

# The View From The

# Ridge



MurrayRidgeCenter  
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

## A Message From The Superintendent



Superintendent Amber Fisher

2018 promises to be an important year for Murray Ridge Center and people with developmental disabilities within our community.

Last year marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of county

boards of developmental disabilities and, through our '50 Acts of Giving Back' initiative, many of those we serve volunteered to meet needs of others in Lorain County. This year-long project, which involved 213 separate events or 'acts' performed by more than 180 people with developmental disabilities, continued and formalized a spirit of generosity and goodwill that has long been exhibited by our program participants. Interested individuals who are served within our Adult Program will continue to 'give back' through volunteer work, and as members of service clubs that have been established at all three of our Opportunity/Vocational Centers.

Workforce participation is another important way in which many people with developmental disabilities make valuable contributions locally. In recent years, our Service and Support Administrators have focused on assisting with the exploration of individual paths to community employment. In 2017, our Supported Employment Department provided community-based work opportunities for hundreds of adult program participants, and exceeded its strategic target relevant to facilitating new competitive job placements.

In the year ahead, finding creative and cost-effective ways to assist and prepare those we serve to participate meaningfully in community life will

continue to be a focus. This challenge will apply not only within our Service & Support Administration Department, and our Adult and Residential Programs, but also to our School Program. Helping infants and toddlers with or at risk for delays to maximize development and functionality within their natural environments will be the priority of our Early Intervention Department.

Another challenge of critical importance this year will be the passage of an issue to appear on the May 08 ballot: the renewal of a 1.6875 mills levy that will expire after December 31, 2018. This levy currently accounts for approximately one third of the Agency's revenue, and some of the funds that come from this levy are used to pull down federal dollars that can only be accessed if local match monies are used. Needless to say, continuation of the current levy funding is imperative for the provision of necessary support for Lorain County residents of all ages with developmental disabilities; this levy, if passed, will not increase taxes.

We will conclude this year with the preparation of a three-year (2019-2021) strategic plan for fulfilling our mission in the years ahead. We will always remember that our success is anchored in the support of our community; the daily dedication of our amazing staff; the outstanding collaboration with other agencies and service providers; the involvement of local businesses; effective partnerships with families and other caregivers of those we serve; and the remarkable efforts and contributions of people with developmental disabilities. I wish all of you a very happy and successful year!

**Amber Fisher**  
Superintendent

# Murray Ridge Center Holds Annual Agency In-Service

On October 20, 2017, 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, Residential Department, Service and Support Administration Department, and other administrative and support roles.

Superintendent Amber Fisher delivered the annual address, highlighting the many successes Murray Ridge Center has had the past year and what we have to look forward to in the future. "In the year ahead, key goals will be, within resource constraints, to continue to prepare and assist those we serve to be part of the community, to prepare and assist the community to embrace people with developmental disabilities, and to inform the public about the important work of Murray Ridge Center." Superintendent Fisher also introduced the new Agency video; staff were delighted to be the first to view it!

Superintendent Fisher 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, and 30 years of dedication and service to our Murray Ridge consumers. 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 staff members who had perfect attendance from October 1, 2016, through September 30, 2017. Congratulations to our amazing Murray Ridge staff!

Other notable acknowledgements were the presentations of the annual C.A.R.E.S. award and Volunteer of the Year 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. The 2017 C.A.R.E.S. award was given to The Friendship Animal Protective League.

The Friendship APL is a private, independent, non-profit humane society founded in Elyria in 1957. The APL owns and operates the largest animal shelter in Lorain County. Murray Ridge consumers have been working with the APL since July of 2016. We have volunteered there more than 532 hours with 28 of our consumers putting in volunteer hours! And all three of our Opportunity and Vocational Centers have donation drives with collections of homemade cat and dog treats, money, and supplies given to the APL. In the words of Greg Willey (right, with Superintendent Fisher), Executive Director for the APL, "Murray Ridge consumers' hard work allows my staff to focus more of their attention on the animals at the shelter. Their dedication to making our shelter look nicer makes the adoption process better for our potential adopters."



And while our volunteer work has helped in keeping with the APL's mission, it is through the acceptance of Murray Ridge volunteers that the APL has helped those we serve to learn how to work with animals, forge friendships with community members, and be "in the community, and of the community" by volunteering with the organization.

Each year at the in-service, a volunteer receives The Marilyn Hupfer Volunteer of the Year Award; this distinction is in honor of the example inspired by Mrs. Hupfer during her time with Murray Ridge Center.

This year Murray Ridge honored Michelle Hunt (right, with Superintendent Fisher), President of the Board, with the 2017 Volunteer of the Year Award.

Michelle is currently serving the last year of her third term as a member of the LCBDD. Throughout her time on the Board, she has gone above and beyond her duties as Board President to immerse herself in the Murray Ridge community by continuously fighting for the rights of those it serves and taking active roles in the many activities and events for Murray Ridge staff and consumers.

