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From the Desk of Gil Fonger

President & CEO



Marklund Friends,

In this edition of our *CareLetter*, I am proud to share with you our Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report.

As you will notice, as a nonprofit organization, we operate on a very tight margin, with expenses closely aligned with our revenue. This past year, we were fortunate to exceed our expenses, allowing us to reinvest in our organization and further strengthen our mission. Our disciplined approach to budgeting has been a cornerstone of Marklund for the past 70 years.

While we receive revenue from a variety of sources, approximately 60 percent comes from State and Federal funding, primarily Medicaid. Additional funding is generated through returns on investments, private pay arrangements, and school district partnerships.

However, it is our fundraising efforts that truly supports Marklund's ability to provide the exceptional care we're known for. We are proud to deliver the *Marklund Standard of Care*, which goes well beyond the basic necessities of housing and food. It is our mission—and our promise—to *make everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities*. This includes providing additional caregiving staff, daily baths, Community Day Services programming, and a wide array of therapeutic activities (physical, speech/language, recreational, aquatic, music, and art), as well as regular outings and events.

To uphold this standard of care, which exceeds what we call the sheets & eats provided through reimbursement by the State of Illinois, we must fundraise a gap of \$20,260 per resident annually—totaling over \$3.6 million.

Thankfully, we are supported by a dedicated base of generous donors and long-standing fundraising events. We are continually encouraging new relationships with friends and supporters to become part of our story and expand our impact.

Regardless of the level of your contribution, please know that your support is so very appreciated by those we serve. Your generosity directly contributes to fulfilling our promise to nearly 300 adults and children served daily through Marklund's residential, educational, and day services programs.

Thank you for helping us bridge the gap that allows us to provide this level of care and keep the promise we have kept for over 70 years.

God bless you!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gil Fonger', written in a cursive style.

