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One year into a pandemic – COVID-19 vaccines are finally available to Marklund staff and residents. Since March of 2020, we’ve been doing all we can for those we serve and who work here.

*Marklund never stops. Not ever.*
Little Angels (MWC) Founder Robert L. Wasmond 1926-2021

We are saddened to share the news that Mr. Robert L. Wasmond, who, with his wife Pat, founded Little Angels Center for Exceptional Care in 1958, (now Marklund Wasmond Center) died peacefully Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021, at the age of 95.

Bob was born on Jan. 1, 1926, in Elgin, Ill., was a graduate of Elgin High School and proudly served his country in World War II in the Army Air Corps. Soon after the war, he met his wife, Pat, a registered nurse, who passed away in 2013.

In his early days, Bob was a skilled mechanic and ran a service station and auto repair shop with his father and brother, Bud. Later, he managed an industrial plating plant. It was said about Bob, that there wasn’t anything that he couldn’t fix or tackle.

In 1958, in pursuit of his wife’s dreams, Bob assisted Pat in founding Little Angels. At that time, she was working in a doctor’s office in the Elgin area. This doctor had a child with severe disabilities, requiring 24-hour care. Pat offered her assistance and the child came to live with Pat, Bob and their children. Word spread in the Elgin area of this exceptional family and the wonderful care this child was receiving. Soon the Wasmonds began receiving calls from other families seeking this kind of help and it became evident there was a vital call for this type of care in the area. At Little Angels, Bob oversaw operations and was on hand when anything broke down. Needless to say, he was on call 24/7. In addition to their work at Little Angels, they were compassionate advocates for children and families in need.

“It is truly the end of an era at Marklund with the passing of Mr. Wasmond, the last of our founders,” said Gil Fonger, president & CEO. “His legacy, vision and dedication, along with that of his wife, Pat, and Claire and Stan Haverkampf, will be honored now and in the years to come.”

Meet our 2021 Marklund Board of Directors

The Marklund Board of Directors is made up of a group of volunteers from the suburbs and Chicago area who are committed to advancing the mission and vision of Marklund. Having diverse backgrounds, the Board members bring to the table experience from various business sectors, service organizations and personal connections to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Frank Murnane Jr., Chair
Mike Herlihy, Treasurer & Vice Chair; Finance Committee Chair
Jeff Risch, Secretary
Jim Armbruster
Jeff Blanchette

Howard Brandeisky, Chair, Development Committee
Carol Donahue
Gerry Estes
Jerry Finis
Duane Fitch

Dan Foley
Laura Karlins
Melissa Kud
Yaneth Medina
Jack Zimmerman
Meghan Edwards, Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Meghan joined Marklund Day School (MDS) 3½ years ago, as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and, according to Paula Bodzioch, Director of Educational Services, works to ensure the school’s behavior programming is “top notch!”

Some students at MDS are unable to express themselves verbally. They often express their wants, needs and emotions in the form of behavior. BCBA’s are responsible for assessing and evaluating students when their behavior impacts their ability to access their education. Meghan, along with the Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs), explore the function of the behavior, identify replacement behavior and positive supports to develop a treatment plan, also known as a Behavior Intervention Plan.

“Meghan is a dedicated, passionate, creative team player who is always thinking out of the box to make sure students are provided with individualized behavior intervention plans based exclusively on their needs,” Bodzioch said. During her tenure at MDS, Meghan has trained 12 RBTs, who each support a classroom.

“A large portion of my job is to observe and analyze what happens before and after the behaviors occur. Together with the RBTs, we implement proactive strategies so that the students’ needs are met and maladaptive behaviors don’t occur.”

After earning a degree in Special Education from Elmhurst College, Meghan received a master’s degree in Applied Behavior Analysis from Arizona State University before sitting for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst exam. She has worked as a Special Education teacher for K-12 as well as a behavior therapist in the home and community setting for individuals with developmental disabilities whose ages varied from 3-65 years old.

“What I love most about working at Marklund Day School sounds cliché but it really is the kids and the staff,” noted Meghan. “Our work is hard and the progress the kids make can be small and challenging, but the difference it makes for them and the (school) team makes me so happy to come to work every day.”

“Meghan provides high-quality, professional development to both Life Skills and Multi-Needs programs at all three MDS campuses. We are so lucky to have a BCBA so dedicated to ensuring our students succeed,” Bodzioch added.

On behalf of the children and adults served by Marklund, THANK YOU for opening your heart this holiday season. Your generosity filled our homes and residents’ lives with joy and helped us with our mission of making everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities.
Run, Walk or Roll for Marklund on Your Course!

For the second year, Marklund’s annual Run, Walk & Roll-Bloomingdale 5K/1 Mile fundraiser will be held as a virtual event. Make a difference from a distance and join in running, walking or rolling anytime from April 15-18, anywhere you want.

It’s very easy to support Marklund during this event. Simply choose your course – your neighborhood, inside on a treadmill, or along your favorite trail. Start your timer and GO! Cross your personal 1M and 5K finish line and submit your time. Post your distance, time and a fun photo to social media, tagging @MarklundCharity and using #RunWalkandRoll #MarklundStrong.

Registration is being accepted at www.marklund.org/5kbloomingdale. Fees are: 5K: $40; 1 Mile: $30; Event Shirt Only: $20.

Registration includes:
- Long sleeve event shirt – *Guaranteed before March 18
- Made a Difference from a Distance Static Cling Window Decal
- Entry for a chance to win an Apple Watch SE
- Timing Entry for 5K Participants
- Participant Bib and Finisher Certificate
- Additional goodies/SWAG provided by race sponsors

“With health and safety being our number one priority, we have decided to remain VIRTUAL for our Run, Walk & Roll-Bloomingdale event again this year.” said Natalie Sarby, Race Director. “Remember... VIRTUAL is not just sitting behind a screen. VIRTUAL gives everyone the opportunity to still participate and be active, while keeping loved ones and ourselves safe.”

