



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE... FOR A LIFETIME

The Murray Ridge Courier

May 2020

Special Olympics Ohio Cancels State Summer Games

Below is the official statement from Special Olympics Ohio regarding the 2020 Summer Games:

Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and our focus on the health and safety of our athletes, families, volunteers, and our entire community Special Olympics Ohio has extended the suspension of sports training and competition, including the State Summer Games, through 6 July 2020.

"This is the first time in more than 50 years that Special Olympics Ohio will not hold State Summer Games. We understand the impact of this is significant for athletes who were planning to compete and who also look forward all year to reuniting with their friends off the playing field," said Special Olympics Ohio Chief Executive Officer Jessica Stewart. "While this is disappointing we know that our love of sport does not compare to the importance of protecting the health and safety of our community. We are in this together and we will come out of this together, and stronger."

"The decision to cancel Summer Games for the first time in the history of Special Olympics Ohio did not come lightly," added Geoff Kunkler, Chair of the Special Olympics Ohio Board of Directors. "We understand how hard our athletes train to prepare for this event and how much they look forward to it, along with their families and friends. However, given the unprecedented circumstances affecting our community and nation, the leadership within this organization believes it is of paramount importance to protect the safety and wellness of our athletes, coaches, and volunteers. We are looking forward to resuming normal activities as soon as it is deemed safe, and are excited for the many competitions and events to come."

The decision to cancel the 2020 State Summer Games was also based on the fact that The Ohio State University has cancelled all on-campus activities through 6 July.

In an effort to help keep athletes, their families, and supporters healthy and fit while formal training is suspended, Special Olympics Ohio has launched a virtual program that includes content such as fitness routines, resources for both physical and mental health, and nutrition information. Content posts every day on the Special Olympics Ohio [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) channels.

If you have questions or need assistance with matters involving Special Olympics Ohio athletes or programs, please contact Special Olympics Ohio Chief Operating Officer John Wysocki at jwyssocki@sooh.org or 614-239-7050 ext. 20. Please be safe and stay healthy. With patience and compassion, we will get through this.



Program Status Update

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Murray Ridge Adult Day Centers are CLOSED to program participants at this time. Updates on the closure will be communicated when known.

Murray Ridge School will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019/2020 School Year, and remote learning will continue.

You may contact us by phone with any specific concerns or questions. The phone numbers for all Agency programs/facilities (except the Meister Road Home) will be routed to a single line that will be staffed by a receptionist during regular business hours (between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on any holidays or Program Closing Days reflected on the Agency calendar). One phone number that may be used to connect with the receptionist on duty during regular business hours is the phone number for our Administrative Offices: (440) 329-3734. For emergencies outside of regular business hours, please call the Crisis Hotline at (440) 282-1131.

Murray Ridge Service and Support Administration (SSA) Staff Continue to Support Families

Troy Eppley's Birthday
4/10/2020



Murray Ridge Service and Support Administrator (SSA) **Natalie Skiba** shared a heartwarming story about a very special birthday treat for Sheffield Lake resident **Troy Eppley**.

On April 10, Troy's community turned out to drive by Troy's house to show their love for him on his 34th birthday. Not only did Natalie put together a Power-Point of the celebration for Troy, she and her daughter took part in the celebration by making special birthday signs for the occasion (visible in the 2nd slide pictured left).

According to Natalie, who works with Troy and his family to coordinate various community supports, "Troy and his family make a wonderful team. He has limited verbal communication and uses some sign language. Troy loves bowling and swimming, and also enjoys using his iPad. He is typically always happy and a joy to be around!" Happy Belated Birthday, Troy!



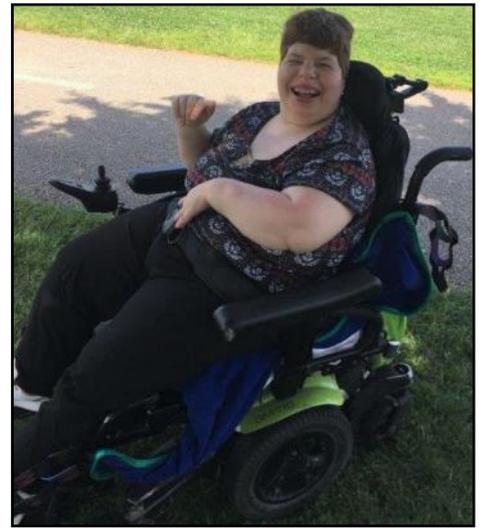
A Special Easter Surprise

The day after Easter, Murray Ridge Service and Support Administrator (SSA) **Mikki McCann** and her children packed up bags of food, candy and Easter eggs, along with toys, face masks and other essentials (like lotions for the ladies). Mikki and her children then drove to the homes of the families she serves and placed the bags of goodies on their front porches, knocked on the front door, and then waved from the car as the families came out to get the bags.



