



MurrayRidgeCenter  
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

# The Murray Ridge Courier

August 2021



**Hector "Bobby" Lozano** posing with his teammates on the Murray Raiders basketball team.

Please join Murray Ridge in congratulating **Hector "Bobby" Lozano** on his 30th anniversary of working at Taco Bell! He passed this truly remarkable milestone on July 25th, 2021. Hector takes great pride in both his work and his independence.

David Lozano, Hector's brother, says Hector "really enjoys working at Taco Bell," adding that he values "the camaraderie of being with his co-workers and having the feeling of accomplishment." At work, Hector is an impeccable and meticulous cleaner, one of his roles at the restaurant. According to David, the job "keeps him focused and driven."

One of his managers at the location says that while Hector is often quiet, he loves to sing and dance to the "Brady Bunch" theme song when the opportunity arises. She adds that he

## HECTOR LOZANO 30 Years of Employment

**Congratulations to Hector "Bobby" Lozano  
for his 30th Work Anniversary at Taco Bell!**

is always focused on his job and is committed to staying on the rigid schedule that he sets for himself.

Outside of work, Hector has been an avid participant in Special Olympics events from a young age. "He was an accomplished swimmer, bringing home several medals," David says of Hector. David continues, "Then, as he got older, he went into ... basketball and softball." Impressively, David confirms that Hector "is still active in these sports at the age of 54."

On his days off, Hector enjoys bike rides and walks in the Metro Park near his home. He also likes to relax at home with a good movie or word search puzzle. When he's in the mood to treat himself, he likes to eat at IHOP and Bob Evans. He also enjoys a nice shopping spree at Walmart or the Dollar Store.

David recounts that his brother and he lost their mother at a young age, and he says that this tragedy helped strengthen their bond together. David makes sure to include Hector in all of their family outings, including their recent trip to Myrtle Beach; of the getaway, David says he was unsure if he'd "be able to tear [Hector] from the beach and get him back to Lorain. He really likes the beach."

Hector has big plans for the future, too; according to his individual service plan, he's eager for volunteering opportunities and wants to work on his reading skills.

Lastly, in addition to chasing these dreams, Hector steadfastly holds that he plans on working at Taco Bell for a long time to come.

**Congratulations, Hector!**



Hector on a well-deserved vacation in West Virginia this past month.





## Remembering... Eunice Kennedy Shriver



This past July 11th would have been the 100th birthday of **Eunice Kennedy Shriver**, whose eight siblings included Robert and John F. Kennedy. Eunice was a pioneer in the fight for rights and acceptance of individuals living with developmental disabilities, and in 1968 she founded the Special Olympics in order to give people with developmental disabilities “the chance to play, the chance to complete, and the chance to grow.” In 1972, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her efforts. Eunice passed away at age 88 in 2009.

Today, Special Olympics operates in 172 countries with more than 5 million participants every year.

## Joe Carrol Completes the “50 Yard Challenge”



Amherst teen **Joe Carrol**, an individual who receives Service & Support Administration from Murray Ridge, recently completed the “We Are Raising Men Lawn Care 50 Yard Challenge” by mowing—you guessed it—a whopping 50 lawns! After first beginning the challenge more than a year ago in March 2020, this teenage titan of turf-trimming took his top-tier talents to town, offering lawncare services throughout his community free of charge.

The “50 Yard Challenge” challenge was created in 2016 by Alabama resident Rodney Smith Jr. in an effort to inspire positive community engagement in children and teens. When he heard about Joe’s accomplishment, Mr. Smith made a special trip to Amherst and presented the young man with a brand new lawnmower!



Joe’s masterful mowing also attracted the attention of Elyria’s newspaper, The Chronicle, which ran a story about him in early July. You can read that article here: <https://chroniclet.com/news/266819/the-whole-50-yards-amherst-teen-completes-mowing-challenge/>

Clockwise from top left: **Joe Carrol** and grandfather **Donald Dombrosky** celebrating lawn #50; Joe taking his new mower for a spin; “50 Yard Challenge” creator **Rodney Smith Jr.** paying Joe a congratulatory visit all the way from Huntsville, Alabama; and Joe with neighbor **Katie Kolenda**.





# MURRAY RIDGE PRESCHOOL

## A PRESCHOOL OPTION

*The Murray Ridge Preschool Program offers students with a variety of developmental disabilities the advantages of in-room therapies, an array of state-of-the-art equipment, outstanding staff, and an opportunity to learn alongside typically-developing peers. The Preschool Program runs Tuesday through Friday. Children with disabilities must be referred to the Murray Ridge Preschool Program by their local school districts. Applications for typically-developing children are available through Murray Ridge School.*

## WE OFFER:

- Individualized Speech, Occupational and Physical Therapy in the classroom
- An extensive collection of early childhood educational equipment
- Full-time nurse on site
- Door-to-door transportation services
- A well-rounded curriculum based on the Ohio Early Learning Content Standards
- Dynamic, ODE-certified staff
- Physical development through indoor/outdoor physical education classes
- Music classes



## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## Independence Through Technology



and obstacles confronted by individuals with disabilities.