Gil Fonger, President & CEO

gfonger@marklund.org | 630.593.5476

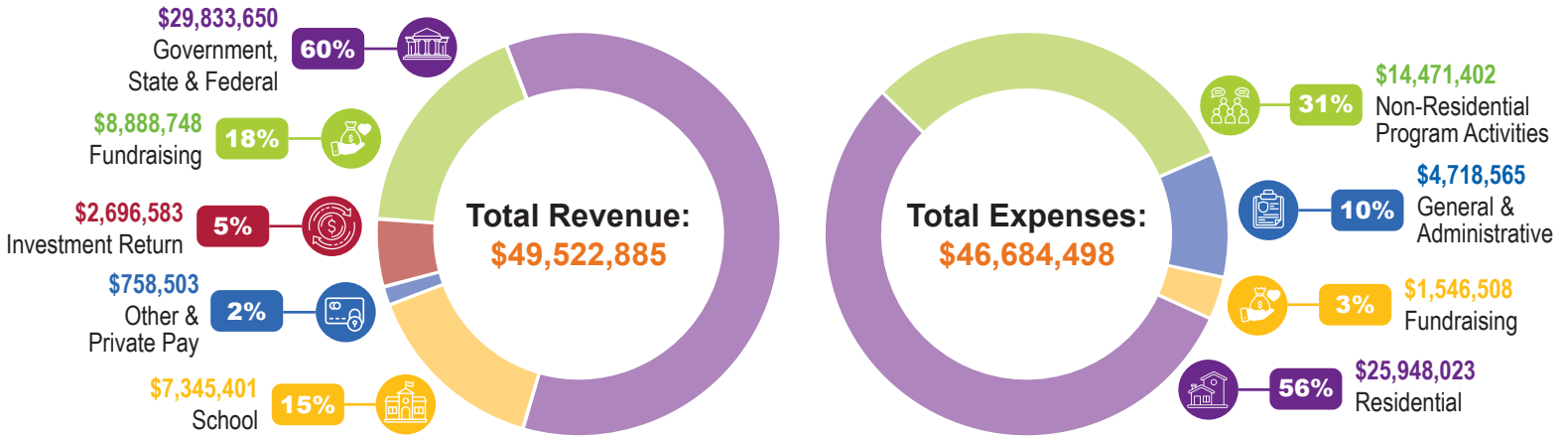


2024 IMPACT

Fiscal Year 2024
Annual Report

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Financial Summary



Impact Numbers

\$155,803
Average Annual
Cost Per Resident

\$8,888,748
Total Amount Raised

\$20,260
Funding Gap

182
Residential
Clients Served

74
Marklund Day
School Students

430
Staff Members

MARKLUND
is proudly accredited by
CANDID, the
**BETTER
BUSINESS
BUREAU**,
and **CARF**,
reflecting our
commitment
to maintaining
the highest
standards of
transparency,
ethical practices,
and quality services.

4
Program
Locations
Serving

2,020
Volunteers
Provided
10,153
Hours

862
New Donors

4,395
Donations

3
Counties:
**COOK,
DUPAGE
& KANE**

87¢ of every dollar goes
to program services

\$525
Average Individual
Gift Amount



Presented by:



GET MOVING FOR MARKLUND! 8th Annual Run, Walk & Roll-Bloomingtondale set for this spring!

Join us on April 27 to run, walk, or roll for Marklund! Participants of all levels are welcome—from runners new to the activity or those going for new personal records, walkers out for an energetic stroll, and even those who do a little of both. Marklund residents will share the course in their wheelchairs, assisted by family members, volunteers and staff!

The event starts and finishes at the Marklund Philip Center, 164 S. Prairie Ave., in Bloomingtondale. Participants will start together, then split off onto one of two routes: a USATF-certified 5K course, and a 1-mile circuit.

Medals are awarded to the top male and female finishers of the 5K course in various age categories. Participant medals are limited to the first 450 registrations. The deadline to order an event shirt is March 15.

Volunteers needed:

An event of this kind would not be possible without the support of many volunteers. Anyone age 14 and above may join in the fun as a volunteer to help ensure the event runs safely and smoothly. Volunteers will receive a free "Race Crew" t-shirt on race day. Sign up at www.marklund.org/5K.

New Toolkits for individual fundraising:

"We are excited to share that we've created a new participant's **TOOLKIT** this year," noted Race Director, Lauren Spitler. "It contains all the information needed to easily share the word that you are participating in and fundraising for this event. We included a new shareable graphic, ready for use on social media."

Since its inception, the Run, Walk & Roll series has raised \$1,308,414 in net proceeds to support the children and adults with developmental disabilities being cared for at Marklund.

Questions? Find **Race FAQs** at www.marklund.org/5k or contact **Lauren Spitler** at lsplitler@marklund.org or (630) 593-5473.



Volunteers receive a free t-shirt!



April 27, 2025
8:30 a.m. Start



164 S. Prairie Ave.
Bloomingtondale



USATF-Certified
Course



Scan the QR Code or visit www.marklund.org/5K to register, fundraise or sign up to volunteer today!

2024

Employee of the Year

Bobby Hilsabeck, a longtime employee of Marklund, was named Marklund's Employee of the Year at the organization's annual employee appreciation event held in November.

Called the Claire Haverkamp Commemorative Award, the honor is named for Marklund's founder Claire Haverkamp, RN, and is given each year to the employee who demonstrates the true spirit of Claire through his or her dedication to the residents/community clients/students serving their locations in Bloomingdale, Geneva and Elgin.

"The Claire Haverkamp Award is about going above and beyond for the residents, and showing how much we love and care for them," Hilsabeck said in accepting his award. "When people see me here at Marklund, I pray that is the kind of person they see in me. Thank you."

A resident of Aurora, Hilsabeck started working at Marklund in 1995 as a Developmental Therapy aide and bus driver for the nonprofit. Along his career path at Marklund, he worked as the Transportation Coordinator, the Community Day Services (CDS) Outings Coordinator for Marklund's Hyde Center campus in Geneva, and as the driver for the Community Integration Team, taking the residents on outings into the community.