Consumer Profile — Susan 'Susie' Flint

Susan (or Susie as she likes to be called) is a sweet and funny woman! Susie is supported by her **Murray Ridge Service and Support Administrator (SSA)**, Cheryl Glatz. Cheryl assists Susie with the development of her Individual Service Plan (ISP) that identifies the services and supports that help Susie live her life to the fullest. Cheryl also monitors her services and keeps her plan up-to-date as Susie's life goals change. Susie moved to Elyria from Cuyahoga County in April 2019. Susie was awarded an Exit I.O. (Individual Options) Waiver in 2019, which helped her move from an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) to a licensed group setting. Cheryl worked with Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities to coordinate Susie's move to Elyria and enrollment onto the I.O. Waiver.



Susie taking advantage of some nice springtime weather.

Susie lives in a group home in Elyria with seven roommates. She receives supports from **Our Lady of the Wayside (OLW)**. OLW is an agency that supports people to do daily life tasks such as personal care, household cleaning, cooking, shopping, scheduling medical appointments and taking medications. Susie likes helping out with chores around the house. When Susie is at home she enjoys sleeping in on the weekends, watching TV (especially Law & Order and NCIS), listening to

classic rock music, looking at fashion magazines and playing board games. Susie is known for being a jokester! She also takes pride in looking nice and having coordinated outfits!



Susie is known for being a jokester!

Susie also loves being out and about in the community! Anywhere she can go, she is game! She especially enjoys going out to eat (Applebee's is her favorite!), going to Grace Baptist Church and being outside when the weather is nice.

During the week, before the COVID closure, Susie attended **Vocational Guidance Services (VGS)** in Brooklyn, and receives day program services. VGS is a "vocational rehabilitation agency with a mission to prepare people with barriers to employment for a brighter future." VGS "focuses on each individual's strengths and abilities. VGS is proud to support individualized goals for everyone they serve as they work to secure a brighter future." VGS provides individuals with day program services, pre and post-employment programs, workplace readiness skills training, career services and retirement and senior services. When Susie is at VGS, she teaches a sign language class to individuals with the help of

her staff. She is very proud of this! Susie also enjoys participating in music therapy and exercise classes. It is important to Susie that she goes out of her area every day and to eat lunch with friends that are in different areas at VGS. Susie watches the time and is proud of the fact that she knows when lunch is over without any reminders from staff! Susie really enjoys attending VGS and doing all the community activities that are available!

Susie is living her best life, making her own decisions and choices and doing what makes her happy!



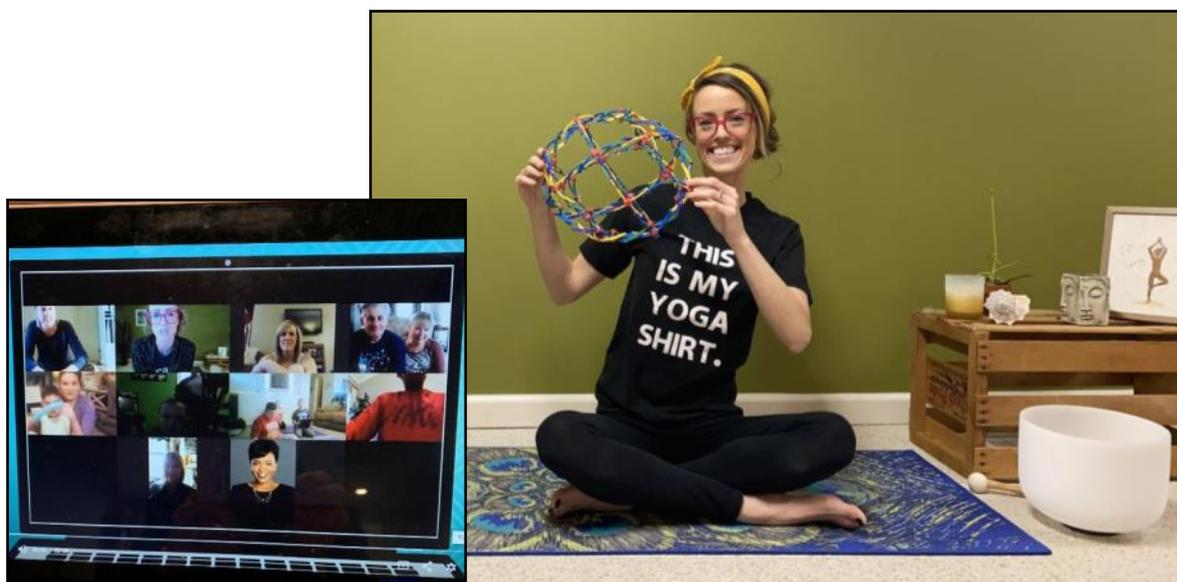
Susie enjoys her time at Vocational Guidance Services.

