Marklund is able to offer enhanced care and services to its clients and students. They help staff by taking part in Therapeutic, recreational and educational activities, lending a hand with art projects, reading a favorite story, going on outings, presenting musical performances, and assisting with exercises in the pool or even with mini horses. Above all else, they are new faces for the clients to see during the day. “They provide many daily life experiences while freeing up staff to provide 24-hour specialized care,” added Cathy Ninkrzd, Manager of Volunteer Engagement.

Marklund began with many dedicated and compassionate volunteers helping founders Claire and Stan Hardnack form care for William Lund, the first client, back in the 1950s, and the many clients since then.

“By volunteering, you can make a difference in the lives of our clients and students while adding meaning to your own life,” Ninkrzd added. “I have had many people thank me for allowing them to volunteer, when I’m thanking them for helping out. It is so heart-warming.”

Studies even show that volunteering provides health benefits including greater functional ability and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not. “People have mentioned it enriches their lives, gives them a sense of purpose,” Ninkrzd said. “It’s a win-win!”

Each April, Marklund acknowledges the contributions of its volunteers at a recognition luncheon, which culminates in the announcement of the Volunteer of the Year (see sidebar). This year’s honor went to Beth Lederer of St. Charles, who helps out weekly at Marklund’s Geneva campus, where her brother, Andrew, resides. “I volunteer because my brother lives at Marklund and it’s nice to get him out along with all his friends,” she said.

Marklund accepts volunteers ages 14 and up, individuals, couples, families, as well as school and company groups are welcome. Schedules are determined based upon the person or group’s availability. “No matter what your talent or skill… Marklund’s staff needs you, and the clients need you too,” Ninkrzd said.

Learn more at www.marklund.org.

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Marklund Day School expands westward

In an effort to provide very specialized education to local students with profound developmental disabilities and multiple medical needs, the Marklund Day School will soon expand to include an Elm location situated within the Marklund Wasmond Center formerly Little Angels). Two new classrooms are nearing completion and will be accepting students from local school districts this fall.

“There are currently four clients at the Wasmond Center who are unable to attend public school due to their medical needs,” explained Marklund’s Director of Education Paul Bodzioch. “We discussed the idea of opening a Multi-Needs program at the Wasmond Center to allow these students to access an educational environment.”

“In addition, this program will be another option for the growing number of districts and families of students we serve in the Multi-Needs program who reside in Kane, DeKalb, and Cook counties. A few students attending our Bloomingdale location will have the opportunity to transfer which will shorten their bus ride considerably,” she added.

Currently, the Marklund Day School has several Multi-Needs classrooms, as well as a Life Skills program for students on the autism spectrum, in Bloomingdale, adjacent to the Marklund Phillip Center. The Marklund Day School Elm Campus will house two multi-needs classrooms that will be equipped with specialized technology, including SmartBoards, iPads, and other communication devices to help the students learn. Students will have access to nursing staff in addition to special education teachers, paraprofessionals and therapists. One classroom will be for elementary/middle school students and the other will be a high school/transition classroom.

“We are looking forward to the opening of the Elm campus,” Bodzioch noted, “and are very excited to be able to expand our services.”
New Location, New Record

The 35th Annual Marklund Golf Classic came and went with a day full of firsts:
• a new location: Cog Hill Country Club
• a new timeline & format: a delicious brunch
• new challenges: Disktread championship course
• new surprises: a helicopter dropping golf balls

While the 263 participants happily embraced the changes, the most exciting new item did not have to do with location, food or golfing. No, the biggest news at this year’s event is reaching a new Golf Classic fundraising record $202,000!

“Marklund was blessed by a perfect weather day, the beauty of Cog Hill and the generosity of our amazing donors,” said Jeanine Zupo, Marklund’s Director of Signature Events. “We remain so grateful for the Porter Pine family and all they do to make this event a huge success for Marklund.”

Twenty celebrities, most of whom are former sports professionals, joined in the day, meeting with Marklund clients prior to heading out on the links with the other participants. “It’s always great to see the kids,” said Buzz Capra, former pitcher for the NY Mets and Atlanta Braves.

Live and silent auctions accompanied the dinner and included the exciting new “Golf Ball Drop.” Sponsored by Lake Brothers Beer Co., the contest featured a helicopter flying close to the event tent and its passengers tossing balls onto the nearby green. The owner of the ball closest to the hole, George Webster, won two airline tickets to anywhere in the county courtesy of United Airlines. Dinner guests watched this unique activity with great interest, many having cellphones out recording the action. “That was very cool! You don’t see that every day,” commented George Demarkaris of ARCON.

Culminating the event was the presentation of the first annual Porter Cup Championship Trophy to the Starmen Insurance foursome.


Get ready to flip for flapjacks!
Annual Pancake Breakfast Set for Sept. 16

Save the date for the 7th Annual Marklund Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, Sept. 16, at the Marklund Hyde Center in Geneva.

