

# CARE LETTER

**SUMMER**  
2-0-2-3

A newsletter for those who care about Marklund

## INSIDE

- ▶ Celebrating our Volunteers
- ▶ Conversations with Staff
- ▶ New Milestones at our 5K/1M
- ▶ Our May Sensory Garden Appeal
- ▶ Project Kitchen Flip
- ▶ A Letter from the CEO
- ▶ Make a Difference
- ▶ Meet our Board Members

*Wasmond Center  
resident Joey enjoys a  
springtime outing!*

# From the Desk of Gil Fonger, President & CEO

It was just over one year ago when we broke ground on our newest facility: the **Nathan Education Center (NEC)**.

This month, we are about to celebrate its ribbon cutting and grand opening. In looking at the finished product, I could not be prouder.

Much like our founder, Claire Haverkamp, did beginning in 1954, we saw the need to expand our services to underserved children and adults with special needs and provide additional educational and adult day programming.

The building is both beautiful and amazingly functional. Half of the building features five classrooms and an expansive adaptable playground for our **Marklund Day School (MDS)**, providing educational services to students on the autism spectrum. The other half is an innovative open concept area dedicated to our first external Community Day Service program. The new **Bridge Builder CDS** program will provide vocational training and day programming specifically for adults with developmental disabilities who have transitioned out of our special education program.



Bridge Builder services will be available immediately, followed in August with the MDS students arriving at the start of the new school year.

As one part of our **M2030 Strategic Plan**, opening the doors of the Nathan Education Center, which is named for a young man who resided at other Marklund locations for many years, was made possible due to the generosity and determination of many who shared our vision: **A happy, safe purpose-filled life for every individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities.**

God bless you -

Gilbert W. Fonger, President & CEO

Scan to learn more  
about Marklund's  
**Bridge Builder**  
CDS program.



## Meet **Mike Herlihy**, Chair of the Marklund Board of Directors

**M**ike Herlihy is the President, COO, CIO of Olsson Roofing Company, Inc., in Aurora, IL.

**Background/Education:** A Resident of North Aurora, IL, Mike earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil-Structural Engineering, Iowa State, and an MBA in Strategic Planning and Management, DePaul University.

**Community Involvement:** Olsson Roofing Board of Directors 1996-present, Moose Lake HOA President, Village of North Aurora Trustee 2001-2011

**Current position on Marklund board:** Board Chair

**Years on Marklund Board:** 10+

**Other positions held on Marklund Board:** Finance Committee Chair & Treasurer

**Reason for accepting appointment to Marklund board...what attracted you to serving:** Joining the Marklund Board of Directors presented an opportunity to learn more about the needs of people challenged with very difficult circumstances, and to contribute my time and talent to help them live a happy and purposeful life. Little did I know how many people are affected and helped by the environments Marklund provides! We have extended family members and friends with similar needs and enjoy the opportunity to engage and give back.



**One goal you have as a member of the Marklund**

**Board of Directors:** Goals can be so woven together.

Marklund has been blessed with the long-term vision and leadership of so many people in its 60+ year history. I believe spreading the mission and message further in the communities we serve, as well as to younger generations that can continue the outcomes, will well serve Marklund for generations to come!

Understanding the value of and carrying out our M2030 strategic plan helps to further the purpose of Marklund to more people. Crossing the hurdles of certain State and Federal regulations to provide better opportunities to so many aging families with needs represents unending opportunity for those families who need it now and into the future.

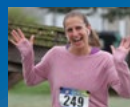
**Comments:** Living in the "rough and tumble" construction industry, Marklund has also accentuated my life by learning better how love, care and compassion can be shared in a Marklund setting and be so beneficial. I often remark when I visit Marklund or engage in a meeting, I learn more than I give! For that I am very grateful! I have enjoyed that during my tenure on the board, Marklund has grown in a practical, measured and healthy manner and added a number of resources and facilities for the betterment of the families and communities we serve to be better served. We call them "projects" but they are really wonderful opportunities!

Buildings and facilities aside, the true heart of Marklund is its people!





Presented by:  
Fitch Foundation



## RWR Fundraising Success!

With over 400 participants, Marklund's 6th Annual Run, Walk & Roll-Bloomingdale was a success raising over \$47,000 for programs and services. Dozens of volunteers and dedicated teams helped Marklund to cross the finish line, reaching a new milestone.

"We're excited to share that after six years in Bloomingdale, and a decade in Geneva – the Run, Walk & Roll series has exceeded the 1 MILLION DOLLAR mark in net revenue raised!" said Heather Graves, Chief Development Officer.

"These funds allow us to provide exceptional care and services to our residents and students 24/7! Thank you to our Bloomingdale community for helping us achieve this amazing milestone for Marklund!"

Since the inception of the Marklund Run, Walk & Roll series, which debuted in Geneva in 2013, the Geneva and Bloomingdale events have netted \$1,013,653.

## A Conversation with Charity Bothwell Registered Behavior Technician



Charity has been with Marklund Day School for 20 years, transitioning from a paraprofessional to an RBT at Marklund Day School-Bloomingdale.