Virtual Yoga Classes Popular With Murray Ridge School Students and Families

One of the many creative uses of technology during the current COVID-19 closure comes from Murray Ridge School teacher **Samantha Polczynski** - affectionately known as **'Ms. Sam'** - who is continuing to teach yoga classes to her students online from her make-shift home yoga studio.

"I offer yoga class at school for my students. And I also teach yoga privately outside of school with independent clients. When school was cancelled I wanted to somehow continue this," said Ms. Sam. Word of her creative way to teach yoga during the closure quickly spread to the local media, leading to feature stories in the *Chronicle-Telegram* and on WKYC-TV3 . . . where she was nominated for the "#3Heroes" program.

According to Ms. Sam, the yoga classes she teaches help students regulate their emotions and become more aware of their bodies and minds. And, according to comments made to the media, the yoga classes are much appreciated by parents. "He (my son) perks up whenever he hears Ms. Sam's voice," one parent told Channel 3. "I was always worried about him being left out of things because he can't do those things, but she really makes it a point to make sure he's involved in everything."



Murray Ridge to Operate a Point of Distribution In the Case of Certain Emergencies

In the event of a county-wide health emergency requiring the distribution of medicine or treatment, Murray Ridge Center, in conjunction with Lorain County Public Health, will operate a temporary Point of Distribution (POD) to provide medicine or treatments to consumers (people with developmental disabilities who have been determined eligible for services from the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities), and their immediate caregivers.

Family members who live in households with children and adults with developmental disabilities will be eligible to receive medication/treatment from the Murray Ridge Center closed POD. Caregivers assigned at the time of POD operation to work with individuals with developmental disabilities who do not live with family will also be eligible to receive medicine/treatment from the Murray Ridge Center POD for themselves and members of their immediate households.

Should the need to operate a Murray Ridge Center POD occur, specifics will be communicated on the Murray Ridge Center Facebook page, on our website, and/or through other local media and other communications.

Murray Ridge Early Intervention Services Continue Through Use of Virtual Technology

Due to COVID-19, Murray Ridge's **Early Intervention (EI)** program has transitioned to a mode of 'tele-EI' to meet the needs of families. EI provides services for parents with young children with disabilities or developmental delays (aged birth-3), which typically include visits from specialists trained in child development.

"Initially there were many thoughts about 'how are we going to do this?' and 'how are families going to respond' but the results have been pleasantly surprising!," said Early Intervention Supervisor **Heather Knoble**. "Our staff and families are embracing a new way of delivering services. Many of our families have been engaging in virtual video visits with different platforms (Zoom, Microsoft Teams and FaceTime). Visits are done much as they normally would be done with Developmental Specialists using a coaching style with the parent," she said.

Through the 'tele-EI' approach, parents are able to report what their child is doing by showing or discussing strategies that they have been trying to help their child reach their goals. Developmental Specialists are then able to observe the child, offer feedback and brainstorm strategies with the caregiver.

"We've had some great success stories where families are coming up with new strategies on their own," Knoble said. "There has also been a little more opportunity to view a child during their routine or the goal they have been working on. For example, parents have been videotaping things like a child drinking or eating and sending it to the specialist for feedback. That's been a great tool to be able to share among our team for feedback as well."

Another popular option for visits has been through phone calls. EI staff have also been emailing or texting resources to families with handouts, videos and websites.

