Registration Now Open for New Bloomingdale Run, Walk & Roll 5K and 1-Mile Event

After five years of hosting a successful 5K/1 Mile event in Geneva, Marklund has decided to expand its fundraising reach to Bloomingdale this spring.

Runners, walkers, and wheelchair riders are invited to register for the Inaugural Run, Walk & Roll Bloomingdale 5K and 1-Mile event, which will be held on Sunday, April 29, starting and finishing at the Marklund Philip Center, 164 S. Prairie Ave., Bloomingdale.

“We are so excited to add a race to the Run, Walk & Roll series this April” said Stephanie Heinz, Marklund Community Events Manager. “Being a part of the Village of Bloomingdale for over 60 years, it is great to get back to our roots by creating a family-oriented, fun and healthy event for our neighbors to engage with Marklund and all of the wonderful people we serve and employ.”

Registration is currently open at www.marklund.org/5K. More specifics about the event can be found at the registration site as well.

Registration fees are as follows:

5K Registration: $35.00. This person is participating in the 5K event and will receive an event T-shirt.

5K Racing Wheelchair Registration: $35.00. This person is participating in the 5K RACING wheelchair event at 7:55 a.m. and will receive an event T-shirt.

1 Mile Registration: $25.00. This person is participating in the 1 Mile event and will receive an event T-shirt.

NOTE: Registration prices increase by $5 on April 1.

The wheelchair race will begin at 7:55 a.m., and the 5K and 1-Mile races will start at 8 a.m. Participants in the 5K will run, walk or compete using racing wheelchairs on a USA Track certified course, which winds through the Westlake neighborhood. Certified therapy dogs are welcome; however, other pets are not allowed. A Party in the Park will take place after the race, offering live music, and delicious food and beverages.

The presenting sponsor for this new event is AMITA Health.

Since its inception, the Run, Walk & Roll events have raised more than $250,000 for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Net proceeds earned from entry fees and runners’ fundraising efforts help make everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities through the care and services provided at Marklund.
Top Hat Ball Breaks Fundraising Records

Shiver me timbers, it happened again! Yes, me hearty — Marklund’s 22nd Annual Top Hat Ball has broken all previous fundraising records for the event, netting more than $907,000 in treasure for the ladis and lasses served at Marklund.

“We are beyond blessed that Marklund’s Top Hat Ball has become one of the premier gala experiences in Chicagoland,” said Jeannine Zupo, Director of Signature Events at Marklund. “In addition to raising record revenues this year, the crowd experienced an Escape to Treasure Island beyond their wildest dreams with a Jack Sparrow impersonator that gave Johnny Depp a run for his money!” Event Chairs Birna and Bud Porter went out with a bang as they welcomed in their friends Cathe and Max Schmidt who will take the baton to chair the next three years and bring this event to even further heights.”

This year’s Ball, Marklund’s largest fundraiser, took place in February at the new Marriott Marquis at McCormick Square in Chicago.

The net proceeds from the Top Hat Ball have steadily grown over the past six years, since recording $338,700 in 2013. Having the “Treasure Island” theme, the popular event allowed nearly 600 buccaneers and landlubbers the chance to step into a night filled with gold coins, large jewels, talking parrots and stately pelicans, and raucous pirates and bold wenches who mingled with and entertained the guests.

Among the highlights of the evening was a $100,000 match offer made by a donor for the Fund-In-Need paddle-raise portion of the live auction, and a “Heads or Tails” contest to win a Norwegian Cruise to Havana, Cuba and two round-trip United Airlines tickets. “We continue to be so thankful for those who chose to support our mission of making everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities,” noted Gil Fonger, President and CEO of Marklund.

Money earned at fundraising events such as this will help Marklund bridge the large funding gap created by the state of Illinois, of $17,000 per year for each of Marklund’s 174 residential clients.

