

MATTERS

Newsletter For The Friends & Supporters of MILESTONE, Inc.

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PLEASE HELP US MAKE THESE WISHES REALITY

Just like many people this time of year, the staff at MILESTONE makes a “Wish List,” which includes items that are needed to ensure the Individuals in our care continue to receive the highest level of care possible while working towards reaching their highest potential. Many items on the list each year become reality thanks to the continued support of the entire community. A vast majority of MILESTONE’s revenue comes from contracts with the State of Illinois to provide both care and services to our Individuals. Those funds are restricted and cannot be used for the items on this list. Support from the community is what has made the difference and allowed us to maintain our levels of care.

This is only a look at some of the items we hope will be in Santa’s bag for MILESTONE.

iPads allow our Individuals to learn new skills and communicate with family. We have an ongoing need for iPads at all facilities.



EZ Lifts and slings allow our staff to safely move an Individual from bed to a chair.



Outdoor recreational equipment allows our Individuals to enjoy the outdoors and the sunshine.



Sensory Equipment can change an Individual’s life by reducing both behaviors and the need for medication.

A complete list is on page 7.



**FROM THE DESK OF BILL GRAHN,
MILESTONE CEO AND PRESIDENT**

Dear Friend of MILESTONE:

The MILESTONE, Inc. mission statement reads:

“Everyone has the right to be treated with respect, to participate in community life, to develop and exercise personal competence, to have family and friends, and to make decisions in their lives.”

During this Holiday Season, I again sit back in awe and amazement at the work and support that is provided to accomplish our mission. I express my sincere thanks and admiration to our resolute staff, who are an integral part of the MILESTONE Family. Their dedication regardless of the task at hand is a true testament to their desire to make a difference. I also provide my unending gratitude to you, our generous community who supports us in any way they can. We are so grateful to have you as part of our family.

2024 was another “milestone” year as we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the MILESTONE Dental Clinic. It feels like just yesterday the groundwork was laid by great visionaries to provide this much needed service, and another testament to our gracious community that helped make this happen and has supported and kept the dream alive and well. The personal life accomplishments made by the individuals daily are unending. Summer Camps in and out of State were a highlight and heavily attended. Our athletes continued to find success on and off the field. The MILESTONE Singers and Dancers prepared and have again spread their love and joy at various venues including another repeat performance at the Boone County Fair.

We continue to be truly blessed. We have incredible staff that will take on any challenge and go above and beyond to complete our mission for our dear friends, the individuals we serve. We are uplifted by a community that has never wavered in kind acts. We are amazed at your unselfishness support financially and spiritually.

Thank you for you love and ongoing support, we are Truly Blessed. May you and your family have a blessed Holiday Season, and I pray that you have a safe and blessed 2025.

Sincerely,

Chief Executive Officer and President



MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE ENTIRE FAMILY



The needs of the entire family must always be considered when making the tough decisions involving one member. Christopher's family discovered that when he was diagnosed with autism in 1991, just before his third birthday. In the early 1990's people did not understand autism and how to implement appropriate

programs, and medications. According to his parents Chris had a lot of destructive behaviors while living with his family, which consists of his parents and twin brother, Daniel. After many years of trying everything that was offered or recommended, his behaviors did not improve, causing an extreme amount of stress on the family. Everyone was especially concerned about how his behaviors would take a toll on the mental health of his twin brother.

The decision to begin looking for group home placement was the hardest decision his parents say they ever made and one they did not take lightly. Chris's initial placement at RocVale was a result of an emergency placement because of destructive behaviors at home.

After a transition period of working with knowledgeable, support staff at RocVale and medical personnel, they began to see improvements in Christopher's behaviors. His medications and structured programming were finally making a difference. They were so elated to have their son back!

The placement was as an emergency situation, and as difficult as it was, his parents knew they had found a perfect home for Chris. Through the many years Chris has been involved with MILESTONE, he continues to amaze his family with all of his strengths. His typing & spelling skills have always been phenomenal. Since he is non-verbal, he relies on being able to communicate by using the written word. Having the staff understand and provide opportunities for his unique way of expressing his needs has been invaluable. Staff has always been in close contact with the family and lines of communication are strong. During meetings they



are willing to try various different treatments and/or medications in order to provide the best benefit. His parents are so pleased at the young man he has become! Chris does not enjoy coming back to his childhood home in Freeport because his group home is his home. This is very comforting for his family, visits with Christopher always consist of a meal and almost always trips to various consignment shops in Rockford. In addition to his twin brother, Chris now has a sister-in-law and two nieces who enjoy getting together with Uncle Chris.



Chris enjoys eating, listening to music, and has always been a tv watcher. For many years Sesame Street was his favorite. He was Big Bird's biggest fan, as Chris is 6'7". He is involved with Special

Olympics, although he doesn't have a competitive bone in his body. He just knows his family takes him out to eat after finishing with his track and field events.