"In the grand scheme of things this is exactly what Early Intervention is supposed to look like," Knoble said. "We always strive to support a parent as their child's best teacher. This model really allows us to be coaches and increases the family's competency and confidence when engaging with their child."



Developmental Specialist **Shawna Livingston** (pictured above, right) talked to **Mariah Lamb**, mom of **Alexis Konst** (pictured above, left) about their experience with virtual visits. According to Shawna, "Alexis's mom indicated that in-person visits are better but when it's that way she sometimes will sit back and let the specialist do the work. But now (with virtual visits) the interaction is 'on her.' Virtual EI is going well – mom has fun and is relaxed with EI visits because she and Alexis can have fun and play."

Zoom Tips for the Modern Age

With more people than ever today relying on teleconferencing to connect during the pandemic, the Oberlin Business Partnership: Positively Oberlin recently shared a blog post by entrepreneur, author and public speaker Seth Godin with some practical tips on how to use these new technologies most effectively for both business and in our private lives.

- Sit close to the screen. Your face should fill most of it.
- Use an external microphone or headset. Regardless of how you're amplified, remember that the microphone is only a foot away, which means you don't have to strain or raise your voice. Also, consider [Krisp](#) if you have background noise issues.
- When you're not talking, hit mute. If you're on mute, press and hold the space bar and you can be heard.
- Don't eat during the meeting.
- When you're on mute during an audio call, you can do whatever you want. But when you're on mute on a video call, you need to act like you're truly engaged. Nod your head. Focus on the screen. Don't get up and feed your dog.
- Don't sit with the window behind you. A little effort on lighting goes a very long way.
- When you're talking, spend some time looking at the camera, not the screen. You'll appear more earnest and honest this way.
- When you're talking, go slow. No one is going to steal your slot.
- Don't walk if you're using a phone. And if you're using a laptop, don't put it on your lap.
- Please(!) do not use an animated background. Do not use a funny one either. If we're noticing your background, you're doing it wrong.

Helpful Resource Links

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
dodd.ohio.gov

**Information from the State of Ohio
(Governor DeWine's Orders, etc.)**
coronavirus.ohio.gov

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
jfs.ohio.gov/



Murray Ridge Staff Create Homemade Masks for Meister Home



Murray Ridge Director of Nursing **Kevin Eye** (pictured left top and center) transformed into 'The Tailor of North Royalton' recently as he made some homemade face masks to donate to Murray Ridge's Meister Road Home.

"I have zero sewing skills," he said, "So I figured out a non-sewing method to make reusable cloth masks using Stitch Witchery. I found a suitable template online and through trial and error, I have made 20 masks for Meister. I used material that I had around the home and used hair ties for the elastic."

Among the others in the agency who have also made masks is **Starr Price** (pictured below left) who is an Adult Program Instructor at the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center. Starr, an avid seamstress who attended the Virginia Marti School of Art and Design, and who has performed alterations on uniforms for the Murray Ridge Cheerleaders, created 42 colorful masks for the Meister Home.

"All of us here at Meister Road Home appreciate the time and creativity of everyone who has made masks," said Meister Administrator **Christine Ash**. "We also want to thank staff for continuing to make deliveries to us, make repairs to appliances, etc. We are very grateful for everyone's assistance with making sure the Meister residents' safety is first priority and would also like to thank everyone for their prayers."

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
1091 Infirmary Road
Elyria, OH 44035

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Exceptional Service Award

Do you know a Murray Ridge staff member whose work efforts reflect remarkable dedication and have significantly contributed to the well being of people with developmental disabilities? Nominate that staff member 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 **Chris Vasco**, Community Education/Volunteer Director. Include a brief paragraph outlining your reasons for nominating the staff member. All nominations will be forwarded to the Board for consideration. The Board presents Exceptional Service Awards on a quarterly basis. If you have any questions, contact Chris at (440) 329-3734 or at cvasco@murrayridgecenter.org

News You Can Use

For some families, obtaining food during the COVID-19 Pandemic has become a major challenge, and one local organization is doing its part to help provide much-needed food to those in need.

The Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio is sponsoring an ongoing series of drive-through food distributions at various locations throughout Lorain County.

To find out the latest information about food distributions available near you, go to the Second Harvest Food Bank's Facebook page, or go to its website at secondharvestfoodbank.org.

