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From the Desk of Gil Fonger

President & CEO



Dear Marklund Family,

During May, we celebrated Mother's Day, National Nurses Month, and Teacher Appreciation Week. At Marklund, these observances are deeply connected, reminding us of the compassionate people whose care and vision shaped our organization from the very beginning.

Marklund's story began in December 1954 in Northlake with one mother's selfless act. She entrusted the care of her son, **Mark William Lund**, who was born with developmental disabilities and complex medical needs, to another mother—nurse **Claire Haverkamp**—who believed he deserved every opportunity for a full and meaningful life. From that small but courageous beginning grew the Marklund organization, which has now served thousands of children and families over the past 72 years.

A few years later in Elgin, another mother searching for care for her child with special needs turned to **Patricia Wasmond**—also a mother and nurse. Like Claire, Pat recognized the tremendous need facing parents of medically fragile children and devoted herself to providing compassionate, specialized care. Her work ultimately led to the founding of Little Angels, now the Marklund Wasmond Center, in Elgin.

Claire and Pat were remarkable women. While raising families of their own, they used their nursing expertise, determination and compassion to create something extremely transformative. They developed specialized care protocols and taught others how to provide loving support not only to children with profound developmental disabilities, but also to the children's families and loved ones.

Today, nurses and teachers continue to play a vital role at Marklund, representing nearly 20 percent of our staff. Every day, they help advance our mission of making everyday life possible for more than 300 individuals served by Marklund's residential and educational sites. Like Claire and Pat before them, these dedicated professionals lead with compassion, see needs others may overlook and work tirelessly to meet them.

Not only in May, but throughout the year, we honor the enduring legacies of Claire and Pat and the extraordinary example they set through their love, service and unwavering belief in the potential of every individual.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Gil Fonger'.

Gil Fonger, President & CEO

gfonger@marklund.org / 630.593.5476



Pat Wasmond



Claire Haverkamp



A Very Special Honor

Marklund RN leads nurses into new program

Krissy Dolen, RN, Administrator of the Marklund Hyde Center in Geneva, recently received a distinct honor when she became the first nurse in the country accepted into the NAQ-Certified I/DD Specialist program.

Based in Illinois, NAQ is the leading national association for disability professionals who support people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). While programs like these typically attract Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Providers (QIDPs), case workers and therapy specialists, Dolen saw it as a unique professional development opportunity to deepen her own expertise.

Dolen joined Marklund in 2013 as a part-time nurse. Over the past 13 years, she transitioned into various nursing roles including Director of Nursing, before becoming Administrator.

She learned of her groundbreaking honor during a conversation with the program's director through the application process.

"First, I think it is imperative for all members of the interdisciplinary team to know and understand the different roles that impact the lives of our residents, clients and students

"I am proud to receive this honor while representing this very special organization which has become my home."

every day," she said "We can best serve our residents if we know who can provide the specific supports or expertise that are needed in any given situation. Especially as an Administrator, I not only need to have an understanding of all available resources to coordinate care but also to know what to expect from the people on my team and how to best support them is essential.

As Administrator, Dolen sees this certification as a way to strengthen her knowledge, her leadership and her ability to support her teams.

"Having a nursing license, a QIDP certification, and an Administrator's license, completing this certification ties all three of those unique licensures together with a decade of experience, and designates me as a specialist in the area of work that we do."

The NAQ program includes ten core modules within 80+ hours of curriculum designed to strengthen professional competence, confidence and effectiveness among those in the I/DD field.

"Marklund was my very first nursing position after nursing school," Dolen said. "I am proud to receive this honor while representing this very special organization which has become my home."

A New Chapter in Marklund's Development Leadership

After fifteen remarkable years of service, **Heather Graves** will retire as Chief Development Officer effective June 30, 2026. Since joining Marklund in 2011, Heather has helped shape and lead a development program that has raised more than \$80 million in support of the more than 250 individuals Marklund serves every day—funding that has transformed campuses, strengthened programs, and expanded opportunities for those at the heart of Marklund's mission.

That success has been made possible not only through Heather's leadership, but through her close partnership with donors and the broader Marklund community. Together, that shared commitment has fueled years of transformational growth and made an extraordinary difference in the lives of infants, children, teens, and adults with profound developmental disabilities and special healthcare needs.

Marklund is pleased to welcome **Carrie Seida** as its next Chief Development Officer, effective July 1, 2026. Carrie is already a familiar and trusted leader within the organization and to many supporters. She joined Marklund five years ago as Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations and most recently has served as Director of Development, leading day-to-day fundraising operations since July 2025. A Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), Carrie brings deep expertise in major gifts, grants, and donor stewardship, along with a heartfelt commitment to Marklund's mission and the special individuals it serves.