His parents are very grateful that society has become much more educated about autism since Chris was first diagnosed. Adding it's important for families to take the path that works best for them and support all families who make various choices for the care and living situation for their child with special needs. They are strong believers in praising staff often and showing our appreciation for all their efforts. They are truly often the unsung heroes in our children's lives!



MILESTONE MISSION STATEMENT

"Everyone has the right to be treated with respect, to participate in community life, to develop and exercise personal competence, to have family and friends, and to make decisions in their lives." MILESTONE, Inc. exists to ensure that persons with developmental disabilities can exercise these same rights.



THIS YEAR'S MICHAEL BURJA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Ronda Mathis is the recipient of this year's Michael Burja Memorial Education Scholarship. She has been an employee of MILESTONE for almost 10 years. She has worked as a DSP, Home Coordinator and most recently a RSC. Ronda is currently enrolled at University of Phoenix and will be working towards a Bachelor of Science in Communications.

The scholarship was established by the Burja family in memory of their son, Michael, who was part of the Elmwood Heights family for over 7 years.

The selection committee comprised of Amanda Schroeder and Arles Hendershott chose Ronda from a field of several worthy applicants.



VISITING LOCKWOOD PARK

Elizabeth loves going to Lockwood Park and visiting the horses and other animals. It always puts a smile on her face.

EARTHLY ESCAPES PRODUCTS ARE THE PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFTS

Are you looking for that perfect gift to pamper someone on your Holiday gift list?

Look no further than MILESTONE Industries.

Our Individuals are busy making scented wax melts .

Each product is wrapped and is labeled with its scent and ingredients.

Other packaging is offered for gifts including gift tins, and boxes.

There are over 25 scents to choose from including special holiday scents.

Prices start at \$1.00 each and go up to \$35 for a gift basket.

For more information call Margaret at 815- 543-6323 or e-mail her at mdeberry@milestone-inc.org



HAVING FUN IN A UNIQUE WAY

A beautiful fall afternoon was the perfect setting for a day of safe Ax Throwing at Lockwood Park. Everyone had fun trying to hit the target.





ARTIST DISPLAY THEIR WORKS

MILESTONE artists proudly displayed their works during the Fall Art Scene event. They met with potential buyers and explained how each creation was made.



END OF SUMMER BASHES

SAYING GOOD BY TO SUMMER

Individuals at MILESTONE Industries said farewell to summer in a big way. Festivities included amazing pinatas, hand made by Shaun Jones and Monika Hopkins, American and Mexican tacos, along with taco salad and refried beans with head chef Monica Esquivias doing her magic.



EVERYONE AT ELMWOOD HEIGHTS JOINED IN THE FUN

Everyone was smiling as they said good by to summer at Elmwood Heights. The day was full of good food, games and good times.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS UPDATE

REGIONAL BOWLING

MILESTONE was well represented with 38 bowlers competing in the Special Olympics bowling tournament at the Cherrybowl, and an additional 7 bowlers competing in the ramp bowling tournament at Park Lanes. Everyone tried their best and faced some tough competition.

Bowling Medals and Ribbons

- 3-Gold medals
- 9-Silver medals
- 7-Bronze medals
- 8-4th place ribbons
- 7-5th place ribbons,
- 7-6th place ribbons
- 2-7th place ribbons
- 2-8th place ribbons



STATE SOFTBALL SKILLS COMPETITION

Six athletes from MILESTONE competed in the Skills portion of the State Softball Tournament in Springfield. Everyone did a great job and proudly displayed their awards when they got home.



Softball Skills Medals and Awards

- 1-Gold Medal
- 1-Silver Medal
- 2-Bronze Medals
- 1-4th Place Ribbon
- 1-5th Place Ribbon



MODIFIED VOLLEYBALL TEAMS WINS GOLD

The MILESTONE Goats Modified Volleyball Team traveled to Oaklawn High School to compete in the Special Olympics Regional Volleyball Tournament. They took home the gold medal and advanced to the State Fall Games at UW Health Sports Factory. Everyone did a great job against tough competition.

STATE MODIFIED VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

The MILESTONE modified volleyball team competed in Division IV at the State Fall Games, and faced some very tough competition and came home with the silver medal. Every one they played their best.





