



**MurrayRidgeCenter**  
HELPING PEOPLE... FOR A LIFETIME

# The Murray Ridge Courier

September 2012

## Murray Ridge Center Honors our Direct Care Professionals

September is a stand-out month for many reasons; the weather gets cooler, kids go back to school, football season begins.

But for the more than three million professionals employed in direct care, this month also brings a very important week of recognition. National Direct Support Professionals Week honors all direct care workers from September 9-15.

Direct care professionals play a critical role in the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. These men and women devote themselves to the health, well-being, and happiness of those served.

Murray Ridge Center employs hundreds of direct care professionals in our Opportunity/Vocational Centers located in Elyria, Lorain, and Oberlin; at our school; and in our six group homes. Their responsibilities range from assisting with basic activities such as eating, bathing, dressing and mobility, to providing assistance with skill development and daily tasks such as cooking.

While direct care professionals certainly deserve a week to be honored for all they do, at Murray Ridge Center, we celebrate our staff year round.

Murray Ridge Center is proud to honor many direct support professionals through its quarterly Exceptional Service Award. The Exceptional Service Award is presented to Murray Ridge employees whose work shows remarkable dedication and exceeds the already high expectations in meeting the needs of our consumers. Staff are chosen on the basis of nomination letters submitted to the administration, many from the consumers who directly benefit from the excellent care given by the nominees.

This quarter's winner, Joaquin Page, was nominated by four Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center consumers who were asked to speak at the award ceremony.

In one letter, consumer Jeremy Foster noted "I have liked Joaquin from the first second I met him. He's very friendly and loves talking to people and making new friends. The most important part is that he does countless service hours and volunteers his time."

Other letters noted his dedication to the people he serves, his willingness to work one-on-one with any consumer, and his rapport with other staff members.



Nominators stand with Joaquin at the Award Ceremony (l-r: Shari Reitenbach, winner Joaquin Page, Jeremy Foster, and James Peters).

"The best part of my job is working with the consumers...my interaction with them," Joaquin said. "We have a good time; they talk to me, and I love to listen. And, I love my co-workers. They make me love coming to work."

And coming to work is exactly what Joaquin Page has been doing for almost seven years. When he first started at Murray Ridge, it was because he was looking for something different. Now, he can't imagine ever switching careers, or working for a different agency.

"When I first started, I saw that I could have a chance to help people... It makes me happy to see them working, earning money, being happy. Murray Ridge provides excellent opportunities for our consumers.

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The consumers actually get out in the community and work, which builds great socialization skills for them."

"I absolutely love Murray Ridge and all the people I work with," Joaquin continued. "I've learned a lot from the consumers as they've learned a lot from me. We teach each other something every day."

Joaquin is just one of the many direct care professionals being honored this September. These professionals help individuals with developmental disabilities live, work, and stay active within communities all over the United States. While the significance of their contributions is sometimes overlooked, direct care professionals enable millions of individuals the chance to live the lives they choose.

"A lot of people get into this field not knowing what they're getting into," Joaquin explained about himself and other direct care professionals. "It's not a piece of cake. It's a challenging job. Our consumers will push, and it's the responsibility of the direct care

professional to keep them moving in the right direction. The people who stay in this field do so because they love their job. I know I'll benefit just as much as the people I work with benefit. And...the longer you do it, the easier it gets."

This "all guts, no glory" attitude is the mantra of so many direct care professionals who are focused on assisting those who need the most help, who work to make someone else's life a little easier, a little happier, and a lot more satisfying.

Murray Ridge congratulates Joaquin on winning the Exceptional Service Award, and acknowledges all direct care professionals who work in this challenging – but rewarding – field.

This September, and all year round, thank the direct care professionals of Murray Ridge Center for all they do, and will continue to do, to achieve our mission of helping people...for a lifetime.



Joaquin shakes hands with Board Member Dan White as he accepts the second quarter 2012 Exceptional Service Award at the LCBDD board meeting on August 31.