Currently, Hilsabeck is the Equipment Assistant where he maintains all wheelchairs and therapy equipment for the 96 residents on the Geneva campus, and even creates specialty items needed by therapists.

His coworkers describe him as "kind, patient, and creative with all things having to do with those we serve."

The employee appreciation dinner also honored three other finalists: Heather Ravenna of Batavia, Wendy Sanchez Cuevas of Elgin, and Jeannie Stefanik of St. Charles.

Each year, the winner is selected from nominations made by Marklund employees. Once the field is narrowed down to finalists, a committee made up of members of Marklund's Board of Directors reads through the nomination write-ups and selects the winner based on who they believe truly exhibits Marklund's Guiding Values: Attitude, Accountability, Creativity, Compassion and Teamwork. Board member Frank Murnane Jr. announced the winner at this year's event.

Bobby Hilsabeck



Bobby Hilsabeck with Marklund resident, Mike



Gil Fonger, Marklund President and CEO, left, with Claire Haverkamp Commemorative Award finalists Wendy Sanchez Cuevas, Jeannie Stefanik, Heather Ravenna, Bobby Hilsabeck, along with Frank Murnane Jr., member of the Marklund Board of Directors

‘Helping my friends at Marklund with their Occupational Therapy takes time and patience—I strive to find out what is most important to them and what motivates them. Therapy should be motivating and fun!’

– Rita Moore, Lead OT at Marklund



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Integral support for those served by Marklund

“For a short and sweet definition, I like to say that OTs (occupational therapists) help people do what they want and need to do!” says Rita Moore, Lead OT at Marklund. “We identify what barriers limit successful participation, such as arm range of motion or sensory processing skills. Then, we formulate a plan to address these barriers and improve overall function.”

“OTs work with individuals with profound developmental disabilities to help them participate in their activities of daily living (ADLs) or any activity that is important to them,” noted Dena Bonnike, Therapy Manager. ADLs frequently involve the use of our hands/arms, and OTs are experts at addressing upper extremity function.

Occupational Therapy goals for individuals at Marklund address a variety of areas, including:

- **Upper extremity splinting:** The OT evaluates, orders and molds orthotics (braces) to help with increasing/maintaining range of motion for the hand/thumb/wrist/elbow, and helping maintain comfortable alignment to ease participation in activities.
- **Activities of daily living/self-help skills:** Residents/clients/students are encouraged to participate as much as possible in their daily self-care activities. For some residents, this might mean that they verbally choose their outfit for the day. For others, they help to thread a shirt on their arm but need assistance for the rest.

- **Vocational and pre-vocational activities:** This can encompass any skills that will help a person complete job tasks. For example, a person working on coordination of their arms and controlling the pressure could practice by working on sharpening pencils with an electric sharpener.
- **Visual integration skills:** To improve visual attention and tracking skills, OTs assist clients with tracking lighted objects in a darkened room, or visually locating and reaching for objects of interest.
- **Fine motor skills:** Therapy includes working on grasp-and-release skills, or manipulating objects held in their hand. For example, holding a coin in a closed hand, then using just one hand to move it to the thumb/index finger to insert it into a vending machine.
- **Access to augmentative communication:** OT works closely with speech and physical therapy to make sure clients are set up for optimal positioning for activities and communication. “We may help the team adjust equipment for ergonomic setup, or find the best positions that will allow clients to move their hands or isolate their fingers in order to touch communication devices.”

Marklund’s Therapy staff also provides training and education for other staff and families.

“At Marklund, therapy is an interdisciplinary team that works together to support our residents/clients/students,” Moore noted. “We are very focused on helping them be as independent as possible while living their best lives!”