WISH LIST



MILESTONE TRAINING CENTER

iPads 4 @ \$400.....	\$1,600
Outside Recreation Area Upgrades.....	\$5,000
Sensory Equipment 12 Classrooms @ \$3000	\$36,000
Concrete Work/Leveling.....	\$15,000
Commercial Grade Entry Doors 2 @ \$2000.....	\$4000



MILESTONE INDUSTRIES

iPads 4 @ \$400.....	\$1,600
Various Educational Materials.....	\$3,000
Concrete Work/Leveling.....	\$15,000
Art Supplies.....	\$3,000
Replacement Carpeting.....	\$20,000
Outdoor Covered Swings 3 @ \$1000.....	\$3,000
Outdoor Recreation Area.....	\$20,000



ELMWOOD HEIGHTS SPECIALIZED CARE FACILITY

Adaptive Swing Set with Wheelchair Swing.....	\$8,000
Medical Equipment.....	\$10,000
Positioning Slings 40 @ \$275	\$11,000
Replacement Entrance Doors 6 @ \$5,000	\$30,000
Sensory Equipment 6 homes @ \$5,000.....	\$30,000
Patio Door Replacements for Homes.....	\$40,000
Bedroom/Bathroom Remodels and Upgrades in each Home 6 @ \$15,000.....	\$90,000
Replacement Flooring for Two Homes.....	\$20,000
EZ Lifts 5 @ \$8,000.....	\$40,000
EZ Lift Replacement Batteries 10 @ \$100.....	\$1,000
Medical Exam Bed.....	\$10,000
Replacement Windows for 6 Home @ \$15,000	\$90,000
Washer/Dryer for 6 Homes @ \$5,200.....	\$31,200
Closet Remodels in 6 Homes @ \$3,000.....	\$18,000
Ceiling Fans for 6 Homes @ \$1,920	\$11,520



MILESTONE DENTAL CLINIC

Parking Lot Repair and Repaving.....	\$40,000
Replace Carpeting/Flooring	\$9,000
Desk Chairs 4 @ \$150.....	\$600
New Office Windows.....	\$15,000
Dental Curing Lights 3 @ \$2,500.....	\$7,500
Mouthwatch I/O Camera 2 @ \$300	\$600

AGENCY WIDE

AEDs Used for Training	\$2,000
Robo-Coupe Commercial Food Processor 2 @ \$1,900.....	\$3,800



ADULT GROUP HOMES

Slings for EZ-stand 3 @ \$350.....	\$1,050
XXL EZ Lift Slings 2 @ \$400.....	\$800
Commercial Grade Oven	\$6,000
Patio	\$4,000
Exercise Equipment.....	\$2,550
Support Railings	\$3,000
Washer and Dryer 6 @ \$1,000	\$6,000
Carports at 2 Group Homes @ \$8,000.....	\$16,000
New Furniture 10 Homes @ \$7,500	\$75,000
Bathroom Renovations 2 @ \$30,000.....	\$60,000
New Flooring Multiple Homes.....	\$50,000
Automatic Door Openers for Bedrooms and Bathrooms 12 @ \$3500	\$42,000
Bedroom Conversion.....	\$12,000
Screened in Porch	\$8,000
Extended/Widened Driveway	\$10,000
Car/Sedan.....	\$40,000
Acoustic/Noise Reducing Tiles 2 Rooms @ \$8000.....	\$16,000
Bike Rack	\$500
New Windows at 2 Homes @ \$6,000.....	\$12,000
New Couch and Love Seat	\$2,000
Seated Scale.....	\$1,500
Large Standing Scale with Handles.....	\$1,000

MILESTONE, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) Illinois not-for-profit organization. MILESTONE Matters is developed to inform the public of the program services we offer to developmentally disabled citizens from Northern Illinois. To learn more about MILESTONE and the individuals we serve, please call (815) 654-6100.

Bill Grahn, CEO and President
MILESTONE Matters Editor: Arles Hendershott
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EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

35 years

Cynthia Miller
Theresa Risser

October
December

15 years

Jessie Barnes
Amanda Eberley
Theresa Chism

October
October
November

30 years

Ellen Renton

November

10 years

Shyrica Thompson
Ronda Mathis
Ronald Ross Jr
Alvin Smith

October
November
December
December

25 years

Theresa Keller
Catherine driussi
Lizzita Sanders

November
December
December

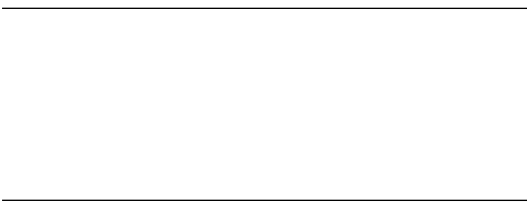


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MILESTONE MATTERS

WINTER 2024



We're Hiring!

Open Positions:

Direct Service Provider: \$19.25/hr • QIDP: \$25.00/hr

C.N.A.: \$19.50/hr

RN/LPNs: \$29.37 to \$47.23

\$600 Sign On Bonus

Benefits: Health Insurance, Dental/Vision insurance,
Paid Time Off, Life Insurance, 401k Profit Sharing,
Tuition Reimbursement, and so much more!

EOE



Apply online today at
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Contact Human Resources with any questions
at 815-639-2849 or hr@milestone-inc.org