

# Daily Herald

Suburban Chicago's Information Source



Grace McWayne Elementary School first grade teacher Chad Clarey was surprised with the Volunteer of the Year award at the Marklund Hyde Center in Geneva. Clarey and the school's first-grade classes visited the facility and made Valentine's Day cards for the clients as part of their 100th Day of School celebration. ( *Sandy Bressner/Shaw Media* )



**Dave Heun**

Updated 2/18/2023 8:09 AM

With about 65 first graders chanting "Clarey! Clarey! Clarey!" residents and staff at Marklund Hyde Center campus in Geneva could say without hesitation it was the most noise they have heard in their community day services rooms since before the pandemic lockdowns.

And it was music to everyone's ears as first graders from Grace McWayne

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As for the chant? First-grade teacher Chad Clarey brought his students to participate in this event, just one of many special efforts Clarey has made in the past dozen years to make life better for Marklund residents.

Such commitment earned him Marklund's Volunteer of the Year award for 2022, which came about as a surprise announcement during his first graders' visit.

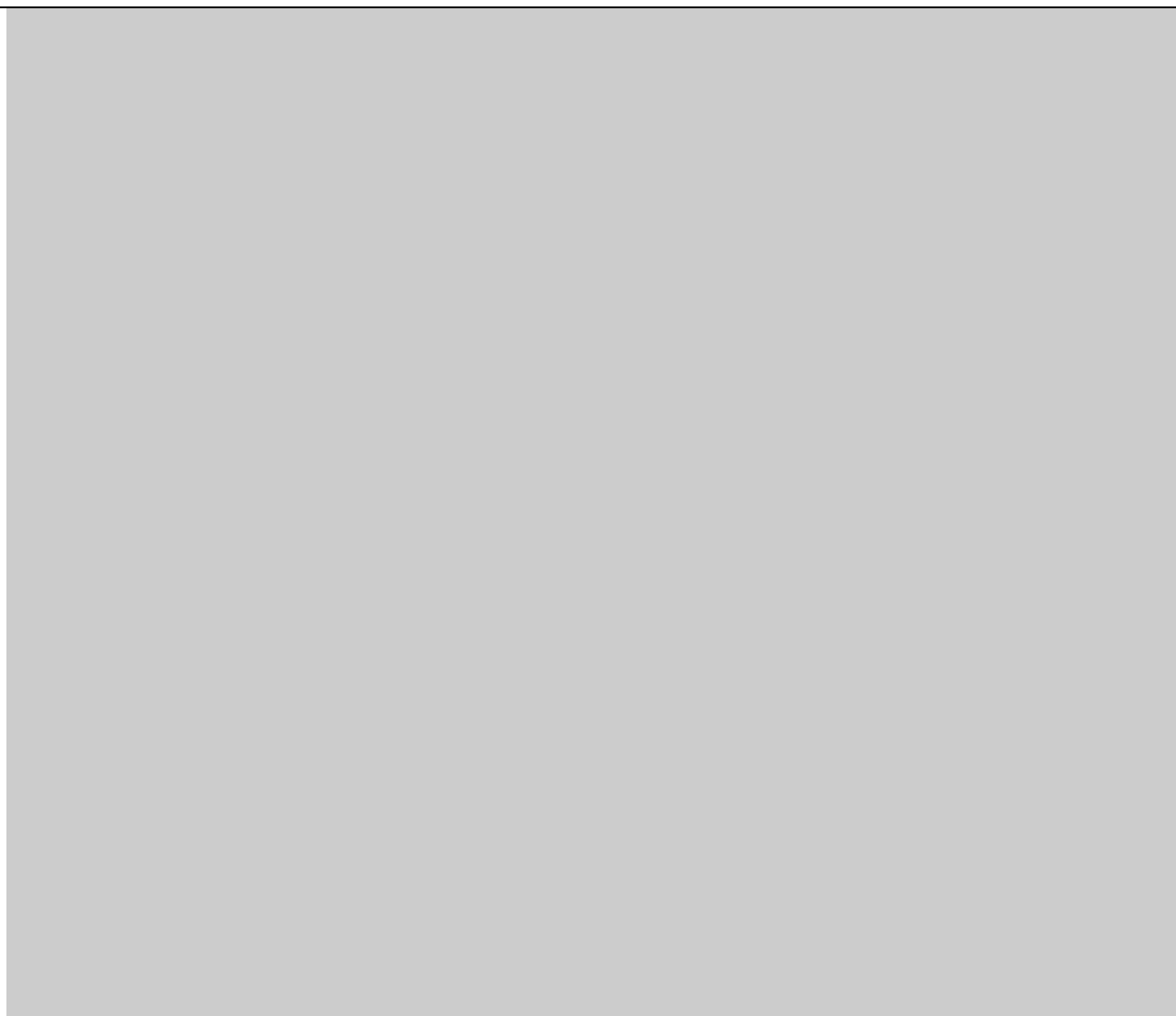
"It was quite a surprise, and a moment I'll not forget," said Clarey, who wanted more of the spotlight on other volunteers and staff at Marklund.

