

M A T T E R S

Newsletter For The Friends & Supporters of MILESTONE, Inc.

WINTER 2025 CONTENTS



It takes a village
3

Goodbye Summer
4

Artscene
Fall Festival
Trunk or Treat
5

Special Olympics
Update
Swimming at Y
6

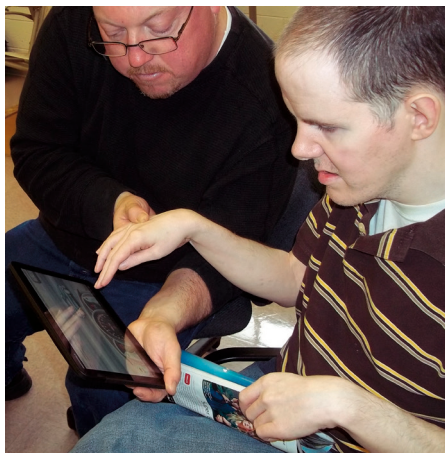
Wish List
7

We Are Hiring
8

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

WINTER 2025

Dear Friends of MILESTONE:

During this Holiday season I must take a moment to express my sincere thanks and admiration to all of our employees who have dedicated themselves to the mission of MILESTONE. Giving their heart and their all to ensure; "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." Their dedication is a true testament to their decision to make a difference. And of course, our unending gratitude to you, our amazing community that continues to be so generous with love and support.

From 2009 – 2023 MILESTONE was led by the epitome of a servant leader, Shawn Way. He showed us that through stewardship, listening, empathy, flexibility, compassion, character, and competence you can foster outcomes for the greater sake of others and not personal accolades. He was a mentor, friend, and champion of others, ensuring that everyone's needs were met while encouraging and applauding their growth. These characteristics extended not only to the individuals we serve but the many staff past and present that serve MILESTONE faithfully. Shawn passed after a courageous and hard-fought battle with ALS. Even during his struggle, he continued as a mentor and friend and will always be a member of the MILESTONE Family.

2025 remained a wonderful year for the individuals that call MILESTONE home. Our athletes participated in Regional and State competitions in Track and Field, Golf, Volleyball, Bowling, Basketball and Softball skills, bringing home many awards. Our campers, due to generous donations to our Adopt a Camper program once again had a glorious time with camp opportunities both away and at home. The year would not be complete without our MILESTONE Singers, Dancers, and artisans perfecting their crafts and putting them on display at various functions throughout Rockford and as always, the Boone County Fair.

I apologize I could talk forever about the amazing things that are happening, I will summarize we are committed to the 260 individuals we serve, and our mission does not waiver. We are blessed with amazing employees, individuals, and you the compassionate community that makes up the MILESTONE Family. You have never waived in your unselfish support spiritually and financially and we are forever grateful.

Thank you for your continued 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 2026.

Bill Grahn
President and CEO

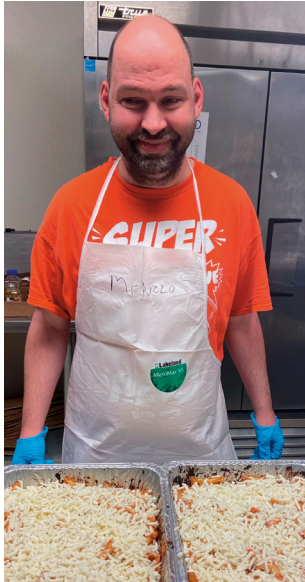


*In memory of
Shawn Way
1962-2025*





IT TAKES A VILLAGE



We all know the saying it takes a village to raise a child. But when something changes in the child's village the impact can be far reaching. Michael's family found this out when his grandparents passed away and child care became an issue. Up until then Michael lived at home, attended school every day and took part in the Special Olympics program. Both of his parents worked and there were no programs with opening that could take him and there was no one who could look after him when he came home from school.

His Mom attended a parents meeting and learned about RocVale in Rockford, and even though there was a long waiting list the social worker urged her to look at the facility and if she liked what she saw to apply. His parents discovered Rockford was smaller than Chicago and very neighborly. They liked the fact RocVale had a Special Olympics program and that the children went on outings in the community. Within 2 weeks Michael was able to move to Rockford and finish High School at Guilford.

When he turned 21, his parents needed to find adult placement and at first were told MILESTONE did not have any openings. They looked at other facilities



and had picked one in Chicago, but they kept hoping something would open up at MILESTONE, and it did. They quickly asked that all the adult placement paperwork be switched so he could stay at MILESTONE.

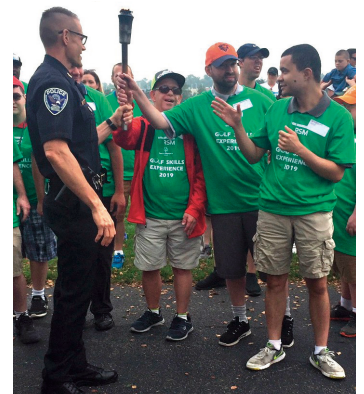
His Mom says that was the best decision she ever made. She has watched Michael grow into a confident young man. Adding the staff at MILESTONE and his housemates are excellent examples for him and encourage him to keep learning and trying new things.



Michael enjoys going to work everyday at MILESTONE Industries and taking part in as many Special Olympic events as he can.

His mom says she is very glad she found MILESTONE for her son.

"Even though he lives in Rockford and I am in Chicago", his mom says, "I am still part of his life." She credits the excellent level of communication between her and the staff because they always tell her what is going on.



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

Artasia Leonard is the recipient of this year's Michael Burja Memorial Education Scholarship. She has been an employee of MILESTONE for almost 15 years. She has worked as a DSP, Home Coordinator and most recently an RSC. Artasia is currently enrolled at University of Phoenix and will be working towards a Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Administration.

