



MurrayRidgeCenter  
HELPING PEOPLE... FOR A LIFETIME

# The Murray Ridge Courier

January 2012

## A Message From The Superintendent



2012 has finally arrived, and with it new challenges and opportunities! Many exciting accomplishments were made in 2011, and the focus in the coming year will be on pursuing new possibilities and furthering the positive developments of 2011, while continuing vigorously to lay the groundwork for financial sustainability.

Financial challenges, Murray Ridge Center continued to assist hundreds of families through its Family Support Program, while enrolling nearly 70 individuals on a Medicaid waiver program which can be used to provide home and community based services to individuals living with their families, and to pull in some federal funding for adult day services. Additionally, while continuing to provide planning and monitoring of services received by eligible individuals, our Service & Support Administration Department diligently researched and expanded the range of alternative services to which it refers and links both eligible and ineligible individuals seeking assistance to overcome limitations.

For the more than 2,000 Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities, pursuit of skills, quality of life and the ability to be engaged and contributing members of the community is paramount. Last year, Murray Ridge Center's creative and committed staff continued its track record of excellence, while taking exciting initiatives on behalf of individuals of all ages.

Our Early Intervention Specialists participated in extensive training, and have implemented the state of the art "responsive teaching model" which involves partnering with families to provide highly effective, on-going stimulation for infants and toddlers with developmental delays. In the meantime, the exceptional staff at Murray Ridge School continued to advance its functional life skills curriculum, while taking advantage of grant dollars available for community access, simulated home environments to complement instruction in daily living tasks, and the introduction of new technology into classrooms.

Community-based opportunities for adult program participants have been sustained and enhanced through the implementation of cost-effective responses to the elimination of public transportation routes on which many in our Community Employment program were dependent, and through the facilitation of new volunteer opportunities that enabled more than thirty adults with developmental disabilities to pursue their dreams while giving back to the community. Likewise, those attending our adult day centers continued to enjoy on-site vocational services, while experiencing numerous enhancements to leisure and learning programs. The focus of Murray Ridge Adult Services on the provision of enriching, customer-driven offerings and environments is reflected in the new name of our service sites – **Opportunity and Vocational Centers**.

In recognition of the critical importance of partnerships with family caregivers, particularly in light of imminent fi-

Finally, in 2011 Murray Ridge Center achieved a four-year Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities accreditation. This is the highest level of accreditation that a board of developmental disabilities can achieve for operational compliance, and it is a testimony to the competence and commitment of staff throughout the agency.

The dedication and energy of our staff, the on-going support of the community and the synergistic collaboration with those served and their family members lead me to feel encouraged and optimistic about our future. That said, funding cutbacks coupled with increased needs continue to be a primary concern. In 2011, following several years of decline in our state funding, Murray Ridge Center lost 45% of its remaining state subsidy. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, we saw the expiration of the federal stimulus program that had benefited the agency significantly over the past two and a half years. Additionally in 2011, more than \$400,000 in on-going funding associated with the Tangible Personal Property Tax was eliminated. An additional \$400,000 will be eliminated this year, and another \$400,000 is scheduled to be phased out in 2013, resulting in a reduction of at least \$1,200,000 annually by 2014.

As we begin the New Year together, I am confident that we will find ways to accomplish much in 2012, while continuing to take steps necessary to remain fiscally secure in the years ahead. It will be important to communicate broadly about the important work of Murray Ridge Center, and I invite each of you to learn more and help spread the word about our services. I am honored by the privilege of working with the incredible staff at Murray Ridge and our partners within the community to provide lifelong services to people with developmental disabilities.

*Amber Fisher*  
*Superintendent*

# A Very Merry Christmas at Murray Ridge School

Murray Ridge School (MRS) celebrated the holiday season throughout the month of December. On December 7, MRS hosted its first ever Santa Village, complete with a visit from the jolly man himself. Classrooms created and decorated different village buildings and displayed their creations throughout the school. Santa Claus showed up early that morning to visit and take pictures with students. After their visit, students were escorted through the Santa Shoppe, a long-standing tradition whereby staff members donate items that students may select as gifts for family and friends.