Clarey, who also coaches cross country at Kaneland High School, has brought his teams to Marklund for various events and tasks in the past. It's a process he finds rewarding.

"My family, my fellow cross-country coaches and teams, my friends and now my students have been lucky enough to be able to spend some time at Marklund," Clarey said. "I couldn't feel more blessed."

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**Grace McWayne Elementary School first grade teacher Chad Clarey, center, talks with one of his students and a Marklund Hyde Center client as the students make Valentine's Day cards as part of their 100th Day of School celebration. Clarey was surprised during the visit by being named Marklund's Volunteer of the Year for 2022. - Sandy Bressner/Shaw Media**

The feeling is mutual at Marklund, where the Valentine's Day event was a jolt of normalcy the campus needed.

"This was the first time we've had people back and interacting with our residents, especially 65 little ones like this," said Dawn Lassiter-Brueske, chief

Ninety-six clients/residents live on the Marklund campus in Geneva. They spend a lot of time in the community day services classrooms for their daily curriculum, physical therapy and other activities.

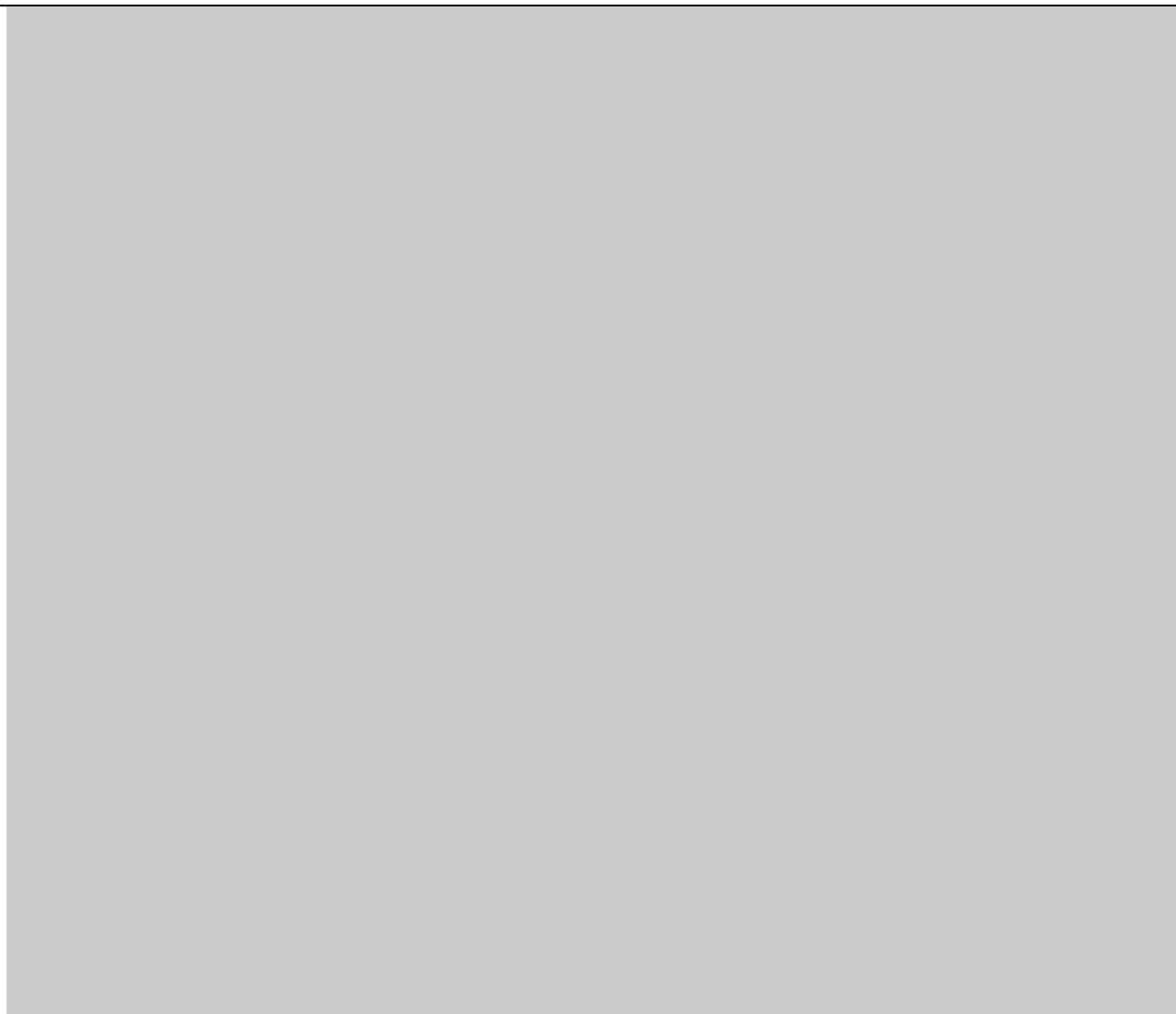
When the school kids made their cards and talked to residents in one-on-one interaction, it made for a perfect day. And it was only enhanced when their teacher earned his volunteer honor.