For example, Murray Ridge program participant **Jodi Stump** was able to move from a group setting with 24-7 care to her own apartment with the help of remote assistive technology. Living independently, she's able to quickly reach assistance should an emergency arise.

This is just one example of how assistive technology and remote support services can help someone with a disability achieve greater independence. To learn more about technological solutions, contact our **Service and Support Administration** office at (440) 324-2366.

On July 21<sup>st</sup>, Murray Ridge hosted a seminar titled **"Independence Through Technology."** In our rapidly changing modern world, assistive technology and remote support services can provide wonderfully powerful solutions to challenges

## BECOME YOUR OWN CHAMPION

*An Advocacy Workshop*

Conquer the big city by learning how to speak up for yourself and others in a two-day workshop!

Please join Murray Ridge for two days of fun, food, and prizes! Experience interactive presentations, activities, and theatre! Visit with the Mayor of Elyria, act out your favorite scenes with the Improvaneers, and more!

Enjoy complimentary breakfast and lunch both days!

### Prizes Games Raffles and More

**Who:** Lorain County Adults with Developmental Disabilities

**When:** August 13 & 14 from 10 AM - 3 PM

**Where:** LCCC Spitzer Conference Center 1005 N. Abbe Rd, Elyria Ohio 44035 - South Entrance

Contact Jaclina Rush with any inquiries:  
jrush@murrayridgecenter.org, 440-324-2366

**We look forward to seeing everyone in a few days!**

## Take Me Out to the Ball Game!

*Robert Kerpics*



Robert Kerpics with a baseball signed by the Lake Erie Crushers!

On Thursday, July 29th, **Murray Ridge Housing Corporation** (MRHC) hosted its annual trip to Mercy Health Stadium to watch the Lake Erie Crushers, Avon's Frontier League baseball team! At the event, more than 80 MRHC tenants sported complimentary t-shirts and were treated to refreshments. Everyone enjoyed a great ballgame that ended with an exciting walk-off home run, clinching a victory for the Crushers. Many thanks for a wonderful evening go to the MRHC Board and event sponsors: **AAA Appliance Service; Callihan Electric, Inc.; Ecotree Services; Dick Esser Plumbing and Heating Inc.; Geisel Heating, Air Conditioning, and Plumbing Inc.; Irvin's Lawn Care; Jamie's Carpet Shop; Midwest Siding; and Schlather Insurance.**

*Sally Gordon & Elena Reinhold*



Sally Gordon (left) and Elena Reinhold (right) with Stomper, the Lake Erie Crushers mascot!



## Exceptional Service Award Presented

Congratulations to **Austin Remo**, who has been awarded this quarter's **Exceptional Service Award**! Austin is a Service and Support Administrator who, according to his nomination letter, "always went above and beyond for **Betty**," an individual whose services he coordinated.

For example, Betty always wanted a dog for companionship, but there were many obstacles to overcome in order to grant her wish. Austin put in the extra work to ensure that all the necessary arrangements were in order, and Betty got her dog.

Sadly, Betty passed away in March. "I've never had an SSA give the kind

**Do you know a Murray Ridge staff member who has gone "above and beyond"? If so, submit your nomination to Kevin Naughton, Community Education & Volunteer Director at (440) 329-3734 or at [kevin@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:kevin@murrayridgecenter.org).**



"Austin always went out of his way to help Betty achieve whatever she needed ... and wanted."

-Austin's nominator

Pictured: **Austin Remos** (center) with his **Exceptional Service Award** plaque, flanked by Board Member **Dan White** (left) and Superintendent **Amber Fisher** (right)

of attention that he gave to Betty," his nominator said. By all accounts, there can be no doubt that her last days were warmer, brighter, and happier thanks to Austin's extraordinary efforts.

Austin's nominator, an employee of a Residential Provider agency that cares for local residents with devel-

opmental disabilities, concluded her nomination letter by noting that she and her staff would be "forever grateful" for everything Austin has done. We at Murray Ridge appreciate Austin's great work with our provider partners and those we serve.

**Congratulations, Austin!**



**Special Olympics** competitions were among the many activities and events that had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, so the **Murray Ridge Raiders** are especially thrilled to be back on the road for this summer's softball season! The team won its very first game on July 21st against Lake County 19 to 7, and made a great effort at its home opener against Geauga County on July 28th. **Way to go team!**

## Summer Gardening at EOVC



The saying "better late than never" certainly applies when it comes to the recently planted vegetable garden at the **Elyria Opportunity Vocational Center**.

**"Farmer James" Hertz** has been diligently watering the flowers, squash, and tomatoes in between rain showers.

## A Solution Rewarded with Diamonds and R.I.C.H.E.S.

Murray Ridge Transportation Coordinator **Harry Koenning** and Adult Program Aide **Renee Mele** were formally presented with the **R.I.C.H.E.S. Diamond Award** this past July for their innovative transportation solution (see right).

