



It's magic! Navy Pier transforms into Bourbon Street for Marklund's 12th Annual Top Hat Ball

Ginny Richardson Public Relations, December 21, 2007

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Marklund's 12th Annual Top Hat Ball is taking place 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9, at Navy Pier's historic Grand Ballroom, 600 E. Grand Ave., Chicago. Proceeds benefit the infants, children and adults with disabilities served by Marklund.

PR9.NET December 21, 2007 - Chicago, Ill. - Party-goers can enjoy all the excitement of a New Orleans-style Mardi Gras celebration without leaving Chicago at Marklund's 12th Annual Top Hat Ball taking place 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9, at Navy Pier's historic Grand Ballroom, 600 E. Grand Ave., Chicago. Proceeds benefit the infants, children and adults with disabilities served by Marklund.

Top Hat guests will enjoy open bar, fine dining, dancing to the Al Sofia Orchestra, a lavish auction, live entertainment in true Mardi Gras spirit and the chance to mingle with local VIPs including Steve Sanders, news anchor for WGN-TV News. Sanders serves as honorary chairman of the event.

No Mardi Gras celebration would be complete without a full night of entertainment. Marching in during cocktail hour will be Mystick Krewe of LAFF, a brass band quartet putting on a Mardi Gras parade in full costume. Mystick Krewe of LAFF was founded in 1992 by self-proclaimed "New Orleans aficionados" with the goal of creating a traditional Mardi Gras carnival "krewe" and a New Orleans-style social club in Chicago. Throughout the remainder of the evening, guests will feel as if they are walking down Bourbon Street, with sights of characters dressed in Mardi Gras costumes, opportunities to be sketched by a caricaturist and the chance to learn one's fate and fortune from a tarot card reader.

Guests top off each year's ball with a special toast to an outstanding Marklund supporter, traditionally named Marklund's "Friend of the Year." This year, Jim and Lynn Armbruster of Aurora will be honored with the distinction.

The Armbrusters have a deeply personal connection to Marklund: their son, Nathan, is developmentally disabled and has been a Marklund resident since 1988. Since then, Jim and Lynn have tirelessly supported Marklund through financial contributions, volunteer leadership and fundraising efforts. Most recently, Jim launched an extraordinary campaign called "California or Bust for Marklund's Kids," in which he walked over 2,300 miles from his home in Aurora to San Francisco, Calif., raising more than \$130,000 for Marklund. From 2003 to 2005, Jim and Lynn served as co-chairs of the Top Hat Ball, and they continue to serve as part of the event committee. Together, through personal and corporate giving, Jim and Lynn have financially supported Marklund with over \$120,000.

"The Armbrusters are an incredible example of how caring Marklund's supporters truly are," said Joel Rusco, Marklund's president and CEO. "Over the past 20 years, Jim and Lynn have opened their hearts to Marklund, continually going above and beyond to provide new opportunities for our residents."

Randy Lindenberg and Kate McCracken of St. Charles will serve as this year's Top Hat Ball co-chairs. Major sponsors include Mola Foundation of Chicago, Trust Company of Illinois, the Lederer Family and American Airlines.

Tickets to the Top Hat Ball are \$300 per person. Table sponsorship opportunities are available. To reserve tickets or for more information, call Jeannine Zupo at 630-624-9874.

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About Ginny Richardson Public Relations

Ginny Richardson Public Relations specializes in media relations for business, healthcare, entertainment, and the arts.

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