A Conversation with

RITA MOORE, MS, OTR/L

Lead Occupational Therapist



Background:

Having a sibling with a disability inspired me to pursue a career where I could work with and support individuals with disabilities. My interest goes back to childhood when I used to attend therapy sessions with my younger sister Claire, who has Down syndrome. I remember going to an amazing fun place to “play” with her every week, realizing years later that these were her therapy sessions with OT and PT! I graduated from the University of Illinois - Chicago with my Masters in Occupational Therapy in 2014. Before coming to Marklund, I worked as an OT in public schools, home health, and skilled nursing. I am an active member of the Illinois OT Association (ILOTA), and have served as the Developmental Disabilities Special Interest Section Chair since 2018. I also enjoy regularly serving as a clinical instructor for OT students who complete their clinical rotations at Marklund.

Q. What attracted you to Marklund and working in OT with the Developmental Disabilities (DD) population?

The adult I/DD (Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities) population in the US has limited opportunities for therapeutic services available to them after finishing high school. I wanted to participate in helping these amazing adults after typical educational services end at age 22.

Although I knew what I wanted to do, it was not easy to find a job that especially catered to this unique population. So, when I learned about Marklund and that they were hiring for an OT position, I was very excited to learn all about what Marklund had to offer. I discovered Marklund values the therapeutic services we provide, and it is what truly sets us apart!

Since coming to Marklund, I have grown to realize that my life experiences of having a sibling with a disability have truly helped me to empathize and relate with families on a deep level. I am truly proud of the work we do at Marklund.

Q. A favorite memory from your tenure at Marklund is:

A special interest of mine is visual impairments. I started a low vision OT group last year that includes clients/residents with severe visual impairments. During these groups, I work in a dark environment with lighted items to help those with low vision work on visual fixation and tracking skills, which are easier to achieve in this type of environment for some people. A resident named Benny* participated in one of these groups, and really enjoyed the activities. Benny is able to see some brightly colored items and has worked hard to increase his visual attention and awareness skills over the past few years. We also worked on helping him turn his head toward his less preferred side to keep his muscles strong and maintain his neck range of motion. During one treatment group, we were working with some really cool new switches which light up in response to touch and also can be programmed to play music and games.

Benny was mesmerized by the new switches and lights. He purposefully turned his head in response to my verbal cue to activate the switch just in time to play the next part in the game – multiple times in a row! This was especially moving for me because it can take a lot of energy and concentration for him to move his head in particular directions, but he did so because he was having so much fun participating in the game!

Q. What would you say to other people thinking about a career move into Therapy at Marklund?

I would say please join us! Our therapy department at Marklund is the best team I've been a part of since becoming an OT. We are incredibly supportive of each other and love to work together for the best outcomes of our residents/clients/students.

Rita joined Marklund in 2016 as an Occupational Therapist working at the Hyde Center in Geneva and the Philip Center and Marklund Day School in Bloomingdale. Over the years, her role evolved to encompass more training and mentorship of new OTs who joined the department. She has served in the role of Lead Occupational Therapist since 2018.

*Resident name changed to maintain privacy

Our Top Hat Ball— A Sweet Success

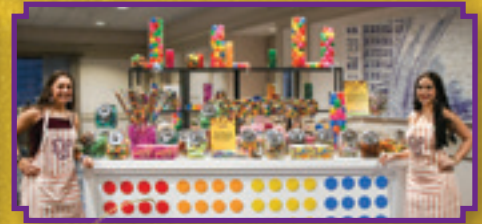
Charlie Bucket and his grandparents, propped in their bed, greeted guests as they entered Marklund’s 29th Annual Top Hat Ball: “Wonka—A Night of Pure Imagination,” instantly setting the tone for the evening. And imaginative it was, with giant lollipops, moving flowers, enough candy to fill an on-site candy shop, a cluster of Oompa Loompas—with green hair—and, of course, Willy Wonka himself.

“Welcome to a night of pure imagination,” Mr. Wonka said to all, as his unique friends, Violet Beauregarde, Veruca Salt, Augustus Gloop, and Mike Teevee danced around him. With the Oompa Loompas handing out chocolate Wonka Bars, the 500 guests gathered at the Chicago Marriott Magnificent Mile for this signature fundraising event eagerly awaited the excited cheers from those who found the golden tickets!