To ensure continuity for donor relationships and ongoing initiatives, Heather will remain engaged with Marklund in a consulting capacity over the next year, working alongside Carrie during the transition. This thoughtful approach will help sustain momentum while positioning the development team for continued success.

For every milestone achieved over the past fifteen years, Marklund's donors have been an essential part of the story. Heather's legacy is deeply connected to the generosity and trust of this community, and Carrie looks forward to continuing—and deepening—that partnership in the years ahead.

Please join us in thanking Heather for her extraordinary service and in welcoming Carrie to this important new role.



Heather Graves

Carrie Seida

INTERNSHIPS:

Real-world experiences support future professionals

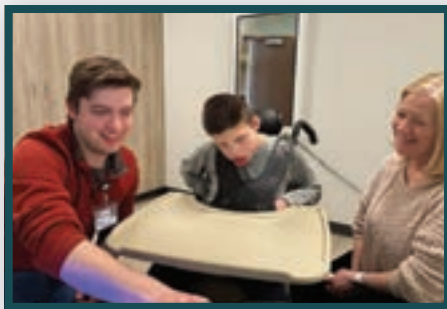
This spring, our Therapy Department welcomed a talented group of interns who brought fresh perspectives, enthusiasm and a shared commitment to supporting adults and students with severe and profound developmental disabilities. Through clinical training experiences across programs at our Geneva campus, interns worked alongside therapists and educators while gaining hands-on experience supporting residents and students of all ages.

From speech-language pathology to occupational and recreational therapy, interns applied classroom learning in meaningful, real-world settings. Just as importantly, they contributed their own ideas and insights to Marklund care teams—helping spark conversations around communication strategies, sensory supports, adaptive techniques and person-centered care.



“Time with our students is a reminder that learning is a two-way exchange,” noted Dena Bonnike, Director of Therapy Services. “While we assist our interns in strengthening their professional skills and prepare for careers in therapy, our staff also benefit from their curiosity, fresh ideas, research-based approaches and passion for making a difference.”

This spring’s therapy clinical students included:



Henry Tomiser – Speech-Language Pathology, Northern Illinois University

Guided by Speech Pathologist Jana Olberg, Henry supported students at Marklund Day School in developing communication skills while completing his graduate internship.



Natalie McCormack – Occupational Therapy Doctoral Candidate, U of I-Chicago.

Working alongside Occupational Therapist Rita Moore on her doctoral capstone project, Natalie developed impressive plans for accessible gardening opportunities for residents.



Ashley Richardson – Therapeutic Recreation, Aurora University

Partnering with Recreational Therapist Lexy Traverso, Ashley assisted with planning and leading adaptive recreation activities, including crafts, games and sports such as adaptive hockey and bowling.



Marklund offers unpaid internships across several disciplines, including Nursing, Therapy (Physical, Occupational, Recreational, Speech & Language, Music Therapy), Special Education, Public Relations, and Fundraising. These internships often serve as a pipeline for future staff recruitment through direct connection to the students or by becoming a resource for the colleges and universities. The relationships that we build with students and their universities extends Marklund’s reach into the wider community ultimately sharing our mission farther than we could alone.

To learn more about internship opportunities, scan the QR code or visit www.marklund.org/internships

Celebrating our

A teacher, teenage sisters, a team of first responders, a Marklund employee, and a group of medical professionals received special recognition this year at Marklund annual Volunteer Appreciation event. "We were happy to have had the privilege of honoring our incredible volunteers," stated Nikki Osterloh, Marklund's Volunteer Program Manager. "For 71 years, our volunteers have played a vital role supporting the organization's mission. This past year, individual and volunteer groups contributed more than 15,000 volunteer hours to Marklund."

Volunteer of the Year: Bette Klein

Some volunteers make an impact by showing up. Others make an impact by stepping in wherever they are needed. And then there are those rare individuals who do both—consistently, selflessly, and with so much heart that their presence can be felt by everyone around them. Bette Klein is someone who truly embodies that spirit. Klein, a resident of Wheaton, recently received Marklund's 2025 Volunteer of the Year honor.

In announcing the 'Volunteer of the Year' award at the event, Nikki Osterloh, Volunteer Program Manager, noted that Klein first came to Marklund through a connection with a resident's family, gradually easing into volunteering by attending their weekly baseball games. "But what started as a small step quickly turned into something so much bigger. Before long, she was not just attending games—she was part of nearly every single one in the season, becoming a familiar, comforting and joyful presence on the field," she said. "And she didn't stop there."

According to Osterloh, Klein volunteers to help take Marklund residents on outings, for its unique formal dances, for the outdoor walking club, helping residents take part in recreational activities in their homes, assists at holiday parties and joins in as a resident buddy for Marklund's Summer Games at both of their locations in Geneva and Elgin. She has recently become a Volunteer Ambassador, helping at recruiting events.