Michelle works enthusiastically with cheerleaders who have developmental disabilities, participates tirelessly as a member of the Murray Ridge Support Group, and has advocated with legislators to support the interests of those we serve. Recently, Michelle coordinated our 50th anniversary celebration, an enormous undertaking.

Her fellow Board members wholeheartedly supported Hunt receiving this award, saying "She has raised the bar for all who have any involvement with Murray Ridge. She deserves this award one hundred times over."

Superintendent Fisher ended the awards ceremony by thanking all of the staff members for their outstanding work throughout the year, "Again, thank you all so very much for what you do every day. I don't think there's a better team anywhere."



Top, right: Our 25 years of service award recipients with their supervisors! Judy Hartung

(supervisor) with Mo Silvis, Keith Rawlinson with supervisor Rich Haase, and Gary Lyons (supervisor) with Jim Nagy. Left: Mike Dougall, one of our 30 year award recipients, poses with his supervisor Jodi Denes. Bottom, right: Our other 30 year award recipient, Tracey Carroll, poses with her plaque.



# Happy 50th to Murray Ridge!

On September 30th, the Murray Ridge Support Group (MRSG) held a celebration to recognize the 50 years that Murray Ridge Center has been providing lifelong services to Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities.

The evening featured dinner, dancing, slide shows, and speeches from Superintendent Amber Fisher and Board President and MRSG member Michelle Hunt. More than 300 individuals who are served by, or have worked with and/or for Murray Ridge were in attendance. Thank you to the Murray Ridge Support Group for recognizing this very big milestone!



Above, left: Angel Rivera and Michelle Lott dance the night away! Above, right: Clayton Rhodehamel, Kaytie Corbett, Carlton Mitchell, Christine Ash, Kara Zudell, and Ray Kelley. Middle, left: Maria Poling smiles during dinner. Bottom, left: The Murray Ridge Support Group! Sherry and Brian Chutes, Joaquin Page, Michelle Hunt, Cindy and Gray Worzel, Penni Shuster, and Karen and Dave Moore. Below, right: Jodie and Lori Stump.



## Murray Ridge Housing Corporation Sponsors a Night Out at the Lake Erie Crushers Game

On June 22, the Murray Ridge Housing Corporation (MRHC) sponsored an event for tenants of its homes at the Lake Erie Crushers game played at the Sprenger Stadium. 140 residents, staff members, and caregivers attended the game, where they ate, danced, and cheered on the Crushers towards its victory against the Washington Wild Things! Tenants had an opportunity to be involved in the game, including one participant, Robert Kerpics, throwing out the first pitch (above)!



MRHC is a non-profit housing board, providing financing, acquisition, and management of housing in Lorain County for individuals with developmental disabilities since 1992. MRHC was initiated by the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities, or Murray Ridge Center, as it is more commonly known. Since its inception, MRHC has been committed to the goal of ensuring the availability of community-based living arrangements for eligible Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities. Collectively, the homes owned by MRHC provide safe and affordable housing for more than 110 individuals with developmental disabilities. All 31 homes are located in traditional residential neighborhoods throughout Lorain County.

The event was sponsored by Ross Builders, Midwest Siding, Mr. & Mrs. Les Spike, Schlather Insurance, Reliable Lawn Care, Yuhasz Builders, AAA Appliance, Dick Esser Plumbing, Firelands Electric, John Rogers Construction, Sellers Concrete, and Stewart's TV and Appliance. Residents and staff from the homes received admission to the game, food, and a t-shirt!

## Murray Ridge Center Far Exceeded its '50 Acts of Giving Back' Goal in 2017



Rosa Ortiz, who led Murray Ridge Center with most volunteer acts, picks up trash and debris at East Park in Elyria, where the Murray Ridge Center Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center's Young at Heart Senior Program participants adopted a trail.

At the beginning of 2017, to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, Murray Ridge set out to complete at least "Fifty Acts of Giving Back" to the community that has supported its provision of lifelong services to thousands of local residents with developmental disabilities. This initiative, whereby members of the Murray Ridge Family would 'give back' through at least fifty acts of helping to meet needs in Lorain County, was wildly successful.

By the end of last year, 213 Acts of Giving Back had been completed, with more than 180 program participants volunteering their time at more than 40 locations in Lorain County throughout the year. While many of those individuals volunteered dozens of times, Rosa Ortiz (right), who attends the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center, led the effort with 31 separate volunteer acts!



All three Murray Ridge Center Opportunity/Vocational Center Service Clubs collected school supplies throughout the month of August and delivered them to Elyria City Schools, Lorain City Schools, Wellington City Schools, and Keystone schools.

Thank you to all who contributed to the Fifty Acts of Giving Back!

## Local Union President Wins Award

Diane Smith was the recipient of the Ohio Association of Public Employees (OAPSE) Northeast District Legends Award at the Bi-Annual Northeast District Conference held in Cleveland May 6-8.

Smith (pictured, right, holding her award), is the Family Support Coordinator for Murray Ridge Center and Local President for local union 771; she has been an OAPSE member since its inception. Diane was nominated for this award by the Northeast District President for her many years of service and participation in political activities.