“Tonight, it’s not just a world of chocolate rivers, gobstoppers and truffles, but a world where dreamers of dreams like us can imagine a better world for all of us,” said Sandy Herlihy, who shared the Event Chair role with her husband, Mike. By the end of the evening, following successful live and silent auctions, raffles and donation opportunities, this event net more than \$970,000 in support of Marklund’s mission of making everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities.

“Changing the whole world is almost impossible but changing our part of the world is absolutely attainable when we do it together!”

— Sandy and Mike Herlihy



Scan the QR code
to view this year's
Top Hat video



Event photos taken by
professional photographer
Chris Guillen can be found here:



Friends of the Year

Sue & John Wick



Photo courtesy of Chris Guillen.

Sue and John Wick started their Marklund journey in December of 2003 when their young daughter, Erin, was admitted to the Marklund Philip Center. Almost instantly, they engaged fully and began volunteering, supporting fundraising events, and donating generously; they very quickly became part of the Marklund family! When their beloved Erin passed away in 2014, their giving took on even more meaning, keeping her legacy alive through continuous and unwavering support and dedication to Marklund.

“Erin loved life,” her parents stated. “She was a disabled child who taught us how precious life is. Her life was not the life we imagined for her... however, through her earthly journey and joyful spirit, she impacted many lives. Thank you (Marklund staff) for your loving care of Erin during her 11 years at Marklund. Thank you for treating her with the utmost respect and dignity. Everything you did on her behalf, you did for us. Thank you for being our strength.”

Through their generosity, kindness, commitment and leadership, Sue and John Wick are forever “Marklund friends” and well-deserving of our 2025 Friend of the Year Award.



Get to Know
Howard Brandeisky
 Member,
Marklund Board of Directors
 since 2016

Howard originally joined the Board of Directors of Little Angels Center for Excellent Care in 2013 and then joined the Marklund Board when Little Angels merged with Marklund.

Education: Received an undergraduate degree at Rutgers University in New Jersey, and earned a Master of Business Administration with concentrations in marketing and finance from the University of Chicago.

Career: I spent most of my career—over 20 years—at Kraft Foods working primarily in marketing roles, after initially starting my career working in finance. After Kraft, I joined John B. Sanfilippo & Son (maker of Fisher nuts) as head of its marketing function. I have spent the last five years with Phoenix Strategic Advisors, a small boutique consulting group that helps mid-market companies achieve profitable growth.

What role(s) do you play on the board? I am currently on the Governance Committee and the Development Committee.

Community Involvement: Besides Marklund, the other cause where I have volunteered my time is addressing food insecurity by volunteering and supporting food banks, and hope to do more with that in the future. I have also volunteered on political causes to help bring positive change through the government.

What do you admire most about the Marklund mission/vision? I greatly admire Marklund's commitment to helping people with profound disabilities have happy, safe, purpose-filled lives. We are all born with different abilities, but we all deserve the joy and dignity that comes from enjoying life's simple pleasures. Marklund helps make that a reality for those in our care.

What inspired you to get involved with the developmental disabilities arena and specifically the Marklund Board of Directors? I was introduced to Little Angels in Elgin by Jeffrey Sanfilippo. Jeffrey, who is CEO of John B. Sanfilippo & Son, was on the Little Angels Board at the time and the company was (and is) a supporter as part of its community involvement. That introduction led to me joining the Board of Little Angels. After Little Angels became part of Marklund, I joined the Marklund Board. To be honest, until I got involved with Little Angels, I didn't fully understand the scope of the need in caring for people with developmental disabilities.



See more at
www.marklund.org/ourstories



2025 Marklund Board of Directors

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Jim Armbruster, Secretary

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Dan Foley

Yaneth Medina

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Ari Smith

David Van Daff

Dan Whiston



SAVE THE DATE

43rd Annual Marklund Golf Classic
June 16, 2025



Now at a NEW location!