Marklund 7th Annual Pancake Breakfast

At this special fundraiser, which is made possible by the collaborative efforts of parents of Marklund clients, volunteers and staff, guests enjoy a delicious buffet breakfast inside, and a collector’s Corvette car show outside. The event will run 8:30-11 a.m.

As always, there are many chances to walk away with impressive gift baskets and door prizes, however, this year’s grand prizes are better than ever a 2017 Apple Watch and two Southwest Ticket Vouchers.

Registration and raffle ticket sales will open in August on the website at www.marklund.org/pancake

Riding to Raise Funds!

The rain held off and the motorcycle riders showed up! Nearly 750 to be exact. Riding on Harley’s and other makes and models, the men and women arrived early on May 21st to take part in the 30th Annual Little Angels Pledge Run. With the start and finish held at Harley Davidson in Woodstock, the event, which included an 80-mile ride followed by a cook-out, a concert and camaraderie, helped raise $92,000 for the care and support of clients at the Marklund Waimond Center (formerly Little Angels) in Elgin. “Many thanks to the Elgin Area Organization of Motorcycle Riders who put on a fantastic event, and to the dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors, who really helped make this event a success,” said Stephanie Heinz, Marklund community events manager.

Run, Walk & Roll for Marklund!

The 5th Annual Run, Walk & Roll 5K/1-mile event will be held Sunday, Oct. 22, at the Marklund Hyde Center Campus in Geneva. Join hundreds of adults and youth who take part in the 5th anniversary of this event to raise funds for the care and support of clients at Marklund.

Registration is open at www.marklund.org/5K

Exciting 5th Anniversary News! This year all participants in the 1 Mile and 5K divisions will be receiving a stylish and cozy winter beanie with their registration!

“We are also offering a SPECIAL registration for both the 1 Mile & 5K participants who would like a 5th Anniversary Run, Walk & Roll commemorative hoodie sweatshirt,” said Stephanie Heinz, Marklund Community Events Manager and Race Director. “This offer will be good for a limited time only! More details can be found on the website.”

Volunteers are needed to help make this event a success. Adults, teens and children are welcome!
Angel Songs Soiree

Please join us at a special Angels Songs Soiree: For the Love of Art & Chocolate, on Saturday, Sept. 23, and enjoy exclusive access to the private Sanfilippo Estate in Barrington hills.

This fundraising event will offer guests a chance to preview the family's unique music and art collections including the Eden Palais carousel.

Those who attend will enjoy:
• A strolling supper
• Live entertainment
• Interactive classical art
• Rides on the Eden Palais carousel

An end-of-evening martini bar sponsored by Guittard Chocolate Company

As an added treat, this event will feature an exclusive line-up of once-in-a-lifetime live auction experiences being presented by the famous Austin Texas Cowboy Auctioneers.

You won’t want to miss this one!
Only 35 tables will be sold!

Various ticket and sponsorship packages are available! Start your registration process at www.marklund.org/angelsongs

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www.marklund.org www.angelsofs.net

Contributions to Marklund are tax deductible as permitted by law.
Our Employee of the Year

Marklund CNA George Santiago received this year’s Claire Havenkamp Commemorative Award. Marklund’s employee-of-the-year recognition. Santiago initially joined the Marklund family in 1999, intending, he said, to work a year or two at the most, but noted everything changed the moment he walked through the doors.

The Award, named after Marklund’s founder, is presented annually to an employee who demonstrates a true commitment to the mission of making everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities. The person also exhibits compassion, dignity and respect for the clients, and maintains a positive attitude and strong work ethic, which serves as an inspiration to others at Marklund. A committee made up of members of the Marklund Board of Directors selected the winner, with the award presented by Board member, Frank Murnane.

The Best of the Best

This past May, Marklund received the 2017 Best of Bloomingdale Overall Award from the Bloomingdale Chamber of Commerce. Gunjan Patel, Administrator of the Marklund Phillip Center in Bloomingdale, accepted the award along with Gill Hoeger, President, and CEO.

“We are so proud,” said Patel. “Marklund’s history in Bloomingdale reaches back to 1958 so this area holds an important place in our hearts.”

“As the Chamber, we are thrilled that Marklund was selected as the inaugural recipient of this award,” stated Deb Evans, President and CEO of the Chamber. “With its strong mission, dedication to its clients, and partnerships throughout the community, Marklund truly represents the best of our community.”

According to Evans, there were over 200 submissions for nominees and nearly 5,000 voting entries. Judges reviewed all information and combined those results with the voting taken.

Before selecting recipients within each of the categories, the Chamber identified two awards that stood out from the rest, the Rising Star (for a newer business) and the Overall Best of Bloomingdale given to the one nominee that stood out above the rest in both voting results and the judges evaluation. #BestofTheBest