Continuing the Christmas theme, the Murray Ridge Choraleers stopped by to sing holiday songs on December 13. Finally, on December 15, MRS's intermediate classes presented a holiday play, "How the Grinch Stole Winter." Twenty-four students participated in the successful production, complete with costumes, holiday carols, and assistance from the wonderful staff of Murray Ridge School.



Nelson Fontanez picks out gifts at the Santa Shoppe.



One of the Santa Village houses decorated as Santa Claus.



Cindy Lou Who (Athyna Rivera), a Who (Shawn Selmon), and The Grinch (CJ Martin) act in the school play.



The Choraleers visit MRS for a Christmas Concert.



Tom Hardy sits on Santa's lap.

# Kathy Justy Named 2011 Outstanding Citizen

## City of Grafton Recognizes Murray Ridge Center Employee

Kathy Justy, Receiving/Inventory Clerk at Murray Ridge Center, was awarded the Grafton Village Right Track Award – 2011 Outstanding Citizen on December 2 at Grafton-Midview Public Library.

This honor, given by the Grafton Village Business Association, is awarded to an Outstanding Business, Organization, Citizen, and Youth who volunteer within the community to support and provide growth opportunities for the city and surrounding area. Nominations are sent to the Association by Grafton citizens.

Kathy was selected over four other nominees – including her own husband! – to receive this prestigious award. She has been involved in volunteer work for more than 10 years. In her positions as a volunteer firefighter, nationally registered advanced EMT, and a Lorain County fire/arson investigator, Kathy responds to homes or other locations to render emergency care. She has also applied for and received numerous grants that have helped Grafton Village purchase and maintain modern, up-to-date equipment. Additionally, Kathy works as an EMS and American Heart Association Basic Life Support (AHA BLS) instructor, where she has even taught MRC consumers in CPR and Emergency Medical Responder classes. “I find that teaching EMS and CPR is a way to share knowledge and skills with others,” Kathy said. “If even one life is saved by someone I’ve taught, then my work has not been in vain.”

Beyond her Grafton positions, Kathy and her husband also volunteer with the Lorain County Metro Parks as volunteer naturalists, where they monitor bald eagle nests for the State of Ohio. Kathy also volunteers at Murray Ridge. In her “spare” time, Kathy uses her knowledge as an Ohio State Master Gardener to teach gardening courses. And, as if that weren’t enough, she and her husband are members of the Carlisle Historical Society. “The only way I could give the amount of time required is because of the support of my husband Paul and close friends. When I felt I was near the end of my rope, they would pull me through. They would remind me about why I wanted to volunteer and that God had put me in this field for a reason.”

Not surprisingly, Kathy finds the biggest challenge with volunteering to be time management. Her volunteer positions require ongoing training, and she is on-



Right Track Award winners (l-r): Dave DiVencenzo and Jim Clark (Outstanding Organization - Grafton Hot Stove), Joel Large (Outstanding Business - GLW Broadband, Inc.), Kathy Justy (Outstanding Citizen), and Erin Keyse (Outstanding Youth).

call evenings and weekends as a volunteer firefighter and EMT. But this time commitment pales in comparison to the satisfaction she gets out of volunteering with so many organizations. “Knowing that I’ve made a difference in someone’s life, hoping that I’ve eased their fears at the time of fire, injury, or illness,” is Kathy’s favorite part of being a volunteer.

“I am humbled and honored to have been given this award,” Kathy said. “I feel that anyone who volunteers should be recognized. Time is one of our most precious gifts, and every volunteer gives of their time and talents.”

Congratulations to Kathy Justy on receiving the 2011 Outstanding Citizen Award!



## EI Represents MRC at Annual Zero Proof Mix-Off

The Murray Ridge Early Intervention Department participated in the 10th annual Zero Proof Mix-Off at Lorain County Community College on December 1.

EI's drink, called the Griswold's Grog (based on the movie National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation) was one of twenty beverages submitted by organizations throughout Lorain County. The public was asked to vote for winners, as well as enjoy refreshments and enter to win various door prizes.

Congratulations to our EI Team (l-r) Jennifer Doseck, Kim Ohl, Heather Knobler, and Stephanie Bondra, for their participation in this year's Mix-Off!



