

The View From The Ridge



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

Kindness Builds a Ramp That Opens Doors for a Child With Disabilities



Jayden Hall relaxes in his new wheelchair.

On April 28, Jayden Hall was given what every child deserves: a chance for mobility, a chance to attend school, and a chance to be out in the community.

Born with multiple disabilities, Jayden was adopted by his great aunt, Lisa Jones, at six months of age.

Lisa and her husband, Ollie Smith, have dedicated their lives to caring for Jayden, now three years old.

Jayden has been involved with Murray Ridge Center since he was three months old, receiving monthly visits from our Early Intervention Specialists. Although eligible to attend Murray Ridge Preschool next fall, the process of moving Jayden in and out of the house each day was problematic because his home did not have a wheelchair ramp.

Months ago, Jayden received a wheelchair. The wheelchair allowed Jayden to be at "seeing level,"

rather than on the floor or being carried around. While the wheelchair has been a blessing, his aunt found that getting him in and out of the house presented major difficulties.

So, six months ago, Lisa contacted Valerie "Val" Dep-tula, the Early Intervention Supervisor at Murray Ridge School, asking for help. Lisa and Ollie could not afford a wheelchair ramp for their home, and were looking for assistance.

Val contacted Family Stability of Lorain County, an organization made up of different county agencies geared towards helping citizens in times of need. Family Stability graciously donated \$1,000 towards the cost of the ramp.



Volunteers work on constructing the new ramp.

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Unfortunately, building a ramp proved to be more costly, with bids of almost \$3,000. Finally, Val contacted friend and builder Brian Poyle who offered to help. Murray Ridge School then approached Home Depot of Lorain, who not only donated the remainder of the supplies not covered by Family Stability's \$1,000, but also sent two volunteers to help build the new ramp.

On the morning of April 28, Jason and Val Deptula, Brian Poyle, and Home Depot volunteers arrived at Jayden's home and built the new ramp.

Jayden's aunt and uncle were thrilled with all Murray Ridge Center has done to help this child they have happily accepted into their home.

Better yet, Jayden now has the ability to easily come and go from his home. This ramp has afforded Jayden and his family access to his medical appointments, and the ability to attend Murray Ridge School in the fall where he will have the opportunity to learn and grow alongside other children.

Thank you to Home Depot and all the volunteers that helped change the life of one very special little boy.



Volunteers (l-r) Brian Poyle (Brian Poyle Builders), Jason Deptula, Jarred Brenner, Suzanne Sutton (Home Depot), Bob D'Aloise (Home Depot), Erin Brenner (front). Below is the finished ramp.



Circle of Life on the Ridge Murray Ridge School Performs Annual Play

On April 27, Murray Ridge School presented its annual play, this year titled "Circle of Life on the Ridge."

The musical, written by teacher Gary Hawke with musical numbers composed and performed by teacher Nevan Eilbeck, followed the animals of South Africa's grassland ecosystem. The scenes throughout portrayed the relationships between the animals and their environment, and how we can learn from our animal friends important lessons that can be applied

to everyday life.

"Circle of Life on the Ridge" included students from all classes, some dressed as wild animals, others singing and playing instruments in the student choir and drum core.

Congratulations to our Murray Ridge School students on a wonderful play, and thank you to the teachers and staff that helped make this year's play another memorable production!

Lorain County Commissioners Proclaim March as “DD Awareness Month”



Pictured (l-r): Commissioner Ted Kalo, Commissioner Lori Kokoski, Jamen Ross, Superintendent Amber Fisher, Commissioner Tom Williams, Barb Ramsey, and Ana Cruz.

Joining with other groups throughout our nation, the Lorain County Commissioners adopted a resolution on March 14, 2012, declaring the month of March as “Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month” in Lorain County.

Three consumers accompanied Superintendent Amber Fisher to share their stories and to thank the Commissioners for their support of the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities, more commonly known as Murray Ridge Center.

As noted by the Commissioners, the proclamation recognized the Lorain County Board Developmental Disabilities “in honor of the sizeable contribution made to the welfare of Lorain County children and adults with special needs.”

During the meeting, Dr. Fisher highlighted the services that more than 2,000 Lorain county citizens with developmental disabilities receive from Murray Ridge Center. For example, in 2011, The Early Intervention program served 682 children from birth to three years of age, and Murray Ridge School educated 159 students. Murray Ridge Center

provided day services and/or work experience for 940 adults in one of the three Murray Ridge Opportunity/Vocational Centers, several community employment enclaves operated by the Murray Ridge Production Center, or in other locations throughout the community. Residential services were provided to 389 individuals, many of whom require this care due to deceased parents and/or elderly family caregivers. Also in 2011, the Family Support program assisted 677 Lorain County families with the care of a relative with developmental disabilities.

