

The View From The

Ridge



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

Murray Ridge Center's Annual In-Service

On October 25, the staff of Murray Ridge Center came together to celebrate the men and women who work tirelessly each and every day in our school, Early Intervention Department, Adult Services programs, group homes, Service and Support Administration Department, and other administrative and support roles.

Superintendent Amber Fisher delivered the annual address, acknowledging each department of MRC for its achievements throughout the year, and thanking staff members for their volunteer efforts to pass our levy in May, stating "I wish to thank everyone who worked on the levy campaign; who encouraged their neighbors, families, and friends to vote FOR Issue 1, and who have participated actively in the on-going effort to educate the community about the importance of the work done at Murray Ridge Center." She then highlighted the successes of the Agency throughout the past year, and each department was asked to stand and be recognized.

Special recognition was given to individuals who this year reached the benchmark of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 40 years of dedication and service at Murray Ridge Center. Also recognized were some 100 staff members who contributed hundreds of volunteer hours, in addition to their regular duties throughout the year, to support the mission of Murray Ridge, and the 16 staff members who had perfect attendance from October 1, 2012, through September 30, 2013. Congratulations to our amazing Murray Ridge staff!

Another notable acknowledgement was the presentation of the annual C.A.R.E.S. award.

C.A.R.E.S. stands for Community Awareness, Recognition, Education and Service. Every year, a C.A.R.E.S. award is presented in recognition of an individual or organization that has gone above and

beyond the call of duty in helping people with developmental disabilities. This year's recipient was the Federal Aviation Administration's Cleveland Air Route Traffic Control Center.

More than twenty years ago, the Murray Ridge Production Center was awarded the cleaning contract for the FAA Air Traffic Control Center in Oberlin. It was a huge challenge – we simply hadn't cleaned anything that large and with that many buildings. There were some interesting moments that first year – such as the unexpected April snowstorm that put our snow shoveling plan into motion 7 months earlier than expected – but thanks to tremendous support from FAA and hard work from our consumers, we quickly became an integral part of the FAA community.

Our contracting officer with FAA liked the work ethic of our consumers so much that we were given the opportunity to clean two more of their buildings at the Cleveland Hopkins Airport, including the air traffic control tower. Today, 17 of our consumers provide custodial services on the three contracts. They receive training from Murray Ridge staff, earn a very good wage and health and welfare benefits, and have been genuinely incorporated into the FAA family. Thank you to the FAA for its dedication to employing people with developmental disabilities in its facilities.

Murray Ridge would like to thank all of our staff members for their outstanding work throughout the year. As Superintendent Fisher noted, "Everyone in this room will continue to have invaluable contributions to make because of your expertise, your unique insights and external connections and, most importantly, because of the way that you connect on a daily basis with people with developmental disabilities. You make all of the difference, and I am honored to be a part of your team."



FAA representative Janet Ramey, Director of Vocational and Transportation Services Jeff Miller, Board Member Bob Gajdos, Board Member Dan White, and Board President Michelle Hunt smile from the stage.

Throughout the past year...

Early Intervention:

- Secured a new playgroup site in North Ridgeville
- Joined the State Autism Diagnosis Education Project, and is the team leader for Lorain County
- Received training in a Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning curriculum

Murray Ridge School:

- Boy Scouts attended Camp Avery, where each camper was paired with a scout from another local troop
- Held annual school-wide talent show
- First ever catered prom, "Hollywood Nights"

Opportunity/Vocational Centers:

- Expansion of the art program, with artwork being displayed at local libraries and at the Metro Parks Mercy Recreation and Health Center
- Increased production opportunities at all 3 OVCs

Community Employment:

- Ranks 7th in Ohio for the number of people in CE per 100,000
- Added 3 new organizations to the venues in which our consumers volunteer
- Will begin working on a joint project with the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation to create integrated employment opportunities for additional consumers

Residential staff:

- Received a perfect licensure survey this summer at the East College home
- Programmatic and efficiency-related initiatives taken at the Meister home
- Installed Care Tracker System at the Meister home

Service and Support Administration:

- Began conducting Provider Compliance Reviews
- Expanded its provider training program
- Increased the number of consumers being assisted to reside in their own apartments
- Assumed administrative responsibility for TDD Waiver

Other Departments:

- IS Department expanded use of iPads within Agency
- Investigative Agent unit implemented and trained the entire provider community on new (M)UI rule
- Nursing Department continued to address highly specialized health needs of consumers
- Human Resources completed key projects for purposes of rule compliance
- Continued media coverage on our breadth of services
- Maintenance implemented a number of key projects to keep our buildings in good repair



Workshop Director Gary Lyons poses with 40 Years of Service Award honoree Dave Babcock.