"Bette shows up again and again, not because she has to—but because she genuinely wants to be there," she noted. "She has brought others along with her, leading a group of her students to collaborate with a visiting youth group and other regular volunteers on a project that transformed our spaces, repainting benches across our patios and baseball field, making them colorful and refreshed. She is kind, warm and joyful. She is the kind of person who makes people feel seen, valued and cared for just by being in her presence. Our residents adore her. Our staff appreciates her. And anyone who has had the chance to work alongside her—or even just spend a few moments with her—knows how truly special she is."



Bette Klein with Nikki Osterloh

This past year, volunteers contributed more than 15,000 volunteer hours to Marklund.



Interested in becoming a Marklund volunteer?

If you are interested in volunteering but are not sure how, Marklund's Volunteer Department staff can help you learn about the many options. No matter your gift, talent, skill or your age, Marklund has a place for you. Volunteers are needed daily!

Scan the QR code or visit www.marklund.org/volunteer

VOLUNTEERS



Special Event Volunteer: *Karyn Racutt*

Karyn Racutt is one of Markklund’s Recreational Therapists, who joined Markklund just over one year ago. According to Carrie Seida, Director of Development, who presented the award, Racutt did not ease into her connection with Markklund—she jumped right in. Just two weeks after starting, she volunteered at the Run, Walk and Roll-Bloomingtondale, escorting residents along the course and ensuring they could fully participate in the experience.

From there, her involvement only grew. Racutt volunteered at Markklund’s golf outing, supported the largest fundraising event, the Top Hat Ball, and now serves as a dedicated member of the Run, Walk and Roll-Elgin event committee. “When we were inviting staff and community members to join, Karyn didn’t hesitate—she asked how she could help,” Seida noted.

Over the past year, Racutt has generously shared her time, energy, and talents to help make our events successful, showing exceptional commitment, enthusiasm, and heart from day one.



Future Changemakers Award: *Dweny and Diya Geeth*

Teenage sisters **Dweny and Diya Geeth** of South Elgin received the special “Future Changemakers Award” for their regular volunteer service at Markklund.

In presenting the award, Markklund volunteer staff noted: It is truly a joy to recognize two remarkable individuals whose compassion, creativity and dedication embody the very spirit of volunteer service. These two are more than volunteers — they are bright lights in our community. While many students spend their school breaks relaxing or vacationing, these two choose to give their time, energy, and hearts to others. Whether it is summer, winter or spring break, you can count on seeing them at the Markklund Wasmond Center, showing up with smiles, enthusiasm, and a genuine desire to make a difference.



Group of the Year: *Northwestern Medicine – Team NM*

This year’s Group of the Year showed up in every sense of the word. From the very beginning, this group jumped in with enthusiasm, participating at some of our biggest events—Spring Fling, Summer Games, and Fall Formal. They did not hesitate; they did not hold back—they simply said “yes” and made a difference.

But what really stood out was not just their presence, it was their heart.

During the holiday season, **Northwestern Medicine – Team NM** took the time to write thoughtful cards to each of our residents. It was such a simple gesture, but it brought so much joy and connection during a time of year when that matters most.

This incredible team represents multiple hospital campuses, coming together with a shared purpose and a genuine passion for giving back.



Community Partner Award: *Elgin Police Department*

From their participation in Markklund’s annual Giving Tree—bringing joy and generosity during the holiday season—to their frequent visits to Markklund Day School classrooms, the **Elgin Police Department’s** staff have made an impact through education, engagement and genuine care. They provided opportunities for Markklund’s residents and students to learn, connect, and feel valued.

As stated during the award presentation, “What makes this partnership so special is not just what the department’s members do—but how they do it. With kindness, patience, and a sincere commitment to inclusion, they have become more than a partner—they have become friends, role models and champions for the individuals we serve.”



Many of us remember a nostalgic moment at the skating rink from our youth: the music, colorful lights, and that burst of energy drawing everyone toward the center of the floor. It's where the laughter rises, confidence grows, and where the fun truly comes alive. This spring at Marklund, **that center space belongs to everyone.**

During a recent outing, residents rolled onto a skating rink in their wheelchairs — no one was asked to watch from the edges and no one was left on the sidelines. Friends rolled side by side, smiling and sharing in the moment, right in the middle of the action. The rink became more than just a place to skate; it became a space where barriers fell away and were replaced with opportunity and belonging. Everyone was part of the movement, and part of the joy. What could have been an ordinary afternoon became something much more!

At Marklund, no one is made to watch from the sidelines. The individuals we serve are not defined by limitations. We create opportunities for every resident, student, and client to experience the simple, exhilarating joy of being fully included, in moments like this and in everyday life.

