

Group home name honors Orland Park's Berhman family for work helping people with cerebral palsy

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Paul Behrman, left, and his son, Andrew, outside the group home in Country Club Hills dedicated to their family for its work to help children and adults with cerebral palsy. (Mike Nolan / Daily Southtown)

Andrew Behrman can talk your ear off about sports, with a podcast that focuses on the subject and, personally, a particular affinity for baseball.

“I run my mouth about sports all the time,” he said.

The 27-year-old says “one of my ultimate dreams is to cross off every ballpark” in the country.

So far he's visited 13, including Chicago's two major league parks, and hopes to visit the home of the Minnesota Twins this summer with perhaps a stop on the way back home to Iowa's Field of Dreams.

For his family, dad Paul Behrman and wife, Gail, the idea a few years ago of their son living on his own was itself just a dream.

Andrew was diagnosed before he was 2 years old with cerebral palsy and relies on a motorized wheelchair to get around. The Orland Park family bought a home in Palos Heights that was refurbished and, in 2019, Andrew moved in with two roommates.

The family for years has volunteered its time and raised funds for an organization whose mission is to help people such as their son, and the Behrmans were recently honored with the naming of a similar group home, in Country Club Hills.



A plaque affixed to a group home in Country Club Hills dedicated to the Behrman family of Orland Park for its work supporting an organization that helps children and adults with cerebral palsy. (Mike Nolan / Daily Southtown)

Paul Behrman previously served on the board of directors of United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Chicago and helped oversee its 2013 merger with Seguin Services. He now works for UCP Seguin as vice president of strategy, working to streamline business processes in areas such as human resources.

He retired from J.P. Morgan Chase in 2017 after 39 years in the banking industry, first working for J.P. Morgan's predecessor, 1st National Bank of Chicago, in systems and business analysis.

During his time on the board of UCP of Greater Chicago, Behrman helped in developing Infinitec, a Tinley Park organization that refurbishes donated computers for use in schools for special needs students and creates online educational videos that help train those who teach special needs students. It also provides digital versions of textbooks for use in schools by students with disabilities.

“Many schools only meet minimum standards in terms of accessible technologies for their students,” Behrman said. “For Andrew, assistive technology like laptops and iPads have proved extremely helpful, but they aren't always provided in schools for kids with physical disabilities.”

Today, UCP Seguin, based in Cicero, operates 79 group homes in the Chicago area, including the one in Country Club Hills that bears a plaque identifying it as “The Behrman House.”



A group home in Country Club Hills has been dedicated in the name of the Behrman family of Orland Park for its work supporting an organization that helps children and adults with cerebral palsy. (Mike Nolan / Daily Southtown)

“We're humbled to receive this honor,” Paul Behrman said at the dedication ceremony.

The work of UCP Seguin on behalf of people like his son “allows people to live independently, work and become active members in their community,” he said.

Andrew said that, through UCP Seguin, he was able to get a job two months ago working at Marcus Orland Park Cinema, checking theatergoers tickets and with the added bonus of getting free or discounted tickets to movies.

“I couldn’t ask for a better company to work for,” he said.

The Behrmans are also involved in an annual fundraiser for UCP Seguin, the Southside Scramble, which started in 1987 with Paul Behrman and buddies getting together for an annual golf outing.

In 1996, it morphed into a fundraiser for what at the time was UCP of Greater Chicago, and that first year raised just under \$1,400 for UCP and has, cumulatively, raised more than \$250,000 for UCP Seguin.

Andrew said he played baseball for 19 years for the Tinley Park Bobcats Challengers, a division of the youth baseball league for players with special

Andrew and his family were part of a fundraising effort, helping to collect \$300,000 to enable the Bobcats, in 2014, to open Challengers Field, an accessible field for players with special needs at [Bettenhausen Park](#), 16500 S. 76th Ave.

Paul Behrman said he did not have much experience with children with disabilities before the birth of his son, but that the challenges, from school to securing a job, opened his eyes.

“If not for his physical limitations, he could do any job,” he said of his son.

Behrman said that he and his wife were told at one point by a doctor that Andrew would never be able to live independently, and although their son relies on others for many of his needs, he has still achieved an independence they never thought possible.

“People would walk up, see him in his wheelchair and ask me if he can talk,” Behrman said. “I’d say, ‘ask him.’”

“They are all so filled with joy but you don’t see if it you make all of these assumptions of who’s really there,” he said people with special needs.

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