

# Marklund names 2023 Employee of the Year: Cody Ash



**Cody Ash of St. Charles received Marklund's 2023 Claire Haverkamp Commemorative Award.**

*Photo courtesy of Tiffany Zurek*

Updated 11/13/2023 10:51 PM

Cody Ash, the lead personal support professional at the Marklund Tommy Home in Geneva, received this year's Claire Haverkamp Commemorative Award at the Marklund Employee Appreciation Event held recently at the Arrowhead Golf Club in Wheaton.

Marklund is a nonprofit organization that serves children and adults with severe and profound developmental disabilities. Founded in 1954, it has residential facilities and day schools in Bloomingdale, Geneva and Elgin.

This "employee of the year" award, named for Marklund's founder Claire Haverkamp, R.N., is given each year to the employee who demonstrates the true spirit of Claire through his or her dedication to the residents/clients/students served at Marklund. The winner also exhibits Marklund's Guiding Values: Attitude, Accountability, Creativity, Compassion and Teamwork. Nominations are submitted by Marklund staff and the winner selected by a committee made up of members of the Marklund Board of Directors.

"I'm extremely honored and grateful," Cody said in accepting her award. "I have an opportunity every day to make a difference. I know we all make a difference and it's amazing, isn't it?"

"I wish my people (the residents) were here," she continued. "I always say, I'm not working, I'm just helping my people out. They're dear to me."

A resident of St. Charles, Ash joined Marklund in 2015 as a therapeutic activity aide working at the Hyde Center campus in Geneva. Since then, her career has evolved to include being a personal support professional, community integration manager and community integration vocational coordinator. She now supports other staff as the Lead PSP for the Marklund Tommy Home in Geneva.

"I've got amazing people I work with and many people who have supported me from the beginning. Marklund is my family," she added. "I always think 'Do work worthy of recognition, but don't work to be recognized.' I do thank you for recognizing my work, but I'm just so thankful."

"It is such a privilege and honor to represent Marklund," she said. "I found my place."

This year's event also honored two additional finalists: Jennifer Atterberry and Char Lukas.

Atterberry is a paraprofessional at the Foglia Education Center of Marklund Day School, Geneva. A resident of South Elgin, she joined Marklund in 2004, first working as a CNA at the Marklund Philip Center in Bloomingdale. She made the switch to working for the Day School in 2009.

Lukas is the administrative assistant-student services for Marklund Day School in Bloomingdale. A resident of Bloomingdale, she joined the Day School staff in February of 2014 as the administrative assistant, helping support the school's administrative needs as it expanded with three additions in Bloomingdale, Geneva and Elgin.

***Submitted by Dawn Lassiter-Brueske***