**R.I.C.H.E.S. (Recognizing Individuals' Creative Helpful Excellent Solutions)** Awards are given for innovative solutions throughout the year. The Diamond Award, which includes a cash prize, is the highest award level granted, and is reserved for only the most original and impactful solutions at Murray Ridge Center.

Koenning and Mele actually won the award in 2019, but their ingenuity was unable to be properly recognized due to COVID-19 restrictions on group gatherings. The awards were presented in person by R.I.C.H.E.S. Committee Members Tanya Guitar and Kathy Justy at a staff meeting on July 7th, earning the recipients a well-deserved round of applause.

**Congratulations, Renee and Harry!**



Passengers in Murray Ridge's van fleet often had trouble getting past the seatbelt that hindered access to the back seat. Harry Koenning and Renee Mele had these hooks installed in all the vans to remedy the issue!



Left to right: Harry Koenning, Kathy Justy, Tanya Guitar, and Renee Mele at the award presentation.

Harry Koenning and Renee Mele showing off their awards.



## Now Hiring

### Featured Positions

#### Direct Support Professionals (Home Setting)

We have openings available for permanent and as-needed positions to care for residents of our Meister Rd. home. Hours vary based on position and/or assignment.

#### Direct Support Professionals (Adult Program Setting)

We have openings available for as-needed positions to care for participants in our Adult Program. Hours are generally during the day.

#### Drivers

We are looking for drivers to transport Murray Ridge Adult Program participants between their homes and community employment sites. Hours are generally during the day, on an as-needed basis.

**We provide the training.**  
**You provide the ♥**

To see our current openings and to apply, go to the Murray Ridge website and click on "Opportunities".

#### Custodial/Maintenance

We are looking for as-needed custodial help and a full-time Maintenance Technician. Hours are generally during the day.

#### **All potential candidates:**

Must have Valid Ohio  
Driver's License  
Good Driving Record  
High School Diploma/GED

Must Pass Background  
Check, Drug Test, and  
Physical



# Consumer Profile: Yaritza Ortiz

It takes hard work and perseverance to turn one's life goals into reality, and **Yaritza Ortiz** certainly embodies this ethos. Her life has taken her along many twists and turns in order to get where she is today. With the support of her team, which includes **Kellie Kraven**, her **APSI** (Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc.) guardian; **Laanni Sims**, her **Supported Living provider**; and **Maria Santana**, her **Service & Support Administrator (SSA)**, Yaritza has taken control of her life and is now living on her own terms!

Yaritza has worked incredibly hard over the last few years to be a successful and independent woman, and APSI is recognizing that effort by selecting Yaritza to be the first recipient of its **"TJ Jackson Forever Friends Award"**! APSI says they created the award in honor of Takeisha "TJ" Jackson, a former APSI cli-



Yaritza and her Supported Living provider, Laanni Sims.

healthy life decisions and develop her ability to be as independent as possible. With the support of her team, Yaritza has been able to foster positive relationships with her mother, step-father, boyfriend, and friends.

According to Maria Santana, Yaritza's SSA who has worked with her since 2015, Yaritza loves shopping for clothes and shoes, going out to eat, and spending time with her mom and Laanni. Maria says, "Yaritza is a champ at budgeting and saving her money! She is very proud of her apartment and keeps it spotless. Yaritza is also very compassionate and wants to help out other people in her building who are not as far along on their paths to independence. I am extremely proud of her because she has really worked hard to be a better person."

With the support and help of her team, Yaritza has blossomed into a financially responsible woman who takes care of her mind, body, and soul. Yaritza works hard to take care of the things that matter most to her, and is very proud of herself for the positive steps she has made in her life.

Murray Ridge Center wishes Yaritza continued success in all her life goals! **Congratulations for being recognized with the "TJ Jackson Forever Friends Award"!**

ent. With the support of her team, TJ was able to develop her independence to the point where she no longer needed the support of APSI, and her guardianship was amicably terminated.

Unfortunately, TJ passed away after a battle with bone cancer in 2020. Her eponymous award is given out to an individual who "is demonstrating growth and independence." The award also includes \$1500 to help the honoree take the next steps in developing his or her independence.

Yaritza was nominated by Kellie Kraven, who says "Yaritza has learned how to maintain healthy relationships with her family and significant others, and she is now managing her medications and finances responsibly. Ms. Ortiz is looking forward to moving out on her own and further developing her independence. She is very proud of her progress, and her team is thrilled with her successes!"

Yaritza currently lives in the Mica apartments, which are supported by drop-in staff members from the **Nord Center**. They, along with her provider Laanni Sims, support Yaritza emotionally, helping her make



Yaritza with her "TJ Jackson Forever Friends" award.



Yaritza in her apartment.

Lorain County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities

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