The Top Hat Ball traditionally serves as the venue to announce Marklund’s “Friend of the Year.” This year, George and Jeanne Webster, longtime supporters of Marklund, were honored together as the 40th recipient of the award. George, owner of RAM Mechanical Services, was introduced to Marklund in the 1990s and over the years, he and Jeanne became more and more committed to the mission and wanted to continue giving back to Marklund in bigger ways. George has served on the Marklund Board of Directors since 2008, and is a member of the Finance Committee. “Through the Webster’s extensive fundraising over the years, Marklund has been able to cultivate new donors, sponsors and volunteers, which has translated into very significant support for the organization,” Fonger said. “Together, Jeanne and George continue to be exemplary ambassadors, giving generously of their time, talent and treasure to support those we serve at Marklund.”

Meet our Administrators

Rachelle Jewison
Administrator, Marklund Hyde Center and Community-Based Services

Gurjan Patel
Administrator, Marklund Philip Center, and Director of Therapy

Shelley Lewis
Administrator, Marklund Wadsworth Center

Rachelle Jewison joined the Marklund team in April of 2015. Professionally, she has spent over 15 years as an advocate for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in addition to her full-time employment with Marklund as a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator (LNHA). Rachelle serves as an Administrative Surveyor for CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) where she oversees survey processes at organizations both within and outside of the United States. Rachelle earned a bachelors degree in Public Health Administration from Northern Illinois University and is currently working on completing her MBA degree through the University of Illinois. Contact Rachelle Jewison at 630-593-5550.

Gurjan Patel has been with Marklund since 2004. Her background consists of working and managing therapy departments at a variety of hospitals and inpatient settings in the Chicagoland area. Currently at Marklund, Gurjan holds an LNHA license, and is both the Administrator for the Philip Center in Bloomingdale as well as Director of Therapy for all Marklund sites. In addition, she is on the Board of Directors for The Center for Developmental Disabilities Advocacy and Community Supports for the Illinois Healthcare Association, and leads the MDCD (Medically Complex Developmental Disabilities) facilities group for the State of Illinois. She received a bachelors degree in Biology from University of Illinois and a Masters in Physical Therapy from Northwestern University. Contact Gurjan Patel at 630-529-2871.

Shelley Lewis has been involved with the Marklund Wadsworth Center (formerly Little Angels) her entire life. She was three years old when her parents, Pat and Bob Wadsworth, opened their home to children with special needs. She grew up working in the facility in every capacity taking over in 1979 as the Administrator. She earned a bachelors degree in Nursing from the University of Iowa. She started her nursing career in the Burn Unit at Loyola University before being called home to the family business. She is proud to stay on her parent’s legacy under the Marklund Family. For several years, Shelley served as President of the Illinois Association of Pediatric Residential Facilities, and has represented similar facilities throughout the State of Illinois serving on numerous committees and advisory groups affecting legislation, rules, regulations and reimbursement issues. Contact Shelley Lewis at 224-523-7530.
Golf enthusiasts are invited to the renowned links of the Cog Hill Golf Course in Lemont on June 6th for the 36th Annual Marklund Golf Classic, home of the Porter Cup. Participants will be joined on the course for this major fundraising event by former professional athletes who take part to support the care of children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Golfers up for the challenge may register to test their skills and endurance on either Course 1 or the famously challenging Dubsread course. The full day of activities include a buffet brunch, followed by an 11 a.m. shot-gun start golf experience complete with various hole challenges, raffles, auctions and more. Dubsread foursomes will take part in a stroke-play after their shotgun start and be part of the Annual Porter Cup championship!

After the 18-hole round, golfers and guests will enjoy a dinner buffet, auction and award ceremony under the big tent. In addition, of course, be ready for the 2nd annual Helicopter Ball Drop!

Register at www.marklund.org/golfclassic.

Respite study to be published in national journal

A research article that assesses the effectiveness of the REST (Respite Education & Support Tools) training program has been published by Home Health Care Services Quarterly (HHCSCQ), a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the advancement of research, practice, and policy in health care across a continuum of care settings.

The manuscript, "Effects of Respite Care Training on Respite Provider Knowledge and Confidence, and Outcomes for Family Caregivers Receiving Respite Services," reports on the efficacy or effectiveness of REST training on respite providers and the outcomes for family caregivers receiving respite services.