## Murray Ridge Opportunity/Vocational Centers Fun at the Ridge

### OBERLIN

On December 23, the Oberlin Opportunity/Vocational Center held its annual Christmas party for consumers looking to share in the holiday spirit. In addition to karaoke, bingo, snacks, movies, snowflake toss, dancing with DJ Curtis Zimmerlin, Christmas trivia, and a hot chocolate bar, was the Prettiest and Ugliest Christmas Sweater contest. The winners, Shasta Knarr and Melanie Ladina (right), were proud of their victories! Thank you to all who participated!



### ELYRIA

The Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center celebrated the season of giving by holding its seventh annual Santa Shop on December 15 and 16. Consumers were able to peruse the large offering of gifts, purchased by staff so that each individual could select the perfect holiday treat for family, friends, and fellow consumers. Consumers like Marie Poling and Margie Nikolai (left) look forward to this EOVC opportunity every year, and all who shopped were very happy with their finds. The staff, too, was happy with the turnout!

### LORAIN

On December 1, the Lorain Opportunity/Vocational Center held its first ever LOVC Music Extravaganza, written and directed by staff member Trina Hutlock. Forty-four consumers participated, with Trina choosing music and teaching choreography to the consumers. One hundred and thirty people attended the two performances, and LOVC staff is hopeful they can take this show on the road by performing at Murray Ridge School after the holiday break. Great show LOVC!

(l-r: Amanda Spreng and Denise Potts dance to "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun," and Ken Martin performs Billy Ray Cyrus.)





# January 2012

## Activities & Events

- 1/2—Agency closed for New Year's Day holiday
- 1/3—Murray Ridge School classes resume
- 1/4—Raiders men's basketball game Team 1
- 1/7—Raiders men's basketball game Team 1
- 1/10—Raiders lady's basketball game Team 1
- 1/11—Raiders men's basketball game Teams 1 and 3
- 1/11—Family Support Parent Committee meeting , 6:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road in Elyria
- 1/12—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 1/16—Agency Closed in Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 1/18—Raiders men's basketball game Team 2
- 1/19—Raiders men's basketball game Team 1
- 1/19—LCBDD Finance Committee meeting , 12:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 1/21—Raiders lady's/men's basketball game Team 3
- 1/25—Raiders lady's/men's basketball game Team 3
- 1/26—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 1/27—LCBDD Organizational Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 1/28—Raiders men's basketball game Team 1

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



### BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on December 16, 2011:

It was reported that the Board Award Committee has an Exceptional Service Award winner who will be honored at the next Board meeting. The Board approved an agreement with Murray Ridge Production Center. The Board unanimously established the dollar amount that the Family Support Parent Committee is authorized to approve in the first quarter of 2012. Also reviewed and approved were the Individual Cost Ceilings for Supported Living. The 2012 Board calendar was discussed; no meeting will be held in July and October, and meetings will continue to be held the last Friday of each month, with the exceptions of November 16 and December 21 . The Murray Ridge Support Group reported that it has donated \$25 Giant Eagle gift cards to 75 needy families at Murray Ridge. It was announced that Board Member Bob Gajdos was re-appointed for another term.

# A PRESCHOOL OPTION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Murray Ridge Preschool Program offers students with a variety of developmental disabilities the advantages of in-room therapies, an array of state-of-the-art equipment, outstanding staff and an

## Murray Ridge Preschool Offers:

- Individualized Speech, Occupational and Physical Therapy in the classroom
- An extensive collection of early childhood educational equipment
- Full-time nurse on site
- Behavior Support Services
- Music classes



- A well-rounded curriculum based on the Ohio Early Learning Content Standards
- Dynamic, ODE-certified staff
- Physical development through indoor/outdoor physical education classes
- Door-to-door transportation services

## Did You Know...

The Murray Ridge preschool serves children with a wide range of developmental disabilities, from those with mild delays to those profoundly impacted, and Murray Ridge is a recognized leader in its comprehensive approach to teaching children with autism. The Preschool Program runs Tuesday through Friday. Children with disabilities must be referred to the Murray Ridge Preschool Program by their local school district.