White Eagle Golf Club, Naperville, IL

A Special Recognition



Nikki Osterloh, Marklund's Manager of Volunteer Engagement was honored by Glancer Magazine this past December as one of its "15 Fascinating Faces of the Year!"

Nikki, a longtime resident of Yorkville, joined Marklund in 2022 after working in the volunteer management arena for several years with other organizations.

"I am very proud to have been selected by Glancer Magazine for this article," she said. "I love what I do, and always enjoy inspiring people to do volunteer work wherever, whenever they can. It's amazing to give back!"

Read about her inspiring journey in the article "Empowering Change: Nikki's Journey from Youth Group to Volunteer Leadership," and see how she is making a meaningful difference in the lives of those served at Marklund.



Scan the QR code to see the full article

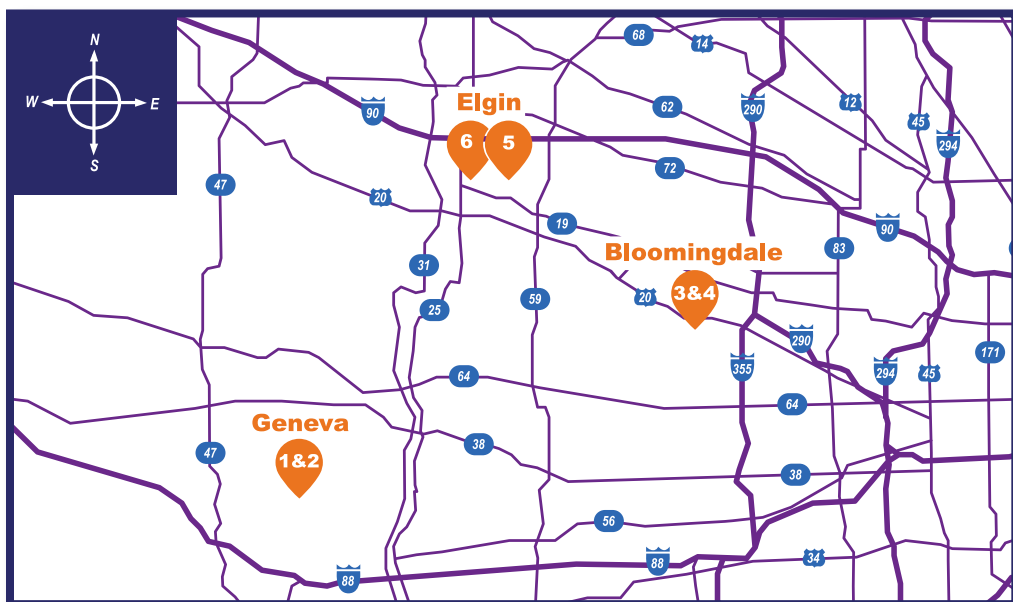


A Happy Holiday Thank You!

On behalf of the children and adults served by Marklund, *thank you* for opening your heart this holiday season. Your generosity filled our locations and residents' lives with joy, and helped us with our mission of **making everyday life possible for individuals with profound disabilities.**



Find Us in Person & Digitally



1&2 ▶ Marklund Hyde Center & Marklund Day School - Geneva

1S450 Wyatt Drive, Geneva, Illinois 60134
Phone: 630.593.5500 | Fax: 630.593.5501

3 ▶ Marklund Philip Center

164 S. Prairie Avenue, Bloomington, Illinois 60108
Phone: 630.529.2871 | Fax: 630.529.3266

4 ▶ Marklund Day School - Bloomington

(same address as Marklund Philip Center)
Phone: 630.307.1882 | Fax: 630.397.5624

5 ▶ Marklund Wasmond Center & School

1435 Summit Street, Elgin, Illinois 60120
Phone: 224.523.7530 | Fax: 847.622.5523

6 ▶ Nathan Education Center

1210 Hunter Drive, Elgin, Illinois 60120
Phone: 630.953.5230



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CARELETTER

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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and get involved!**



CARELETTER A newsletter for those who care about Marklund.



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for dedicated, compassionate
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