

## Marklund names Employee of the Year



Yanary Labrador, accepts Marklund's Claire Haverkamp Commemorative Award, the organization's Employee of the Year recognition. *Courtesy of Tiffany Zurek*  
**Submitted by Dawn Lassiter-Brueske**

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Yanary Labrador, a 14-year employee of Marklund's Hyde Center campus in Geneva, received this year's Claire Haverkamp Commemorative Award, Marklund's employee-of-the-year recognition.

Having worked as a nurse in her native homeland of Cuba, she joined the Marklund family in 2008, a few years after moving to America.

"Seventeen years ago, I moved to this country not knowing a word of English ... Marklund took me in, Marklund understood me, Marklund helped me grow, Marklund became my second family," she said.

Never having worked with people with severe disabilities before coming to Marklund, Labrador, a resident of Montgomery, used her nurse's training to thrive as a Personal Support Professional (PSP). Over the years, she took on additional roles as a Preceptor, Marklund Ambassador, and Lead PSP and serves on committees focusing on Employee Appreciation, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

"These days, she is often referred to as one of our loudest cheerleaders," one coworker said. "She lights up the room for residents and staff alike, regularly going out of her way to make sure all staff and residents feel part of the Marklund family."

According to one of her nominators, she knows every resident on campus and has developed strong bonds with them, several of whom have been with her since the day she started.

Two other employees were finalists in the award process, Barb Lechowicz of Addison, who is a longtime multi-needs paraprofessional in the Marklund Day School in Bloomingdale, and Charity Bothwell of Bensenville, another longtime employee who is an RBTP (Registered Behavior Technician Paraprofessional) also at the Day School in Bloomingdale.

Marklund Board Member Frank Murnane Jr. presented the award at a ceremony held at the Marklund campus in Geneva.

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 serve as an inspiration to others at Marklund. As another nominator stated: "Yanary truly is the modern day Claire Haverkampf!"