Dr. Lynn Ackerman, co-founder and chief customer officer of Sensign Surveys, and Lois Sheaffer, National Director of REST and Director of Government Relations at Marklund, co-authored the study, which is set for publication in the near future.

"This study is a first step in examining how formal respite training translates into competent respite care and, as a result, better outcomes for family caregivers," Dr. Ackerman said. "The REST program was built on the idea that delivery of a quality respite experience involves equipping providers with skills that allow them to respond to unique family needs and situations. Our research supports the supposition that when respite providers are educated on the core areas of quality respite, they have the tools to develop an individualized plan of care and the know-how to thoughtfully respond to unique family situations, resulting in better caregiver outcomes."

"It is my passion to serve caregivers through respite," Sheaffer said. "As author of the REST curriculum, it is very humbling to see the program being used across the nation. To have this article published shows the efficacy of the first evidence-based respite training program in the nation. It is truly inspiring as we continue to deliver education.

REST is a Train-the-Trainer program, created five years ago through Marklund, that equips and prepares trainers to conduct an eight-hour respite care course. By training paid and unpaid workers (volunteers) to provide respite, it allows those who are caring for people across the lifespan (children, adults and seniors) to receive breaks in their caregiving. Getting breaks helps to prevent burnout, and ultimately delay long-term placement of their loved ones. Currently, the REST Program has trained 528 Trainers and 5,480 Companions (those who provide respite care services) in 29 states.

Learn more: www.restprogram.org.

Thank you Mr. & Mrs. Schaden!

On Dec. 16, 2017, Brandon Schaden and got married. Sheli is the K-5 General Music Teacher at Western Avenue Elementary School in Geneva. She has been partnering with Marklund over the last four years by bringing her 5th grade choir members to the Marklund Hyde Center in Geneva to carol in the winter, and the entire 5th grade class to perform their Spring Showcase Concert. Sheili says she has always admired what Marklund staff does for individuals with special needs and their families, so that as a way to show gratitude, she and her husband decided to use their wedding as a way to raise money for Marklund.

Guests at the wedding were given the option to make a donation in the bride and groom’s name for Marklund in lieu of a traditional wedding gift. This generous effort raised $1,000.

Sheili and Brandon hope that this donation can help in some way and is given as a thank you for everything Marklund does for the community. ‘May God bless you all and continue to gift you in making a difference in others’ lives everyday.

— Sheli & Brandon Schaden
Wheaton College Students Learn from Marklund

Eleven Wheaton College students are benefiting from a new partnership between the college and Marklund Day School.

Marklund Day School, a non-public state-certified school located in Bloomingdale and Elgin, provides an enriching educational experience for students ages 3-21 with multiple disabilities, autism and other developmental disabilities, and have learned about teaching methods, curriculum, technology and how teachers and staff meet the unique needs of each student. After their visit, they are required to complete a reflection and present to their class.

“We are very excited to welcome the students from Wheaton College and share our knowledge with them,” Botzioch said. “We hope that they will learn how to utilize the best practices implemented within our classroom to support students. We also hope to inspire them to consider working in a therapeutic school setting after they graduate.”

The goal of the partnership is to train and equip future teachers - and give them a real-world experience beyond classroom learning, said Thomas Boehm, Ann Haskins Assistant Professor of Special Education, Wheaton College, who is overseeing the new special education endorsement program at the college. “Teacher preparation programs are enhanced when students can blend the best of classroom instruction with field experience that can provide context to what they are learning.”

Wheaton student Lesh Schoonmaker noted that she was moved in ways she didn’t expect to be. “I was impressed with how well the paraprofessionals and teachers worked with each other and the students. The graciousness I saw the staff demonstrate warmed my heart and gave me confidence that, with practice, I can do the same for my future students.”

“I learned a lot about how ‘special’ special education can be,” added student Maggie Rhee. “I saw so many advantages to having specialized instruction during my time here. I also could see that all of the aides really cared for their students. They really had a heart for seeing them grow and develop as individuals.”

Boehm noted how valuable it is for students to do their field experience at a place like Marklund Day School, which maximizes opportunities for students to return to their home school setting. “It is a model program,” he said.