



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

# The Murray Ridge Courier

December 2012

## Consumer Spotlight: Bill and Mark Lacko

They say it takes a village to raise a child.

But what happens when there are two children, both born with a rare genetic disorder, and a village not quite prepared to handle the enormity of support those children and their family needs?



Sherry Lacko (center) poses with her brothers Bill (left) and Mark (right) after a Special Olympics competition.

many wonderful and unexpected ways.

Both boys attended Elyria High School because of its exceptional program for kids with special needs. This, however, did not stop Keystone High School (the home district) from rallying around the boys, and – as

For the city of LaGrange, neither of those issues proved to be a setback in the raising of Bill and Mark Lacko.

Randy Lacko, father to Bill and Mark, grew up in LaGrange, and he and his wife, Elaine, settled into the community where friends and family still remained. In 1975, Elaine gave birth to her first son, Bill. Five years later, she had Mark.

When pregnant with their third and final child, Sherry, Elaine and Randy began noticing delays with Bill. He was eventually diagnosed with Fragile X Syndrome, a genetic disorder associated with mental retardation and similar to autism. Mark, five years younger, was tested and also diagnosed with the condition.

“When Bill was diagnosed, it was a very rare thing. There were no organizations to be part of, no school that was familiar with their level of needs,” said their mother, Elaine. “We were ignorant. We didn’t realize there was anything out there for little ones.”

This did not faze residents of LaGrange, and support came from many community organizations, in

Sherry and her mother pointed out – Bill had more pictures in the Keystone yearbook than his sister! That’s not surprising, given Bill’s affiliation with the school still today; he helps coach the wrestling team and is on the sidelines at every football game!

“The community rallies around them,” said Sherry, their younger sister. “My family always pushed them to be involved in the community and community events. Now, it’s amazing how many people in LaGrange know them!”

As adults, both Bill and Mark began attending Murray Ridge Center, where they found opportunities for the social interactions they had grown accustomed to in school. At the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center, or EOVC as it’s known at Murray Ridge, they have the opportunity to engage in activities that coincide with their personalities. Bill has become involved with Special Olympics; Mark is very active in the Community Employment Department. Both feel that these activities allow them to be just like everyone else.

“I have fun here,” Bill said. “I like to go to work every day,” added Mark. “I like having a job.”

*Continued on page 2.*

And the family involvement with Murray Ridge doesn't end there. Sherry Lacko has found that being a sibling to brothers with a developmental disability has helped her choose a career path as a Behavioral Analyst with the Service and Support Administration department at Murray Ridge Center, where she visits family homes and day programs to work with consumers and develop behavior support plans based on functional and behavioral assessments. She noted that her brothers are the sole reason she chose to work with this population.

"Once I got older, I recognized the struggles they were going through," said Sherry. "I realized they couldn't be advocates for themselves, so I became an advocate for them."

"But, we've never not tried something," mom Elaine adds. "They have to prove to us that they can't do it." This family attitude has shaped Bill and Mark into the individuals they have grown up to be; social, outgoing, and lively members of a community that not only supports these men and their families, but has had a big hand in helping to raise them.

And, through their years in Lorain County, they've received invaluable support from the city of LaGrange, from the Elyria school system, and from Murray Ridge Center; support appreciated by the entire Lacko family, with Elaine noting, "It took the whole community to raise these boys to where they are today."

### BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on November 16, 2012:

The Board presented Karen Pavelschak, a Recreation/Leisure Specialist from the Lorain Opportunity/Vocational Center, with an Exceptional Service Award. A renewal of prescription, vision, and medical insurance coverage with Medical Mutual (MMO) was approved with modified coverage in order to contain costs. Board member Dan White provided an update on Murray Ridge Special Olympics programs. An updated set of financial projections was presented, and the 2013 budget was approved, as submitted. Additional Level 1 Waiver enrollments were discontinued (topic to be revisited next summer). In other news, resolutions submitted for consideration at the upcoming OACB delegate assembly were discussed; no objections were noted by the Board. The Inland Trail Marathon generated approximately \$7,500 for the levy committee. Many thanks to all who volunteered to make this event a success.

### Special Visitors



Top school officials from Lorain City Schools visited Murray Ridge Center on November 27 for a tour of Murray Ridge School and the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center. During their visit, the staff took the time to visit with students from Lorain who attend Murray Ridge School. (l-r): Davasia Sales, Grant Holbrook, Superintendent Tom Tucker, Athyna Rivera, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Jane Hawks, Obed Robledo, and Special Education Supervisor Sherri Hutlock.



### Support the Team!



MURRAY RIDGE RAIDERS HOME GAMES  
9750 Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria

Date:	Time:	Team:
December 15	10 AM	Men's Team 3 vs. Betterway 2
	11:30 AM	Men's Team 1 vs. Betterway 1
December 19	6 PM	Men's Team 1 vs. Summit DD 1

# Murray Ridge Honors Special Olympic Athletes at Annual Ceremony

At Murray Ridge Center's annual Special Olympics awards banquet on November 5, athletes were honored for their participation throughout the year in more than nine sports.

