

The View From The *Ridge*



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

Remembering Ellen Payner



It is with sadness and fond memories of an extraordinary woman and key figure in the Murray Ridge story that we report the passing of former superintendent Ellen Payner. Dr. Payner, who retired in 2004, led the Murray Ridge Center for nearly twenty-seven years, having started as superintendent in 1977. She was here in the early years of county boards of developmental disabilities, and both witnessed and oversaw many progressive changes to services for people with developmental disabilities.

It is truly not possible, in anything less a novel, to cover her contributions or do justice to the memory of Dr. Payner. Her dedication and presence were enormous, and she would tell you that she looked forward to getting to work each and every day. Godspeed Ellen (Dr. Payner). You will forever figure largely in our hearts and our history.



'Virtual' Adult Day Services Connects Consumers and Staff



One example of the creative new virtual programming is pictured above - a lesson about Japan. As part of the lesson, staff delivered chopsticks and noodles to participating consumers and demonstrated how to use those utensils via a virtual 'chopstick showdown' to see who could pick up the most items in 25 seconds!

While the Murray Ridge Adult Day Centers are open for eligible individuals who reside in the family home, staff and many other program participants continue to interact online through **Virtual Adult Day Services**.

Many sessions have focused on socialization and communication on topics important for community awareness — such as the COVID-19 virus. According to Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center (EOVC) Speech and Language Pathologist **Jennifer Hakko**, "The participants have had great discussions, learning how to take turns on Zoom. They always enjoy socializing during the opening of each meeting. Some even sign on early just to be able to catch up with their friends."

These sessions have included: an overview of how to stop the spread of germs; how to properly put on, wear, and take off masks, and social distancing; videos of how the Adult Day Centers have changed; staff guests sharing how the virus has affected them; sanitizing surfaces due to COVID-19; how to access virtual vacations/tours; contact tracing; COVID-19 Bingo; and 'COVID and coins'. The participants also worked on a virtual COVID-19 Time Capsule which they shared with others in the group during the month of November, along with sharing what they were grateful for.

EOVC activity aide **Bryan Hessler** has taken a lead on creating specialty breakout sessions including a six-week Fall Sports Talk session in which the participants watch game highlights, play sports trivia, and discuss how COVID-19 has affected the world of sports with a focus on football, baseball, and basketball.

DonorsChoose Helps Students 'Adopt an Animal'

'Adopt an Animal,' which uses plush pets to help students learn responsible pet ownership, is just one of the latest DonorsChoose projects funded at Murray Ridge School.

Founded in 2000 by a high school teacher in the Bronx, N.Y., DonorsChoose (donorschoose.org) empowers public school teachers from across the country to request much-needed materials for their students. Right now there are thousands of teacher requests that you can help bring to life with a gift of any amount. At school or at home...wherever learning happens, you can make a difference. With teachers and students facing the toughest learning challenges in a generation, you can help provide the supplies to keep kids learning.



Evan Clarke (left) and TJ Nagy

Fall Fun with Murray Ridge School and Early Intervention



This fall, Murray Ridge's **Early Intervention (EI)** program held its annual outing at Miller's Apple Hill in Amherst. This year, the EI team made sure to add some special safety precautions for the outing, including time slots, limits on attendee numbers, and social distancing. The event had a great turnout and was a nice way for Developmental Specialists and families to see each other in person - and not on a computer screen. Shown above are: (left) **Lucas Meno**; (center) **Norah Clarke** with her mom, **Sarah**, and Norah's Aunt, **Anna Taylor**; and (right) **Annalisia Payne**.

Murray Ridge School enjoyed a safe, yet fun Halloween. Below is Teacher **Laurie Davis** and her class having a virtual Halloween party, including carving pumpkins and making Halloween sweets.



SSA Department Produces Self-Advocacy Video Series



The Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department has developed a series of eight videos on consumers' rights, entitled "**Knowing My Rights.**" The video series is designed to help educate adults with developmental disabilities in Lorain County on the importance of self-advocacy.

The videos showcase Lorain County consumers and several agency SSAs discussing a wide range of consumer rights. Throughout the rest of this year and early 2021, SSA plans to release the videos through small events where staff will lead discussions through Zoom about specific rights covered in each video. Among the topics covered are rights surrounding personal choices, relationships, self-advocacy, voting, and housing and living conditions. The first event, held on October 14, was the release of a video entitled "Vocational Training and Citizenship," followed by a 30-minute discussion through Zoom.

Contact the SSA Department at (440) 324-2366 or email Jaclina Rush at jrush@murrayridgecenter.org for more information. Funding for the project was provided through the Myrtle Endowment Fund of the Community Foundation of Lorain County.



Top: **Angel Rivera**

Center: **Diana Clement**
and **Tim Dammeyer**

Right: **Diana Clement**

MY LIFE, MY RIGHTS KNOWING MY RIGHTS Video Training Series

Join the Lorain County Board of DD as we explore the rights of adults with developmental disabilities. Over the coming months, we will discuss topics on housing, daily choices, health, relationships and more! Check the Murray Ridge Facebook page or our website for the Zoom link. Contact Jaclina Rush at (440) 324-2366 or jrush@murrayridgecenter.org for more information.