YOU make moments like this possible. In this season of renewal, your gift ensures that everyone we serve can experience what so many of us cherish: not watching from the outside but being fully engaged and sharing in the moment together.

With gratitude,

Gilbert W. Fonger, President & CEO



Scan to learn more or make a donation!

Your donation will be matched thanks to a generous \$5,000 match by Catie & Max Schmidt, of Schmidt Steel, Inc.

A Springtime of Smiles

This spring, residents, community clients and students across our programs embraced new experiences, built friendships and celebrated the changing season. While exploring communities, enjoying outdoor activities, creating art, sharing laughter and making lasting memories, these joyful moments with staff, volunteers, families and friends, filled the season with connection, growth and fun.





Inaugural Run, Walk & Roll-Elgin Success!

On the morning of April 26, runners and walkers gathered at the Marklund Wasmond Center in Elgin for a new, inspiring community event filled with energy, encouragement and purpose—the **Run, Walk & Roll-Elgin**. As participants made their way along the course winding through the adjacent neighborhood, they received cheers and support from neighbors and friends—a powerful visual of what can happen when a community comes together.

With 374 participants, 28 teams, and 73 dedicated volunteers, staff, and many donors and sponsors, the community showed up in an incredible way to support the 300+ individuals with profound disabilities cared for at Marklund and made our inaugural Elgin event a meaningful success.

“While the event was filled with enthusiasm, compassion and connection, all those who participated in many roles worked together to help raise more than \$66,000 in net revenue — funds that will directly support programs and services that make everyday life possible for the individuals we serve,” said Heather Graves, Chief Development Officer.

“Because of everyone’s generosity and commitment, children and adults with profound disabilities will continue to have opportunities to learn, grow, connect and thrive,” added Lauren Spitler, this year’s Race Director. “Thank you for helping turn our first Run, Walk & Roll-Elgin into such an inspiring community effort. We can’t wait to see you next year!”



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Join us on October 18 for our
14th Annual Run, Walk & Roll-GENEVA.

Sites & Services

CARE LETTER

The Marklund CareLetter is a quarterly newsletter created and distributed by Marklund, a nonprofit organization that provides residential, educational and day services programs for children and adults with severe and profound developmental disabilities.

To receive extra copies, email Dawn Lassiter-Brueske, Chief Communications Officer, at dlassiter@marklund.org.

For digital copies, visit www.marklund.org/newsletters.

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Call 630.593.5500



Marklund Hyde Center

1S450 Wyatt Drive, Geneva, IL 60134; 630.593.5500

25-acre campus includes:

- Marklund Hyde Center building houses Community Day Services (CDS) classrooms, onsite aquatic therapy pool and spa, administrative and therapy offices, dental office and salon
- Six 16-bed homes are licensed as Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) that provide 24-hour care to support the medical, social, emotional and physical needs of 96 adult residents
- The Foglia Education Center at Marklund Day School-Geneva serves students ages 3-21 with multiple disabilities, including those on the Autism Spectrum, within both the Multi-Needs and Life Skills programs
- Our Marklund ball field, newly resurfaced with specialized materials suitable for wheelchair accessibility



Marklund Wasmond Center & School

1435 Summit Street, Elgin, IL 60120; 224.523.7530

- Five-acre campus includes a newly-renovated MC/DD residential facility for 85 children and adults with medically complex developmental disabilities. Facility offers new, state-of-the-art skilled nursing and intermediate care services, comprehensive respiratory services, onsite aquatic therapy pool, dental office, and therapeutic social, recreational and community activities
- CDS classrooms also located adjacent to main building
- Marklund Day School-Elgin operates Multi-Needs classrooms onsite



Marklund Day School

Four locations in Bloomingdale, Elgin and Geneva;

Phone: 630.307.1882

Therapeutic Day School serves students ages 3-21 with multiple disabilities, including those on the autism spectrum, within both Multi-Needs and Life Skills programs. Education services are supported by nursing and therapy teams.

- **Ann Haskins Center, 164 S. Prairie Avenue, Bloomingdale, IL 60108:**
 - Multi-Needs and Life Skills programs
- **Marklund Wasmond Center, 1435 Summit Street, Elgin, IL 60120:**
 - Multi-Needs classrooms
- **Foglia Education Center, 1S376 Wyatt Drive, Geneva, IL 60134:**
 - Multi-Needs and Life Skills program
- **Nathan Education Center, 1210 Hunter Drive, Elgin, IL 60120:**
 - Life Skills classrooms for students on the autism spectrum
 - Bridge Builder CDS program for adults on the spectrum who have aged out of traditional school programs

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than care—it's
connection,
compassion and
community.*

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