RICHES Employee Suggestion Program members (l to r): Kathy Justy, Diane Knoble, Krista Brown, Jennifer Doseck, Tammy Stanley and Starr Price. Absent: Judy Hartung and Tracey Halstead

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Murray Ridge Center once again participated in the National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October.

The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

Murray Ridge Center is proud to salute the nearly 800 Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities who are part of the local workforce, and the more than 100 local businesses that provide jobs



Staff from the Community Employment Department

for these individuals. Through its three Opportunity and Vocational Centers, supported employment sites, and community employment program, Murray Ridge Center continues to focus on finding and placing individuals in positions where they can grow and excel in today's competitive job market.

"Reliability, positive outlook, and quality performance are just a few examples of what people with developmental disabilities bring to the local workforce," said Murray Ridge Center Superintendent Amber Fisher. "I hope that opportunities for those we serve to be employed within our community continue to grow in the years ahead."

Oberlin OVC Holds Open House

On October 2, the Oberlin Opportunity/Vocational Center opened its doors for its 20th Anniversary Open House. More than 40 community members toured the OOVC, including consumer and staff family members and friends, consumers and staff from the Lorain and Elyria OVCs, business representatives from local companies, and representatives from the LCBDD Board and management team.

"Our 20th Anniversary Open House provided a wonderful opportunity to showcase the talents and efforts of our consumers and staff," said Workshop Director Rich Haase. "We greatly appreciate those who attended to see first-hand some of the many good things we do here at OOVC."

Supervisor Judy Hartung explains various jobs at the OOVC to staff member Kathy Witte's parents (above right). Shasta Knarr smiles as she demonstrates her job (bottom right). Angela Murphy and Jennifer Jones sort papers and stuff envelopes (bottom left).



National Down Syndrome Awareness Month Celebrated at Murray Ridge School



Teachers and staff at Murray Ridge School proudly display their t-shirts "Murray Ridge School steps up for Down Syndrome," honoring October as Down Syndrome Awareness Month.

In October, Murray Ridge Center celebrated Down Syndrome Awareness Month in recognition of the many achievements and abilities of people with Down syndrome.

People with Down syndrome are living longer than ever before. The life expectancy of individuals with Down syndrome has increased dramatically in recent decades – from 25 in 1983 to 60 today. Children with Down syndrome are increasingly attending postsecondary education and many adults with Down syndrome participate in the workforce, bringing

enthusiasm, reliability and dedication to their jobs.

Down syndrome is the most commonly occurring chromosomal condition; one in every 691 babies in the United States is born with Down syndrome. Quality educational programs, like those at Murray Ridge Center, a stimulating home environment, good health care, and positive support from family, friends and the community enable people with Down syndrome to develop to their full potential and lead fulfilling lives! Thank you to all who helped us celebrate Down Syndrome Awareness Month!

An Exceptional Employee

Julie Kraker received the Exceptional Service Award at the meeting of the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities on August 30, 2013. Julie was nominated by two families for her outstanding efforts with the Boy Scout Camp experience. For the past two summers, each Murray Ridge boy scout was able to partner with a boy scout from another troop, and attended camp at the Lorain County Boy Scout campgrounds.

Julie has worked as a the Liaison at the school for the past five years, and has worked for Murray Ridge for a total of 13 years. Congratulations Julie on a job well done!



Julie Kraker with her award.

Murray Ridge Center's Inland Trail Marathon

On Sunday, November 3, Murray Ridge Center held its 8th annual Inland Trail Marathon | Half Marathon | 5K in Elyria.

This year is the first year of a new race course, and participants in the race were treated with cool weather and clear roads!

Thank you to all the runners and volunteers who came out to support this event!



RESULTS:

Marathon Men: Tim Bell, 3:07:42.2 (picture below)

Marathon Women: Kimberly Bennett, 3:41:03.9

Half-Marathon Men: David Hathaway, 1:20:41.4

Half-Marathon Women: Rose Stoloff, 1:39:17.6

5K Men: James Meholic, 17:55.0

5K Women: Pati Habenicht, 25:49.7



Have You Heard the Murray Ridge Choraleers?

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 about 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.

Book Signing a Success at Murray Ridge School



Denise Zarrella, Avon Lake resident and 19 Action News Reporter, poses with Murray Ridge School student Stephanie Jackson at a book signing on October 18 at Murray Ridge School. Stephanie is holding a copy of "Not Even the SKY is the LIMIT!" The book is the result of Zarrella's own beautiful journey to find out what life with her daughter, Gianna, would be like. Gianna has Down syndrome and was previously in the Early Intervention Program at Murray Ridge Center; she now receives assistance through the LEAP Program with Avon Lake Public Schools. Zarrella donated \$418 from sales of the book to Murray Ridge School! Thank you to all who came out to support Denise and Murray Ridge!

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

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