**Q.** What attracted you to Marklund Day School?

**A.** I started working at Marklund Day School as a temporary summer school employee. By the end of the summer, I loved it so much I didn't want to leave.

**Q.** What attracted you to this position as an RBT?

**A.** When the Life Skills program opened, I was the first paraprofessional to work in the classroom. I had no experience working with individuals on the spectrum and learned a lot from the ABA therapists that were contracted out. When the position of RBT became available through Marklund, I was immediately drawn to it. I most enjoy the problem-solving part of the job.

**Q.** What are your priorities for working with other teachers and the students?

**A.** My priority is that the staff in my room feel close like family. I want them to feel supported and valued. I also want to make them laugh especially on a tough day. My priority for the students is that they feel safe and happy and to create the best environment possible to allow for learning.

**Q.** A favorite memory from your tenure at MDS is:

**A.** When a previously nonverbal student said my name for the first time.

See more of Charity's story at  
[www.marklund.org/staff-stories/](http://www.marklund.org/staff-stories/)

SAVE  
the  
DATE

10.15.23





# Celebrating our

For the first time since 2019, we were able to honor our

## Marklund Hero Award Laura and Russ Karlins



The Marklund Hero Award is given out annually to individuals or groups who, for many years, have tirelessly supported and furthered the Marklund mission with change and enhancement, and have gone beyond the status quo to improve the lives of the residents served. This year's recipients were Laura and Russ Karlins.

"I once read that there are five characteristics of a hero: kindness, humility, persistence, passion and integrity; and there are so many other words to add – to describe Laura and Russ Karlins," said Chief Development Officer Heather Graves in presenting the award. "They truly want to make every day better for those we serve. Whether it's helping secure new furniture or technology in our homes, raising money for staff appreciation, participating in ALL of our events, playing baseball with Laura's brother, Scott, and other residents, and even serving on our Board of Directors – they are always willing to serve and they truly are OUR heroes!"

"We are humbled to be here today amongst all of you," Russ said in accepting. "We are so happy we found Marklund for Scott. It's Marklund the organization, the outstanding staff, it's all of you, the volunteers who make Marklund what it is—it's us thanking you for allowing Scott to be with you."

## Volunteer Chad



A first-grade teacher/high school counselor, Chad Clarey was honored of being named Marklund's 2021 Hero.

Chad Clarey, a resident of Batavia, has been a volunteer for over a decade because he believes all called to serve others, and if my life is made of other things makes me more visible and more valuable. It's not about me. It's about the things we have found out about Marklund and the people who want to continue to try and help people to live better because in our hearts, my wife, Heidi, and I believe this is one of the best places on Earth where our children—the best of them—are either born or live. We just want to be a part of it because we know it's the best place to be.

Marklund's Manager of Volunteer Engagement surprised Clarey with the volunteer award. His fellow teachers brought 70 first grade students to the Hyde Center campus in Geneva.

"Receiving the award in front of those students was a special moment," he said, "but not just in receiving the award, but in the students being able to see who we are and what we are doing this."



## Most Hours Vol

Marklund Hyde Center,  
Geneva

Evan Clark, 198 hours

Marklund W  
E

Karen You



**Volunteers in person at our Volunteer Recognition Brunch!**

A man with short brown hair, smiling, wearing a blue patterned shirt and a bright green tie. He is holding a framed photograph of a group of people. The photo has text at the bottom: "Class of 2011" and "Whitman College".

se students was a very special  
ceiving the award, but for the  
can serve and why we should be

A photograph of two women smiling. The woman on the left has white hair and is wearing a blue top. The woman on the right has dark hair with a white feather headpiece and is wearing a white top with a blue patterned scarf.

*Thank you for all that you do--you are amazing. You, as volunteers, you are going to where the need is, to be with the people who need you. You give our residents and outlet, a connection to the community, and we appreciate all that you do for those we serve. - Gil Fonger*

<b>Asmond Center, Elgin</b>	<b>Marklund Philip Center, Bloomington</b>
<i>Ang, 70 hours</i>	<i>Peter Rende, 40 hours</i>





A Conversation with  
**Kayla Atkins,**  
Community Integration/PSP  
at  
Marklund Wasmond Center



**K**ayla been with Marklund for 7 years, serving at the Marklund Wasmond Center in Elgin.

**Q.** What attracted you to Marklund?

**A.** I developed an interest and wanted to work with those in the disability population and make a difference.

**Q.** What attracted you to this position as a PSP (Personal Support Professional)?

**A.** I had experience working with those with disabilities in my family and wanted to give being a caretaker a try.

**Q.** What do you enjoy most about your position?

**A.** Spending quality time with residents and getting to see them happy. Coordinating the outings and seeing them happy in the community, makes it a blast.

**Q.** What are your goals for working with the residents at MWC?

**A.** To provide the best care for our residents and follow our mission of making everyday life possible for our residents.