The evening's keynote speakers were Natalie Winkelfoos and Ray Appenheimer, both from Oberlin College.

Natalie is the Associate Director of Athletics for Development and Alumni Affairs for the College. Her inspirational speech touched on her years as an athlete and how playing sports has impacted her life and career. She concluded her speech with a personal comment on her experience parenting a child with developmental disabilities, and noted how each person in the room was her hero, and made her proud to raise a son who might one day be as amazing as the Murray Ridge athletes.

Ray is the Head Track and Field/Cross Country Coach at Oberlin College. He, too, spoke of his experiences in sports, and noted how real athletes continue to get back on the court, despite any setbacks or losses they might experience. He ended his speech by calling Special Olympics "remarkable," and noted that professional athletes could take cue from the Murray Ridge competitors, who continue to play and strive for excellence, regardless of any failures they may encounter.



Board member Dan White, Board President Michelle Hunt, keynote speakers Natalie Winkelfoos and Ray Appenheimer, Recreation Supervisor Bob Burkhart, and Superintendent Amber Fisher.

At Murray Ridge, we strive to assist all of the individuals we serve to discover and master skills, and we are thankful to the staff members and volunteers who take the time to coach, mentor, and support our athletes in the many competitions throughout the year.

Congratulations to all Special Olympics athletes! Murray Ridge is proud of all you've accomplished and looks forward to celebrating many victories with you in the years to come!



The two-time gold medal winners from the Five-a-side soccer team pose with their new jackets.




**Special Olympics**

Athlete Jennifer Moccabee poses with her new Murray Ridge Special Olympics bag, received by each athlete.

# Exceptional Service Award

Each quarter, Murray Ridge awards a staff member whose work efforts reflect remarkable dedication to the more than 2,000 Lorain County residents we serve.

On November 16, we honored Karen Pavelschak, a Fitness and Leisure Specialist at the LOVC. In a nomination letter from the parent of a consumer who attends the LOVC, it was noted that Karen goes above and beyond to ensure the safety and happiness of the adults, and that she is a great example to the community.

Karen responded to the honor by noting, "To accept an award of this magnitude is an honor I will never forget. I am truly grateful to the person responsible for recognizing me. I have a passion for my job and all the consumers I service daily. This award reinforces the reasons I have dedicated myself to this line of work for the past 19 years."

Murray Ridge commends Karen on her hard work and dedication to the adults at the LOVC, and thanks her for her continued dedication and exceptional service to those we serve.



Dan White presents Karen Pavelschak with her award as Karen stands with her Supervisor, Bob Burkhart.

## Important Weather-Related Announcements

Murray Ridge program closing information will be available on TV station Fox 8, on the Fox 8 website fox8.com, and on radio stations WEOL 930 AM and WOBL 1320 AM, as it has in the past. **There will be two separate listings for Murray Ridge Center:**

- **Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers**
- **Murray Ridge School**

Parents and caregivers of school students should disregard the "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers" listing, and follow only the listing for "Murray Ridge School." Conversely, adult consumers who attend our Opportunity/Vocational Centers and their parents/caregivers should disregard the "Murray Ridge School" listing, and follow only the listing for "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers."

If "Open—No Transportation" follows the announcement for "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers," parents/caregivers are welcome to transport adult consumers to their day service sites. Regular programming will be provided. Consumers should be dropped off no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and must be picked up by 3:45 p.m.

In the event of bad weather, the decision to transport individuals to Murray Ridge Center will be based on the ability of our busses to travel safely on city and county roads. Regardless of whether or not transportation is available through Murray Ridge Center, if our Opportunity/Vocational Centers are open, but there is an individual concern about the weather, adult consumers should feel free to stay home. Likewise, parents/caregivers of Murray Ridge School students who have individual concerns regarding the weather should feel free to keep their child at home.

Please be aware that transportation to enclave sites is generally available even if transportation to the Opportunity/Vocational Centers is cancelled. Murray Ridge Center does not broadcast the status of enclave transportation on the television or radio. Consumers should assume that enclave transportation will be available unless they receive a phone call from a member of our Community Employment program.



# December 2012

## Activities and Events

- 12/10 Regular Meeting of the Board and Ethics Council, 6:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road in Elyria
- 12/14 Murray Ridge Support Group Dance, 7-9 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 12/19 Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, EOVC, 4:15 p.m.
- 12/21 - 1/2/13 - **Murray Ridge School closed for winter break**
- 12/25, 26, 27, 28, 31 - **Agency closed for winter holiday**

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
23/30	24/31 	25 	26 	27 	28 	29

## Lunch Menu

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



December 3 - 7  
December 24 - 28

December 10 - 14

December 17 - 21

**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

**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

Standard Presort  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 146  
Elyria, OH 44035

Return Service Requested



## 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).

### The Murray Ridge Choraleers

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.

**Murray Ridge Center  
wishes all Lorain County  
residents a  
safe and joyous  
holiday  
season,  
and best  
wishes for  
a  
wonderful  
new year!**



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.