As part of her Local President responsibilities, Diane sits on several committees, is involved with Agency labor negotiations, advocates for union members, and meets with Agency management, including the Superintendent, regarding any concerns or changes impacting the Agency.

"I appreciate our Superintendent and upper management because I believe they care about the students and consumers we serve, as well the staff that work at Murray Ridge," Smith said.

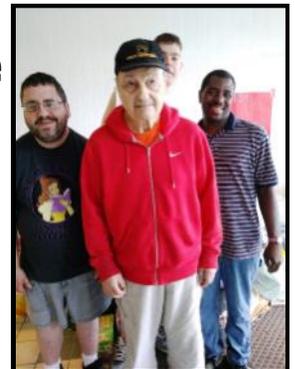


Congratulations, Diane, on receiving this prestigious award!

## Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center Makes Large Donation to Friendship Animal Protective

As part of the Agency-wide 50 Acts of Giving Back initiative, consumers and staff from the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center collected food, blankets, towels, treats, and litter for the animals at the Friendship Animal Protective League (FAPL).

Penni Shuster, Adult Program Instructor at the EOVC, took Adult Program participants Terrance Meagher, Mark Axford, Richard Yager, and Andrew Donald to drop off the items on July 10. Thank you to all who donated to the FAPL!



## Investigative Agents Hard at Work at Murray Ridge Center

Murray Ridge Center employs three Investigative Agents, also known as IAs, whose purpose is to investigate and help prevent incidents that adversely affect the health and/or welfare of Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities (DD). They perform those functions on behalf of any individual who receives paid services through Murray Ridge Center or another provider within the DD system.

The IAs investigate allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and other incidents, including rights violations. As applicable, IAs work collaboratively with local law enforcement, the Children's Services Agency, and Adult Protective Services.

IAs work with providers to track and monitor trends and patterns in incidents adversely impacting people with DD. IAs also train all staff at Murray Ridge Center on



Pictured above, Investigative Agents Kelly Moe, Valerie Deptula, and Debi Streibel.

incident reporting requirements, the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities, and health and safety alerts issued by the Ohio Department of DD.

# Annual Spaghetti Dinner a Huge Success!

On April 29, the Murray Ridge Support Group (MRSRG) held its annual Spaghetti Dinner at the AmVets Post 55 in Sheffield Lake.

In total, the MRSRG raised more than \$6,000 through the event, and all proceeds will benefit Lorain County citizens impacted by developmental disabilities.

One highlight from the event was a presentation of artwork by consumer Michael Elliot (pictured, right, with Board President and MRSRG member Michelle Hunt, and members of the AmVets Post 55) to thank the AmVets for their continued generosity towards the Murray Ridge Support Group.



Thank you to all who came out for great food, great company, and a worthy cause!

## Thank You to all our Murray Ridge Center Volunteers!

National Volunteer Week was April 23-29, 2017. Throughout this week and throughout the entire year, Murray Ridge Center recognizes the individuals who give their time as volunteers at Murray Ridge School, in our Opportunity/Vocational Centers, within our Special Olympics Program, and in many other facets of the Agency. Murray Ridge Center extends its sincerest thanks to these community volunteers for making a considerable and lasting difference in the lives of the individuals we serve. In addition to the many staff volunteers, thank you to the following community volunteers:

For more information on how you can volunteer with Murray Ridge Center, contact Jennifer Judkins at 440.329.3734 or [jjudkins@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:jjudkins@murrayridgecenter.org).

Pete Barth	Gerry Findlan	Tim McLaughlin	Stephen J. Ross	Heather Torres
Jim Berarducci	Ann Findlan	Andrea Hall-Miller	Kristina Schuman	Abby Turnwald
Keith Boey	Robert Gajdos	James Miller	Kristine Schuman	Tim Turnwald
Bob Burkhardt	Beverly Gedid	Dan Muschitz	Terry (Pete)	Jim Uldrich
Greg Butchko	Betty Hanson	Molly Oliver	Shilling	Jerry Vessalo
Larry Cooper	Bill Harrison	Henry Patterson	Vassie Scott	Tina Woskobunik
Pam Cooper	Charlene Hartman	Joan Peterson	Charles Sherry	Daniel White
Rebecca Cornman	Linda Herman	Yolanda Ramos	Olivia Sliman	Denis Wright
Matt Dailey	Michelle Hunt	Renee Reitenbach	Les Spike	
Dave Eliason	Sandi Johnson	Isabel Rivera	Kayla Syrowski	
Laura Eliason	James (Kurt) Koepf	Debbie Roberts	Phil Tollett	

## National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Murray Ridge Center once again participated in National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. Murray Ridge Center's Supported Employment Program provides services to assist individuals to choose, obtain, and maintain employment in the community.

Murray Ridge Center is proud to salute the nearly 1,000 Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities who are part of the local workforce, and the more than 100 local businesses that provide jobs for these individuals. Through its three Opportunity and Vocational Centers and Supported 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.

Lorain County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities

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