See back page to learn how you can nominate an exceptional employee.

## New to the LCBDD Crew

Please Welcome the Newest Members of the Murray Ridge Team!



Heather Boduch will be working as a teacher at Murray Ridge School. Heather attended Kent State University and is currently working towards her Master's degree at Ashland University. She lives with her daughter, Madison (12), and enjoys reading, gardening, cooking, and scrapbooking in her spare time.

Heather McKenna will be working at the Academy Court group home as a part time aide. Heather has her degree in Applied Science from Lorain County Community College. She lives with her husband and son in Elyria and is an active member of the VFW Ladies Auxiliary, Phi Theta Kappa, and Order of the Arrow.





Caitlyn Keil joins Murray Ridge as the new Recreation Specialist. In addition to her recreation responsibilities, Caitlyn will be working with the Murray Ridge Choraleers. She is a graduate of West Geauga High School and recently received her Bachelor's degree from Toledo University. In her spare time, Caitlyn enjoys shopping!

Elizabeth Long will be working as a Clerical Counselor at the South Professor group home. Elizabeth has her STNA certification from Lorain County Community College. She lives with her two children, Jordan and Amaya, and loves spending with her family, and outdoor activities such as walking, riding bikes, tennis, and softball.



Kimberly Toich will be joining Murray Ridge as a part time aide at the Academy Court group home. Kimberly lives in Elyria with her son, Lewis, who is five months old. She enjoys baking cakes, listening to music, and spending time with her son and her boyfriend.

Kali Teater joins Murray Ridge as a Service and Support Administrator. Kali is a graduate of Michigan State University where she received both her undergraduate and Master's degrees. She lives in Sandusky with her husband, Charlie, and enjoys travelling, SCUBA diving, attending concerts, and spending time with her two cats.



Jennifer Hockman will be working at the Academy Court group home as a part time aide. Jennifer is currently working towards her Bachelor's of Psychology. She previously worked as an aide for the Richland County Board of DD before relocating to Elyria. Jennifer lives with her husband and four children.

Ariana Flood will be working as a part time aide at the East College group home. She received her Bachelor's degree in psychology and religious studies from Lawrence University. Ariana loves cooking and baking, running, and spending time with friends. She also enjoys many outdoor activities, like hiking and soccer.



Shannon Swanner joins Murray Ridge as a part time LPN. She is a graduate of Lorain County Community and previously worked at Rae Ann Skilled Nursing and Stroke Rehabilitation Center. Shannon lives with her husband, two sons, and daughter in Pittsfield Township. Shannon and her family enjoy hiking, fishing, and car racing.

Marie Patterson will be working at the E. 9th St. group home as a part time sub-aide. She lives in Elyria.



Susan Sands will be working as a part time Secretary at Murray Ridge School. Susan previously worked as a sub teacher aide. Susan lives in Amherst with her husband, Mike, and daughters, Brittany and Lindsay.

Gary Huff will be working as a teacher aide at Murray Ridge School. Gary has previously worked as a personal aide for an MRS student and at the MRS summer camp. He lives with his wife and daughter in Lorain. In his spare time, Gary enjoys coaching football.



# Welcome Back Murray Ridge School Students!

On Tuesday, August 28, Murray Ridge School opened its doors for the 2012-2013 school year. Students and staff were eager to get back to working hard and having fun, as they do every day throughout the year. Best of luck to all of our students! Have a happy, healthy, and successful school year!



Sandra Lisso and her parents (above) pose as they lead her to class. Mark Dolan (middle top) sits at his new senior class work station.



Student Athyna Rivera (above) greets Director of Education, Dann Swift, as she prepares to walk into the school. Later, she and classmate Obed Robledo (left) get ready to start the day.



## BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

### The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on August 31, 2012:

An Exceptional Service Award was presented by Board Member Dan White to Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center Aide Joaquin Page; three consumers spoke regarding his nomination, and Board President Michelle Hunt also spoke on his behalf. Superintendent Amber Fisher proposed board support for an inclusive playground and general sensory room, which are part of the design of the new Lorain County Metroparks recreation site; this topic will be further discussed at a future meeting. Dr. Fisher also discussed collaboration with Lorain County Children's Services, and funding was approved for this purpose for the remainder of 2012. Director of Vocational and Transportation Services Jeff Miller recommended that the Board approve identified bus stop locations for the 2012/2013 school year. The Board unanimously agreed. In other news, Dr. Fisher reported that the Ohio Association of County Boards Serving People with Developmental Disabilities will keep dues at the 2007 level. The date for the December meeting of the LCBDD was changed from 12/21/2012 to 12/10/2012.

# The Murray Ridge Choraleers are Back!

Murray Ridge Center is proud to announce that the Murray Ridge Choraleers are back in action!

The Choraleers have become a popular performing group for churches, civic clubs, and special events throughout the county. Through singing and entertaining, the Murray Ridge Choraleers provide insight into Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities and the programs available at Murray Ridge.

The Choraleers are getting ready for the Holiday Season! If you are interested in booking a performance, please contact Tina Tucker, at the Oberlin Opportunity/Vocational Center (440) 774-7400.



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## Learning Money Management at Murray Ridge School

Money management. It's a skill that all people learn over the course of a lifetime. For Murray Ridge School students, however, it's a concept that has been hard to grasp.

"Most of our kids don't use money," said intermediate teacher Julie Mauer. "So many of our students don't take nickels, dimes, quarters, and go out and use them, so it's hard for them to get a concept of what money actually is and how to use it properly." To provide a more functional way for the students at MRS to learn money management, Mauer, along with three other intermediate teachers, came up with an idea to make it click for these young people.

The combined classes will be having a rummage sale! Students are collecting items from staff and school families, sorting objects by subject, and are preparing to sell the products back to the staff at Murray Ridge Center. Although they will be under adult supervision, this endeavor will be completely student-run using tools that will make taking money and making change easy and understandable.

Mauer, along with teachers Cheryl Bieri, Vicky Nagy, and Heather Bodrich, will be planning a field trip to the Goodwill shop so that students can see how they set up and maintain sale items.

Donations to this project will need to be made by September 14, and the teachers are hoping to see this rummage sale take place near the end of September.

Anyone is welcome to donate items, and whatever does not sell will be donated to Goodwill in Oberlin.

Money raised will be used for each student to purchase tickets for the Crusher's game. "They earn this money, and then it's theirs to use to go on a special field trip," said Mauer. "This is a different way of approaching the concept of money; from putting in a day's work and getting a day's pay, which is a goal when they transition to an employment program after graduation."

Best of luck to the students as they prepare for the big sale! And a special thank you to these our exceptional teachers at Murray Ridge School, who are constantly finding new and interesting ways to make even the most difficult tasks achievable for their students.



Obed Robledo, Brynne Diedrick, and Lorenz Tidmore sort through a box of toys donated by a MRS staff member.

# Annual Transportation Safety Instruction

Murray Ridge Center wants your ride into our program sites to be a safe one. These are guidelines that students, adult program participants, and their caregivers should be aware of when utilizing transportation services provided by Murray Ridge Center.

## WAITING FOR THE BUS

- Be 5 minutes early. Wait for the bus at least 10 feet from the road.
- Dress properly - winter clothing, hats, mittens, and boots will help keep you warm in the winter.
- Watch for the bus' red lights.
- Wait until the bus has stopped and door opens before stepping into the roadway.
- Wait for the driver to signal to cross. Cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus.
- Use the handrail when stepping onto the bus.
- If you use a wheelchair, it must be equipped with a functioning seat belt. The wheels should lock as well.
- Store all belongings in a backpack so nothing gets dropped.

