Recognizing our Volunteers!
2 WOMEN SHARE ‘Volunteer of the Year’ title

South Elgin resident Amanda Smith, a teenage volunteer at the Marklund Hyde Center in Geneva, and Algonquin resident Penny Williams, a longtime volunteer for the Marklund Wassom Center in Elgin, recently took home the Marklund 2017 Volunteer of the Year awards in honor of their dedication to the organization.

"Both of these women contributed so much to the organization that we couldn’t choose between the two,” said Cathy Nikranda, Manager of Volunteer Engagement. "Amanda, a high school senior, has come regularly for 4 years to volunteer with our clients at the Tommy Home in Geneva and she helped get Marklund involved with the annual TEAM Polaris Dance fundraiser at St. Charles North High School. Penny has volunteered in so many ways for many years at the Wassom Center—formerly Little Angels—in Elgin, visiting with clients, going on outings, even painting client bedrooms. They are both so deserving.”

Clients, with assistance from staff and a parent, helped give the awards, making the presentation even more special to the winners as well as those in attendance.

The annual volunteer recognition event took place in April at the St. Andrews Golf and Country Club in West Chicago.

Others receiving “Most Hours Served” honors included:
- Tom Hahn of Rolling Meadows with 211 Hours in 85 Visits - Bloomingdale Residential
- Sarah Curtis with 33 hours in 18 visits - Bloomingdale D7
- Amber Halinski of Roselle with 79 Hours in 29 Visits - Day School
- Kris Grover of Schaumburg with 74 Hours in 28 Visits - Bloomingdale Administration
- Evan Clark of Geneva with 374 Hours in 88 Visits - Geneva D7 Program
- Joseph Santiago of Aurora with 190 Hours in 29 Visits - Geneva Residential
- Barbara Rhoads of Elburn with 750 hours in 188 visits - Geneva Administration
- Penny Williams of Algonquin with 74 hours in 31 visits - Elgin Residential/Development
- Mark Glibb of Elgin with 64 hours in 22 visits - Elgin D7/Residential
- Margie Lewis of Elgin with 67 hours in 11 visits - Elgin Administration

Additionally, more volunteers received honors in the following categories:
- ‘Special Event Volunteer’ to the Natalie Saligerd of West Chicago
- "Groups of the Year” to Glen Crest Middle School (for visits to Marklund’s Philip Center in Bloomingdale), Elgin Police Department (for visits to the Wassom Center in Elgin) and the Kane County Cougars baseball organization (for service to clients at Marklund’s Geneva campus)
- "Corporate Partner Volunteer of the Year” to Comcast
- "Hero of the Year” to Whitfield’s (AV) P. Smith of Palestine (see related story in this issue)

Marklund Employee of the Year: Kerry Berg

Kerry Berg, Marklund’s Director of Facility Services, received this year’s Claire Havenkamp Commemorative Award at the annual Employee Recognition Event in May. Kerry, who was one of three finalists that also included Antonella Diaz and Luis Perez, thanked his dad in heaven for teaching him everything he knows about maintenance.

"He remodeled homes so I learned a lot from him growing up," he later explained.

Having grown up in Chicago and Minnesota, and earning a Certificate in Diesel Mechanics from the Hibbing Area Vocational Technical Institute, Berg joined Marklund in October of 2004 as a Lead Maintenance Engineer. He was eventually promoted to Maintenance Manager and has served in his current role for the last two years, overseeing not only the Maintenance Department for all three Marklund sites, but also Housekeeping, and Laundry.

The variety he faces in the job, is one reason he has stayed at Marklund for nearly 14 years. "There are always new challenges. You face something different every day,” he said. "And working with the clients and the staff at all three Marklund sites is great fun. I like the whole package.”
**Teachers Learning... New ways to reach students with CVI**

How best to support the needs of students with cortical visual impairment (CVI) to improve their educational experience was the subject of a recent professional development program presented to Marklund Day School teachers and staff in Bloomingdale and Elgin.