Upcoming Event Dates

January 7, 2021 from 1-2 PM
Advocating for Yourself

January 21, 2021 from 1-2 PM
Living Conditions

February 4, 2021 from 1-2 PM
Sexuality, Bullying, and Change

February 18, 2021 from 1-2 PM
Decision Making

View past topics on the Murray Ridge Center website
<http://www.murrayridgecenter.org/health-and-news-alerts/>

Contact: **Jaclina Rush** at
(440) 324-2366 or
jrush@murrayridgecenter.org

Sponsored by: Lorain County Board of
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Flu Shots are Important - Now More than Ever

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has emphasized the added importance of getting a flu vaccine during the 2020-2021 flu season because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While it is unclear how the pandemic will affect the flu season, CDC is preparing for COVID-19 and seasonal flu to spread at the same time. Co-circulation could place a tremendous burden on our health care system and result in many illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths. Getting a flu vaccine is something easy that people can do to protect themselves and their loved ones and to help reduce the spread of flu this fall and winter.

Flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19. But vaccination has many other benefits and is part of a comprehensive public health strategy to reduce the burden of flu, which can flatten the curve of respiratory illnesses overall, help protect essential workers from flu, and preserve medical resources for care of patients with COVID-19. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has been very vocal about the importance of flu shots - especially this year. "While the flu can be deadly on its own, we also are concerned that Ohioans who get both the flu and COVID-19 at the same time could become severely, if not fatally, ill. Our youngest and oldest Ohioans, those who are pregnant, those in long-term care facilities, and those with chronic health conditions may be especially susceptible to severe illness or complications from the flu."

As long as flu viruses are circulating, vaccination can continue - even in January or later. The CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older be vaccinated against flu. It protects the person getting vaccinated and the people around them. Flu vaccines have been shown to prevent flu illness and reduce the risk of hospitalizations and deaths. Flu vaccination is proven to help protect pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions while reducing the burden of flu on our communities and health care system. This year, especially, it will be most important to protect those at higher risk for flu complications. Many of these people are also at high risk for COVID-19 illness or serious outcomes. It is also important for caregivers and essential workers to protect themselves and those around them from flu by getting a flu vaccine.

For more flu information from the CDC, go to: [cdc.gov/flu/](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/)

For flu information from Lorain County Public Health, go to loraincountyhealth.com/flu



National Disability Employment Awareness Month Observed in October



James Peters

For many years, **James Peters** has received assistance from the Murray Ridge Supported Employment Department with honing skills on supervised work crews; securing employment by local businesses; and meeting the expectations of the businesses that have hired him through the use of Murray Ridge job coaching, follow-along services, and transportation assistance. James began attending the Adult Day Program at the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center (EOVC) in 2001. He has excelled in his job training at our Adult Day Center, and in Murray Ridge-supervised community-based group work sites, primarily performing janitorial services. Among the many sites at which he has worked are the Murray Ridge Service and Support Administration (SSA) Building, Splash Zone, Avon and Sheffield Municipal Buildings, Lorain County Jail, Lorain Port Authority, First Church in Oberlin, Traq Performance, Cuyahoga Vending, Hickman and Lowder, Lake Erie Crushers, Amherst Township Hall, Amherst Cinema, Oberlin ODOT, and Green Impressions. James also was employed by Oberlin College last year as a dining area attendant and, since the COVID shutdown, he received assistance from our Supported Employment Department to become employed by the Elyria Pizza Hut. He has been doing so well at Pizza Hut that he was offered an additional day to work! In October he was also scheduled to begin participating through Murray Ridge on a work crew at AVI Foodsystems at Oberlin College. When asked about his jobs, James says he loves working! Thank you James for being a productive and valued member of Lorain County's workforce.

Murray Ridge Center was once again pleased to participate in NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH — an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. We are proud to salute the Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities who are part of the local workforce, and the local businesses that provide jobs for these individuals. Through our 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. Anyone interested in employing someone with a developmental disability can call our Supported Employment Program at (440) 324-4993.

Dana Phillips began working at Wesleyan Village in Elyria as a unit helper in September 2008. In December 2019 she was transferred to the activity department as an activity aide. She loves her job, as her new position allows her to interact in a direct care capacity with the residents. When family supports are not available, she uses Uber to get to and from work independently. Dana is a valued team member at Wesleyan Village. Her positive attitude, pleasant demeanor and personal appearance on the job are noticed by all she comes in contact with. She is agreeable to working extended shifts or extra shifts when needed. In fact, earlier this year she received a small bonus (a \$10 Giant Eagle gift card) from the Wesleyan Village Human Resources Department to acknowledge her team spirit . . . and her direct supervisor, Barb Hopkins, also bought her lunch. Dana is a 2008 Elyria High school graduate and she also attended the Lorain County JVS Job Training Program. She lives at home in Elyria with her mother Mable Phillips.

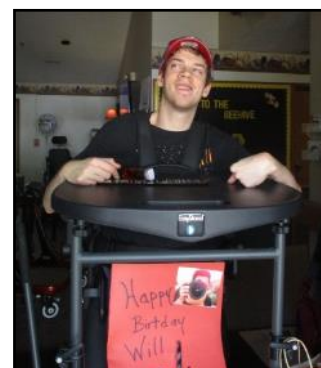


Dana Phillips



LOVC Provides Consumers with Special Birthday Surprises

Lorain Opportunity Vocational Center (LOVC) staff have been surprising some of our Adult Program Participants on their birthdays. Staff have been dropping off hand-made birthday cards and other goodies. The cards are decorated with the individuals' likes and are signed by all LOVC staff. The birthday cards and visits let our consumers know that we are thinking of them. These birthday celebrations help to lift everyone's spirits.



Top left: **Moses Velez**

Top right: Some of the festive birthday cards.

Above left: **Randy Yeary** and his mom, **Treva**

Above center: Staff member **Sheila Amerla**

Above right: **Will Foster**

Left: **Randy Yeary** (center) with staff members

Sheila Amerla and **Mary Wright**

Below left: **Erika Kaminski** and staff member **Sheila Amerla**

Below right: **Teauna McFadden** and her mom, **Georgia**



Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

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