Since 1979, agencies across the country have formally recognized the abilities of persons with Developmental Disabilities (DD) every March. Throughout the month, efforts are made to help the public become more aware of people with developmental disabilities, the accomplishments and potentials of these individuals, and the programs and services available to them. Ohio proudly participates in this tradition and Lorain County’s Murray Ridge Center is eager to support this effort.

Posters announcing DD Awareness Month were displayed in libraries, community buildings, and places of worship across Lorain County throughout the month of March.

Thank you to all who worked throughout the month of March - and all year long - to help educate the community on developmental disabilities!

Playground For Kids of All Abilities Coming to Mercy Recreation and Health Center

Lorain County Metro Parks recently unveiled Lorain County's newest inclusive play area at the Mercy Recreation and Health Center in Amherst. The goal of this playground is to create a space where children of all abilities will be able to enjoy the outdoors with their family members.



use ponchos to protect the wheelchair as they roll through one water feature after another.

Citizens can support this playground by donating a monetary gift. As part of the donation, supporters will be able to decorate a tile with the assistance of local artists. These tiles will then be

Through a partnership with Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Murray Ridge Center), the Lorain County Board of Mental Health, and parents of children with disabilities, the playground has been designed to accommodate children of all abilities. The outdoor area will include swings, a sand pit, fishing pond, a tent village, a tree house, a slide, a sunflower maze, a sled hill, and more. During the summer months, children can cool off in the water play area, which will have different settings for children with different disabilities. Children in wheelchairs will be able to

placed throughout the playground. For those who aren't artistically inclined, they can select a predetermined design that will be created by one of our artists. Tiles are available for \$1,000, \$500, \$250, and \$100. A custom size tile is available for \$5,000 and an artist can design the tile to your liking. Donations can be made online at www.metroparks.cc/playground or by mailing a check to Lorain County Metro Parks, ATTN: Outdoor Play Area, 12882 Diagonal Road, LaGrange, Ohio 44050. For more information about this exciting project, please call (440) 458-5121 or visit www.metroparks.cc.

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 this summer. If you are interested in representing Murray Ridge at any of these events, please contact Jennifer Judkins or Tracey Carroll at 329-3734.



Exceptional Service at Murray Ridge Center

Christine Ash, Residential Program Manager at Murray Ridge Center's East College and South Professor Group Homes, recently received the quarterly Exceptional Service Award from the Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Christine was nominated by Laura Shumaker, cousin of South Professor resident Sharon Kinney. In her nomination letter, Laura expressed her appreciation for Christine and all she does for the residents living at the home. "Christine is the heart of the home," she said in her letter. "Christine's heart is wide open and everyone feels the love."

Congratulations, Christine! And thank you for your exceptional service at Murray Ridge Center.



Board Member Dan White presents Christine Ash with her award.

Murray Ridge Center Honors Oberlin College Students with Volunteer of the Year Award



Picture (l-r): Murray Ridge Center Superintendent Amber Fisher, MROCA co-chairs Sarah Volk and Caroline Vilter.

Murray Ridge Center honored the Murray Ridge Oberlin College Alliance, or MROCA as they are known on the Oberlin College campus, as the winner of the 2012 Marilyn Hupfer Volunteer of the Year Award. The award was made at the agency's annual Volunteer Appreciation Reception where Murray Ridge Center recognizes with gratitude all of the volunteers for the time and commitment they've given throughout the past year.

The Volunteer of the Year Award was created seven years ago by the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities to commemorate the life of a woman who personified the spirit of helping people. Each year, a volunteer is nominated to receive this distinction in honor of the example inspired by Mrs. Hupfer during her time with Murray Ridge Center.

MROCA is comprised of students from Oberlin

College dedicated to working with individuals with developmental disabilities. These exceptional young men and women have volunteered hundreds of hours this year alone. At Murray Ridge School, MROCA volunteers spend an hour each week in three different classrooms assisting with lessons. At the Board's three Opportunity and Vocational Centers, Oberlin College students conduct the Murray Ridge Storytelling ExCo, which provides consumers with three weekly storytelling workshops, and bi-weekly meetings where they engage consumers in discussions regarding disability literature and contemporary issues faced by the DD community.

Because of its continued dedication to Murray Ridge Center, ability to create more opportunities to work with Murray Ridge consumers, and interest in fostering the connection between Oberlin College and the more than 2,000 Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities we serve, Murray Ridge Center congratulates MROCA as recipient of the Marilyn Hupfer Volunteer of the Year Award.

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

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