CVI is a condition in which the visual systems of the brain do not consistently understand or interpret what the eyes see.

During the session, staff explored different supports, such as light boxes, lighted objects and metallic objects. They also learned how shining flashlights on objects in a dimmed classroom, and surrounding learning materials with simple backgrounds can maximize learning for students with CVI.

“The great thing about CVI is it can be treated and improved as long as the right supports are put into place,” said Nancy Vincel, Lead Teacher for multi-needs, who led the session at the school. “My goal for the training was that every person in that room walk away with at least one thing they could improve on in their classroom. If every person implemented one new strategy, then just think about how many students are going to be positively impacted.”

“The more ways we connect our instruction with our students, the more they will understand and enjoy learning,” Vincel added. “This is what makes Marklund so unique and successful.”

Marklund Day School conducts regular professional development sessions for staff throughout the school year.

“It’s important to continue to grow as a school,” Vincel said. “Since every student learns in their own unique way, it is important to continue to develop as professionals so we can meet their needs. Every student in our school has the ability to learn. It is up to the staff to find the ways in which they do.”

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**Therapy manager publishes article on Social Positioning**

Dr. Dena Bonnike, therapy manager and speech-language pathologist at Marklund, co-authored a study, which recently appeared in the *International Journal of Special Education.*

The study, “Social Positioning: Increasing the Non Symbolic and Symbolic Communication of Students with Complex Communication Needs,” showed that the combination of positioning students facing each other within two feet of each other for social interaction, while providing speech-generating devices (devices that can have communicative messages recorded on them) can increase the amount of interaction between these students.

The study showed that eye gaze between peers significantly increased. Although not statistically significant, students also demonstrated instances of reaching for a peer, vocalizing to a peer, and activating a speech-generating device when positioned facing each other. Overall, students appeared to communicate independently after they were positioned appropriately.

Three middle school students with severe physical and communication impairments participated in the study.

Students were positioned when out of their wheelchairs in what was previously thought to be time for rest and relaxation. “But it appears that it is also a perfect time to communicate with their friends,” Bonnike said.

“The information provided by this study helps us to understand that students with significant communication needs, like typically developing children, are willing and capable of communicating with their peers, which is developmentally and socially appropriate,” Bonnike said.

Bonnike has been a speech-language pathologist at Marklund since 2005. She received her doctorate of education in 2018, and more recently obtained her endorsement to be a Director of Special Education.

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**Inaugural Run, Walk & Roll-Bloomingdale A Success!**

Thank you to all of our generous sponsors, participants, neighbors, donors, and volunteers for helping to make our inaugural Run, Walk & Roll - Bloomingdale a first year success!

We are proud to report that with your generous support and participation, we were able to raise over $37,000 (crushing our goal) to continue to make everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities.

Success By the Numbers

400 runners, walkers and rollers participated on race day.

Over 50 Fundraisers!

Congrats to the Top 3 Fundraisers

- Mike Hupr
- Curtis/Andreas
- Beaus & Roger Wilson

Congrats to the Top 3 Fundraising Teams

- TC’s Team
- Team Treehouse
- Torbala & Harre

1 is 30 chance

Congratulations to the Apple Watch Winners: Todd Corbett
A lot has changed in the past year.

WE HAVE GROWN!

There are many new faces – of both staff and clients – through our merger with Little Angels (now the Marklund Wasmond Center). We opened two new Day School classrooms in Elgin. And, we refreshed our branding with a new logo. What lies at the heart of Marklund has remained the same – our mission and our promise to make everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities.

The things that make up everyday life experiences at Marklund are what you would expect in your own home and more! Each year, Marklund’s team of therapists (speech/language, physical, occupational, and recreational) and teachers meet with parents and guardians to develop individualized plans and goals for everyone we serve – just like you and I set goals for ourselves and our families each year.

To execute these goals, special therapy equipment may be necessary.