**Q.** What challenges do you face in this role?

**A.** Among the biggest challenges faced are having lower staffing levels during this time and feeling burnt out.

**Q.** What vision would you like to see for MWC as the world moves on from the pandemic?

**A.** As we move on from the pandemic, I would like to see MWC return to having volunteers and social events.

See more of Kayla's story at  
[www.marklund.org/staff-stories/](http://www.marklund.org/staff-stories/)

# PROJECT FLIP

## *It's Flipping Time!*

The *Marklund Wasmond Center* kitchen is used **every day** to prepare meals for our residents. Fresh omelets, taco salads, baked chicken, and tapioca pudding are just a few of the items our residents love on the Marklund menu!

So, following the lead of our favorite home renovation TV shows, our summer "project" is to renovate and update our kitchen, and we've created quite the wish list:

- ✓ Replace shelving/create additional storage
- ✓ Replace the commercial dishwasher
- ✓ Replace the refrigerators and freezers
- ✓ Replace the kitchen door
- ✓ Add functional cabinetry
- ✓ Install new flooring
- ✓ Paint the room

In order to  
do this, **our goal**  
is to raise

**\$80,000**  
by **June 30!**

**Fisher**  
nuts

has already started the effort  
by offering to match the first

**\$10,000**



Scan to  
donate today



# *Springtime Smiles*



# Opportunity Relaxation Colorful Peace Garden Therapeutic Stress Sensory Happiness Stimulating Fun




## *"A grand teacher"* -A garden described by Gertrude Jekyll, British horticulturist, garden designer, writer and artist.

The garden teaches patience - encouraging a slower pace and an awareness of nature's gifts. Colors seem brighter, when the scents and sounds of summer instantly awaken! Fresh flowers blooming, the distant hum of a lawnmower, or the taste of a home-grown tomato connect us to the memories and promise of the **everyday adventures** of summer.

Brittany Maertzig, longtime Recreational Therapist at Marklund, sees the intrinsic effects of these grand teachings every year. In May, residents visit the local garden center and make their selections of flowers, herbs and vegetables to plant in the Marklund Wasmond Center courtyard. Through smell, touch and even taste, residents actively participate in the making of a sensory garden. "From beginning to end the residents are a part of each step. Learning about and holding the tools used, feeling the soil with their fingers, touching and smelling each plant as it goes in the ground. It is truly the whole sensory experience."

Brittany describes the instant shift in mood and energy of residents enjoying the garden. Their garden becomes a part of their **everyday life**. Scavenger hunts with friends, picnics, time with family members, and even the enjoyment of a homemade salsa... these **everyday life** experiences are not taken for granted here at Marklund! We truly take time to "smell the flowers" and enjoy those moments.

This garden space is deeply rooted in personal choice and opportunity for our residents. **To make these everyday opportunities possible, we need your support.** Just as seeds are dependent on sunlight and water, we depend on **your gifts** to provide these everyday life moments and activities. You give our residents independence, opportunity and choice. **Thank you for making everyday life possible** for the children and adults living and learning at Marklund.

With gratitude, 

Gilbert W. Fonger, President & CEO



# YES!

**I would like to contribute:**

☐ \$50  
 ☐ \$100  
 ☐ \$250  
 ☐ \$1000  
 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Method:

☐ Enclosed Check (made out to Marklund)  
 ☐ Credit Card (Please fill out information below)  
☐ VISA  
 ☐ MasterCard  
 ☐ Discover  
 ☐ American Express

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I commit a monthly gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 ☐ I/We wish to remain anonymous

This gift is in ☐ HONOR or ☐ MEMORY of: \_\_\_\_\_

### I'm interested in:

☐ Volunteering  
 ☐ Taking a tour of Marklund  
 ☐ Naming Marklund in my will  
☐ Doubling my gift with a match by my employer

To give online or make changes to your information, please scan the QR code or visit <https://www.marklund.org/give>



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

## Meet Yaneth Medina Marklund Board of Directors



Yaneth is President of the Elgin State Bank, a Wintrust Community Bank.

### Background/Education:

Growing up in Des Plaines, she attended Maine West High School, followed by Roosevelt University in Chicago, where she earned a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Business, with a Concentration in Finance.

Yaneth is currently a resident of Hoffman Estates.

**Community Involvement:** Very active in the Elgin community, Yaneth is currently the Board Chair and member of the Executive Committee of the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce, a Board Member and Finance Committee Member of the Advocate Sherman Hospital, and a board member of the Gail Borden Library Foundation.

**Current position on Marklund Board of Directors:** Board Member and Member of Finance Committee

**Years on Marklund board:** 3

**Reason for accepting appointment to Marklund board...what attracted you to serving:** The mission and all of the LOVE that Marklund pours out to the residents, kids and staff.

**Goal as a member of the Marklund Board of Directors:**

Create awareness each and every day of the Marklund mission so that more and more people know of the amazing work that is done!





1S450 Wyatt Drive, Geneva, IL 60134

SUMMER 2-0-2-3

NON-PROFIT  
ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #128  
ELGIN, IL



## CARELETTER

A newsletter for those who care about **Marklund**.



# Come Make a Difference

Marklund is built on our mission of making *everyday life* possible for individuals with profound disabilities.  
Our services are designed to enhance the lives of our residents in a meaningful way:  
*but we can't do it alone—our heroes make a difference!*

[www.marklund.org/careers](http://www.marklund.org/careers)