## BUS SEAT SAFETY RULES

- Follow all of the driver's instructions.
- Speak softly so the driver will not be distracted. At railroad crossings, be quiet.
- Stay seated until your stop and keep the aisle clear.
- Never put head, arms, or hands out of the window.
- Never do anything to distract the driver.
- Keep aisles clear and free of tripping hazards.
- Never throw things on the bus or out the windows.
- Tell the driver or monitor if you are being bullied.
- If there is an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.
- Do not eat on the bus as this could present a choking hazard.

## GETTING OFF THE BUS AT HOME

- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least ten feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road, until you can turn around and see the driver.
- Make sure that the driver can see you.
- Wait for the signal from the driver before beginning to cross.
- When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
- Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver has signaled that it is safe for you to begin walking.
- Stay away from the bus' rear wheels at all times. If you drop something near the bus, leave it. If you leave something on the bus, never return to get it. The driver may not see you come back and start to move the bus. If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver before you pick it up so he/she knows where you are.

Many of our consumers are also able to travel about the community through the use of public transportation. We want your trips to be safe ones!

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GENERAL SAFETY TIPS

- When you enter or leave a vehicle, watch for slippery or uneven pavement and other hazards that could cause you to fall.
- Have your LCT ID, bus fare, ticket, or pass ready to avoid losing your balance while looking for it.
- Do not carry too many packages – always leave a free hand to grab a railing.
- Allow extra time to cross streets, especially in bad weather.
- If it's dark outside, wear light-colored or reflective clothing.
- Do not talk to strangers. If you are being bothered by someone, tell the driver immediately.
- If you use a stop assistance card, remember to show it to the driver as you board the bus.
- Most LCT stops are not sheltered. Dress appropriately for the winter weather, and utilize sunscreen in the summer.
- Whether you are in a bus, car, or van – **ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEATBELT IF THE VEHICLE IS EQUIPPED WITH ONE!**



# September 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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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 						

## Activities & Events

- 9/3 - Agency closed for Labor Day holiday
- 9/4 - First day of school for Preschool Students, Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 9/5 - Open House, Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 9/13 - Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, EOVC, 4:15 p.m.
- 9/17 - Murray Ridge Golf Classic, Avon Oaks Country Club in Avon
- 9/20 - LCBDD Finance Committee meeting , 12:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 9/21 - Murray Ridge Support Group Dance, 7-9 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 9/26 - Family Support Parent Committee meeting , 6:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road in Elyria
- 9/28 - LCBDD Meeting, 12:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Rd, Elyria
- 9/30 - Woollybear Festival and Parade Vermillion, OH



## Lunch Menu



Cost Per Day: Youth = \$3.15, Adults = \$3.25

September 17-21  
October 9-12

**Monday**- Salisbury Steak w/Gravy, Scalloped 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

September 3-7  
September 24-28

**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

September 10-14  
October 1-5

**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  
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Elyria, OH 44035

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[www.murrayridgecenter.org](http://www.murrayridgecenter.org)



## Exceptional Service Award

Do you know a Murray Ridge employee whose work efforts reflect remarkable dedication and have significantly contributed to the well being of people with developmental disabilities? Nominate that employee for an Exceptional Service Award! If you are a community member; consumer; or parent, guardian, sibling or other relative of a Murray Ridge program participant, submit your nomination to Jennifer Judkins, Public Relations/Volunteer Director. Include a brief paragraph outlining your reasons for nominating the employee. All nominations will be forwarded to the Board for consideration. The Board presents Exceptional Service Awards on a quarterly basis at regular scheduled meetings, usually held on the last Friday of each month at 12:30 p.m. in the Board Room. If you have any questions, contact Jenn Judkins at 440-329-3734 or [jjudkins@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:jjudkins@murrayridgecenter.org).

## Volunteer This Summer

Have fun and educate the community about Murray Ridge Center. We need volunteers to help us staff booths and participate in parades at several events throughout Lorain County. If you are interested in representing Murray Ridge at an event, please contact Jennifer Judkins or Tracey Carroll at 329-3734.



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.