For example:
- Octavia may need to be in a prone position over a foam wedge to relieve pressure from other areas of her body, allowing her to safely build upper body strength and head control.
- Kristen and Niko spend time positioned in a gait trainer; walking helps keep their muscles strong so they can continue to be mobile. This also improves overall alignment and reduces pain.
- Asia may have a goal to turn on an electronic device (such as a computer or radio) with a touch-activated koosh switch (a touch-sensitive button).

Additionally, therapy equipment such as customized eye-gaze communication devices, cushioned floor mats for comfortable re-positioning, therapy balls, and specialized swings are just a few of the things you will see in use everyday at our campuses.

This highly specialized (and expensive!) equipment requires frequent replacement and will cost Marklund close to $32,000 in 2018. Marklund annually provides services to nearly 300 individuals through residential, educational, and vocational programs. These children and adults are medically fragile and require assistance with all activities of daily living.

Sometimes, we take for granted the essentials we have in our lives, such as the ability to speak our minds, a vehicle to get around, or a comfortable chair in the living room. Our clients’ daily life experiences count on the essentials of therapy equipment to meet their needs. Your generous support will ensure that Marklund can provide high quality therapy equipment for those who need it most. Your donation today is greatly appreciated.

Please give your Fiscal Year - End gift by June 30th, 2018

Enclosed is my gift of:
☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ Other $________

Payment Method
☐ Check enclosed (payable to Marklund)
☐ Please charge my credit card [see back of form]
☐ I commit to a monthly gift of $________ [see back of form]

To give online, please follow the QR code or visit www.marklund.org/give now

Credit Card Information
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

This gift is ☐ in honor of ☐ in memory of
☐ I (we) wish to remain anonymous
☐ I would like more information about
| Volunteering or taking a tour at Marklund |
| Naming Marklund in my will |
| Making gifts of stock or securities |
| Doubling my gift with a match by my employer |

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Contributions to Marklund are tax-deductible as provided by law.

Please update my Information with the following:

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EMAIL ADDRESS ___________________________

For monthly gift commitments only:
☐ I agree to have my card charged on the 1st/15th (circle one) of each month. I understand that I may cancel at any time.

The clients pictured use their therapy equipment every day and are so grateful for your support: Justin, Kayla, Jack, Octavia, Asia, Niko, Kristen, Heather, Jackie, Alwena, Karen, Mike, and Jim.
A Story From Kristen,
a Marklund client

It was a typical April day, well... except for the snow. My friend Mike and I were going on an outing with our activity aids, Bobby and Maria. I enjoy longer rides in the van, so we can listen to music and joke around. I heard we were helping with a special project today and was looking forward to getting to work.

It wasn’t long before we arrived at a really new and interesting building in Schaumburg. Instead of towers, it looks like bars stacked on each other. Oh wow! This is the new Zurich North America headquarters.

One of Marklund’s good friends, Karen Michalski, came outside to help lead the four of us into a conference room. It turned out that we would be helping Zurich employees assemble athlete and coach wristbands for the upcoming Special Olympics. How exciting!

We got set up, and I was ready to work. There were multiple steps – we had to fold and tear off strips of cardstock, label the strips, and insert them into wristbands. Maria helped me get into a rhythm, she’d fold strips, and I’d tear. Then she’d get the label started, and I’d press it down.

I was focused... when Maria would slow down, I’d clap and vocalize “help” so she knew I was ready to keep going. She even asked if I wanted to stop for lunch... I yelled “WORK!” I didn’t want to stop yet!

But, after an hour, we had to say goodbye to our friends and go get some lunch. What a fun day overall – we helped our friends help Special Olympics, and we got to see the amazing new Zurich building!

The Importance of Vocational Training
Research clearly states that working, in any capacity, helps build self-esteem. And working in a setting with others strengthens relationships. This experience was a beautiful win-win for all parties involved – we’re all better when we work together.

Opportunities like this could be available at any business or other non-profit organization. If you have simple piecework jobs (or greeting position) that may be a good fit for Marklund clients, like Kristen, please contact Codi Ash at cash@marklund.org. Marklund welcomes brainstorming ideas too!