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 Artasia from a field of several worthy applicants.

MILESTONE BENEFITS FROM STATE BUDGET ALLOCATION

MILESTONE was one of the non-profits selected by Illinois State Representative Maurice West for a state funded grant. The funds are being administered by the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois and are non-restricted. MILESTONE will be using the funds for new 15 passenger van



SAYING GOODBYE TO SUMMER

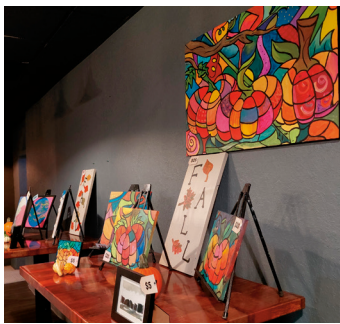
A carnival marked the end of summer at MILESTONE Industries. There were smiles galore, especially when the right spot was hit with the dunk tank.





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.



WELCOMING FALL



The weather did not stop everyone at Elmwood Heights from Welcoming Fall during a Fall Festival. Everyone enjoyed the music, food and fun.

TRUNK OR TREAT A HUGE SUCCESS

Over 200 Trick or Treaters attended MILESTONE's first Trunk or Treat at MILESTONE Industries. Over 20 vans were decorated and the Individuals were all smiles as the handed-out candy. A special thank you to our sponsors who helped make the event possible.



MILESTONE TRUNK OR TREAT SPONSORS

GRAND GHOST SPONSOR
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HOCUS FOCUS SPONSORS
Rockford Park District

TOMBSTONE TRUNK SPONSORS
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The Sturm Family

WITCH'S BREW CANDY SPONSOR
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Meridian Printing



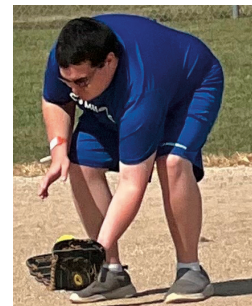
SPECIAL OLYMPICS UPDATE

STATE SOFTBALL SKILLS TOURNAMENT

Softball Skills Medals

- 2 - Gold Medals
- 1 - Silver Medal
- 3 - Bronze Medals

Six MILESTONE Athletes traveled to Springfield to Compete in the State Softball Skills Tournament, and they did great. In total they brought home 6 medals and lots of wonderful memories.



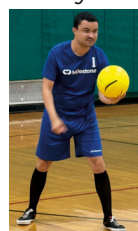
REGIONAL VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT



The MILESTONE Goats and the MILESTONE Marvels Modified Volleyball teams traveled to Oaklawn, IL. to compete in the Regional Volleyball Tournament. Both teams played hard & did their best.

The Goats won the Gold in their division and will be advancing to the State Volleyball Games.

The MILESTONE Marvels placed 2nd in their division and brought home a Silver Medal with a nail-biting finish. They will also be advancing to the State Fall Volleyball Games.



MODIFIED VOLLEYBALL TEAM BRINGS HOME THE GOLD

Two MILESTONE Modified Volleyball teams competed at the Special Olympics State Volleyball Tournament. They played some great games and came home with some well-deserved medals. The Goats took home the Gold in the Modified IV division, and the Marvels brought home the Bronze in the Modified I division.

EVERYONE ENJOYS SWIMMING AT THE YMCA

A highlight of everyone's week is swimming at the YMCA. No matter how hot or cold it is outside the temperature inside is always perfect and welcoming.





WISH LIST



MILESTONE TRAINING CENTER

iPads 4 @ \$400.....	\$1,600
Outside Recreation Area Upgrades.....	\$5,000
Sensory Equipment 12 Classrooms @ \$3,000.....	\$36,000
Concrete Work/Leveling.....	\$15,000
Commercial Grade Entry Doors 2 @ \$2,000.....	\$4,000



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 @ \$1,000.....	\$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
Replacement Windows for 6 Home @ \$15,000.....	\$90,000
Hi/Low hospital beds and mattresses 5 @ \$4,000.....	\$20,000
Washer/Dryer for 6 Homes @ \$5,200.....	\$31,200
Closet Remodels in 6 Homes @ \$3,000.....	\$18,000
Medical Equipment Medical Rolling Crash cart 6 @ \$620.....	\$3,720
Hospital Beds Full electric 10 @ \$2,500.....	\$25,000



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 2 @ \$1,400.....	\$2,800
Mouthwatch I/O Camera.....	\$300
Operative Handpiece 2 @ \$2,000.....	\$4,000
X-Ray Sensor 2 @ \$7,000.....	\$14,000



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
iPads 4 @ \$400.....	\$1,600
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 @ \$3,500.....	\$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 @ \$8,000.....	\$16,000
Bike Rack.....	\$500
New Windows at 2 Homes @ \$6,000.....	\$12,000
New Couch and Love Seat.....	\$2,000
Emergency Generator 3 @ \$1,800.....	\$5,400

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

30 years

Sonia Brown

October

15 years

Chanelle Baker

October

20 years

Sheffield Wiley

October

Rita Hanson-King

October

Serena Batten

October

Aimee Kaopua-Hersey

December

10 years

Laterra Anderson

November

Victoria Patterson-Spivey

December

Julia Ross

December



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MILESTONE MATTERS

WINTER 2025



ANNUAL VISIT TO PUMPKIN PATCH

It is an event everyone looks forward to every year, a visit to the Pumpkin Patch. There were smiles galore as everyone admired the Halloween themed decorations and pumpkins.



Milestone We're Hiring!

Open Positions:

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

C.N.A.: \$20.50/hr

\$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

www.jobsatmilestone.com

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