As noted, Clarey is no stranger to Marklund. He and girls' cross country coach Doug Ecker chose Marklund as a place where their teams could volunteer and raise money for the campus.

Calling it a "lasting friendship" with Marklund and its staff, Clarey ingrained in his teams the need to serve and give to others. During COVID years, the teams conducted gift drives to provide Marklund residents with needed essentials. Aside from the COVID years, the teams have gone to Marklund on the first days of practice since 2010.

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**Grace McWayne Elementary School first-graders make Valentine's Day cards with residents and clients at the Marklund Hyde Center in Geneva as part of the Batavia school's 100th Day of School celebration.** - Sandy Bressner/Shaw Media

The cross-country teams' efforts have been so important to Marklund. The center awarded the cross-country program with the top volunteer award in 2019.

Clarey also has younger runners engaged with Marklund, as the Grace McWayne School Running Club has supported the campus through its Walk, Run and Roll

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helped get members of Chapelstreet Church in Geneva to get engaged with Marklund by helping him and his wife Heidi decorate campus homes during the holidays.

"It was fun to do the surprise announcement for the volunteer of the year," Lassiter-Brueske said. "Chad was really surprised with the honor, and he gave a fantastic speech about the students coming and making new friends."

In a way only a teacher can do it, Clarey utilized the kids' math class lessons about how numbers can make equals to make an important point.

"He told the students they were equal to all of these people they met that day," Lassiter-Brueske added. "It was such a profound message for these kids."

Whether through actions or words, a lot of good things unfold at the Marklund campus every day. People like Chad Clarey make it that much more special.

"Clarey, Clarey, Clarey," indeed.

## **Go into these 'Woods'**

If you plan to see the production of "Into the Woods," it might help to reacquaint yourselves with the Grimm Fairy tales, particularly Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel and the Baker and his wife.

All those characters are intertwined in this fascinating musical at Paramount Theatre in Aurora, presenting a story that tells us there's always a twist to "living happily ever after," and it's called the reality of life's highs and lows.

We saw this show last week and, even though its length kept us up later than

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make you think about many different things regarding human traits and emotions that get in the way of all of us.

Even though it is difficult when the stage is full of so much talent, I generally like to make note of my favorite performer.

In the case of "Into the Woods," it would be Sarah Bockel who played the Baker's Wife. She had me sold on every move and song when her scenes unfolded.

She's not new to Paramount, having played the stepmother in "Cinderella" and Grandma Tzeitel in "Fiddler on the Roof."

You could easily see how she would be perfect for the role of songwriter and singer Carole King, which she recently took on for "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical" in playhouses across North America and on Broadway.

## **A gift for Cooper**

We all face challenges and struggles, but it's hard to imagine any more difficult than what numerous Highland Park families met in the aftermath of the mass shooting there on July 4.

But uplifting news can occur in the aftermath of a tragedy, and a St. Charles businessman has done his part to ensure some joy can be part of that.

We've mentioned Bike Rack owner Hal Honeyman on numerous occasions over the years, particularly his involvement in various charitable events as well as cycling clubs and groups and the creation of Project Mobility and its adaptive bikes for disabled youths and adults.



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it maneuvers through the use of one's hands in a rowing motion.

The news segments about this tremendous gesture showed a smiling 8-year-old Cooper, paralyzed from the waist down, making his way around his neighborhood on the bike. Honeyman, executive director of Project Mobility, intends to invite Cooper and his family to St. Charles for some cycling events in which Cooper could participate.

Project Mobility has done this for many kids and adults, and it was no surprise that Honeyman steered it toward Cooper after so much has been in the news about his difficult recovery.

## **Seeds for green thumbs**

One way to accelerate the start of spring and warmer weather is to get your brain thinking about green things.

That's one way to look at the St. Charles Public Library's annual Seed Swap and Seed Library, where people can look over various heirloom seed varieties and check them out like a book to grow in their gardens.

The library is holding its kickoff for the free service from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 18, in the Huntley Community Room at the library.

Master Gardeners from the University of Illinois Extension office will be at the kickoff to answer any gardening questions.

All available seeds are heirloom or open-pollinated. The library explains that once saved and planted again, the seeds will grow into the same type of plant.



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The seed library will be available anytime the library is open. Those wanting more information can stop at the library research desk or call (630) 584-0076, ext. 1.

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