Participants are encouraged to also fundraise as individuals or teams.
A Virtual Top Hat Ball Success!

Marklund. Never. Stops. Not for a pandemic, and not while hosting a virtual gala!
Thankfully, our donors, friends and families did not stop either!

With a live-streamed show presented online Saturday, Feb. 6, to hundreds who watched during private watch parties and small at-home gatherings, Marklund’s Top Hat Ball Upside Down ultimately raised more than $770,000 in net proceeds.

“I’d like to thank everyone for standing beside us through the technology glitches and making Marklund’s Livestream Gala Experience a truly unique and remarkable year we will never forget,” said Jeannine Zupo, Director of Signature Events at Marklund. “Everyone responded with incredible generosity as our auctioneer creatively used hand-signals and signs to guide attendees through a Live Auction and Fund-in-Need paddle raise.”

“This is a testimony to how much you care about our mission and the families we serve,” she continued. “Cheers to the best volunteers and supporters an organization could ask for. We are blessed. We are Marklund strong!”

2021 Friend of the Year – Peg and John Haskins

Peg and John, owners of Viking Travel Service, were first introduced to Marklund in 1997 when they began supporting the very first Top Hat Ball with a cruise donation. Over the years, Peg and John have truly become champions to the cause by not only their continued in-kind and financial contributions, but by introducing countless travel partners to Marklund who have donated to our auctions. The Haskins combined personal and corporate giving spans almost 24 years, making Viking Travel one of our strongest Corporate Partners.

Dating back to 1979, Marklund has honored a “Friend of the Year” at an annual event. Each Friend has demonstrated in his/her own way, publicly or privately, a heart of gold and the willingness to serve Marklund’s infants, children and adults in ways that will affect their lives significantly, now and in the future.
Looking ahead: Expanding our Community Day Services program

Exciting news! We are expanding our Community Day Services (CDS) to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have aged out of traditional high school programs. Last December, Marklund purchased a 4,470-square-foot professional office building at 1210 Hunter Dr., Elgin. With the recent approval for a special use permit granted by the Elgin City Council, the wheels have been put in motion to design and renovate the property. Tentatively slated to open in the Fall of 2021, this CDS program will address functional skills including communication, choice making, self-care, leisure and recreation, and vocational, as well as life skills such as cooking, laundry and cleaning. It will also incorporate community integration, focusing on community navigation, socialization and volunteer opportunities.

Celebrating Our Diversity

Starting in 2021, Marklund included Martin Luther King Jr. Day as one of its official holidays, along with New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. “We wanted to observe this Federal holiday, even though it is not mandated, not only to honor Dr. King and his contribution to the Civil Rights Movement but to celebrate the cultures and diversities that we represent in this organization,” said Marklund President & CEO Gil Forger.

The Marklund organization – staff, residents and students – is full of different people from different places with different experiences. Throughout this community and the activities and programs presented 24/7/365, there is cultural diversity, gender diversity, religious diversity, language diversity, different education levels, different viewpoints, and unique abilities. It’s all of that. It’s people who think differently, act differently, and look different, from leadership to frontline employees, bringing their own unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to the table, working together on one mission of making everyday possible for individuals with profound disabilities.

Event Calendar

Please note: We are excited to present the upcoming Run, Walk & Roll-Bloomingdale as a virtual event, with individuals Making a Difference from a Distance wherever they want April 15-18. As more people become vaccinated throughout the area, we are hoping to hold our other 2021 events in person. However, they could become virtual or hybrid if necessary, depending on the status of the pandemic. Stay tuned for more details as 2021 progresses.

4th Annual
Run, Walk & Roll-Bloomingdale
April 15-18, 2021

39th Annual
Marklund Golf Classic
June 10, 2021

Summer Games
• Marklund Hyde Center
  Aug. 14, 2021
• Marklund Philip Center
  Aug. 21, 2021
• Marklund Wasmond Center
  Aug. 28, 2021

9th Annual
Run, Walk & Roll-Geneva
Oct. 17, 2021

*Volunteer Recognition Event postponed to 2022.

Our Locations

Marklund Hyde Center & School
1S450 Wyatt Drive
Geneva, Illinois 60134
Phone: 630.593.5500
Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) for adults.
25-acre campus includes six 16-bed residential homes for 96 adults. Community Day Services for residents and day clients, on-site heated aquatic therapy pool, main administrative offices, therapy services, and Miracle League baseball field.

Marklund Day School-Geneva,
Foglia Education Center,
(same address as above)
A non-public, state-certified school for students ages 3 through 21 with multiple complex medical conditions and those on the autism spectrum. Offering special education within Multi-Needs and Life Skills programs.

Marklund Philip Center & School
164 S. Prairie Avenue
Bloomingdale, Illinois 60108
Phone: 630.529.2871
Medically Complex/DD Facility for 21 children and adults. Skilled nursing, Community Day Services, therapy services, recreational and community activities.

Marklund Day School (same address as above)
Phoen: 630.307.1882
A non-public, state-certified school that partners with area school districts to provide a highly specialized education experience. This therapeutic, sensory-driven Multi-Needs Program serves individuals ages 3 through 21 with medical, developmental, and physical disabilities.

Marklund Wasmond Center & School
1435 Summit Street
Elgin, Illinois 60120
Phone: 224.523.7530
Medically Complex/DD Facility for 57 children and adults. Skilled nursing, Community Day Services, therapy services, recreational and community activities. Five-acre campus includes the residential facility, Community Day Services center, and two Marklund Day School classrooms for students in the Multi-Needs Program.

Our Social Network

www.marklund.org | info@marklund.org