### For More Information Contact:

Dann Swift  
Director of Educational Services  
Murray Ridge School  
9750 Murray Ridge Road  
Elyria, Oh 44035  
440.329-3760  
dswift@murrayridgecenter.org  
www.murrayridgecenter.org



**MurrayRidgeCenter**

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# 2012 Lunch Menu



For the convenience of Murray Ridge consumers and their families, we are posting the lunch menu for the 2012 year in its entirety in this issue of The Murray Ridge Courier. **Please maintain this copy for your records and refer to it in the coming months, as monthly newsletters are not disseminated before the first of each month.** The menu will also be available on our website in the January 2012 edition of the monthly newsletter. If you have questions or need a replacement copy, please contact Jennifer Judkins at 329-3734 at any time during the year.

**Please note that the cost of adult lunches will be \$3.25 as of January 1, 2012. The cost of student lunches will still be \$3.05.**

—	—	January 3-6
January 9-13	January 16-20	January 23-27
January 30-February 3	February 6-10	February 13-17
February 20-24	February 27-March 3	March 5-9
March 12-16	March 19-23	March 26-March 30
April 2-6	April 9-13	April 16-20
April 23-27	April 30-May 4	May 7-11
May 14-18	May 21-25	May 28-June 1
June 4-8	June 11-15	June 18-22
June 25-29	July 2-6	July 9-13
July 16-20	July 23-27	July 30-August 3
August 6-10	August 13-17	August 20-24
August 27-31	September 3-7	September 10-14
September 17-21	September 24-28	October 1-5
October 8-12	October 15-19	October 22-26
October 29-November 2	November 5-9	November 12-16
November 19-23	November 26-30	December 3-7
December 10-14	December 17-21	December 24-28

**Monday-** Salisbury Steak w/Gravy, Scaloped Potatoes, Corn, Peaches, Cookie

**Tuesday-** Turkey or Bologna with Cheese on Wheat Bread, Peas & Carrots, Pears, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Wednesday-** Meat Lasagna, Green Beans, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Wheat Bread, Cookie

**Thursday-** Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Banana, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Friday-** Fish Patty, French Fries, Cole Slaw, Apple Slices, Wheat Bread, Cookie

**Monday-** Ham, Wheat Bread, Rice Pilaf, Diced Carrots w/Herbs, Applesauce

**Tuesday-** Hamburger on a Bun, Potato Wedges, Corn, Crushed Pineapple, Cookie

**Wednesday-** Chicken Patty w/Gravy, Au Gratin Potatoes, Green Beans, Fruit, Wheat Bread, Cookie

**Thursday-** Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Banana, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Friday-** Macaroni & Cheese, Cooked Carrots, Diced Pears, Cookie

**Monday-** Chicken Patty on a Bun, Potato Rounds, Corn, Crushed Pineapple, Cookie

**Tuesday-** Meat Lasagna, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Diced Peaches, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Wednesday-** Rigatoni w/Meatballs, Green Beans, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Wheat Bread, Cookie

**Thursday-** Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Fresh Fruit, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Friday-** Meat/Cheese Burrito, Spanish Rice, Cole Slaw, Applesauce

Lorain County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities

**Murray Ridge Center**  
1091 Infirmary Road  
Elyria, OH 44035

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### More News You Might Use...

We often receive information from external sources about offerings designed for people with DD (e.g., summer camps and special interest classes). Many offerings have an associated cost to the participant. Although we are not in a position to "vouch for" or promote such offerings, we recognize that these opportunities may be of interest to our consumers, their families, and/or guardians. If you are interested in learning more about these consumer-oriented events and opportunities, please contact Albert Sprague, Director of Residential Service & Support Administration at 440-324-2366.

### Annual Spaghetti Dinner

- Saturday, March 3 from 3:00-6:00 p.m.
- AmVets Post 55, 530 Abbe Road in Sheffield Lake
- Sponsored by the Murray Ridge Support Group



This Italian feast, which includes spaghetti with meatballs, fresh bread, salad, desserts, and beverages, is being generously donated by the AmVets Post 55. Activities will include a gift basket auction and a 50/50 raffle. Proceeds will go toward programs and services for Lorain County citizens impacted by developmental disabilities.

Tickets are \$8 for persons 6 years of age and up, and free for kids 5 and under. Sponsorships are available. Call Andrea Elek for more information, 440-323-2741.

If you wish to receive future newsletters by email, please visit [www.murrayridgecenter.org](http://www.murrayridgecenter.org) and click on the Sign Up for Our Email Newsletter link.