



MurrayRidgeCenter  
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

# The Murray Ridge Courier

March 2021

## March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Every March, Murray Ridge Center joins local, state, and national agencies to recognize **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month** — a time for all of us to celebrate the unique and vital contributions that individuals with developmental disabilities make in our communities. It's also a perfect time to share our agency's commitment to educate local residents about the important role individuals with developmental disabilities play throughout our community as volunteers, co-workers, citizens, neighbors and friends.



Murray Ridge is a provider of services; and plans, funds, and monitors services provided by other agencies and independent providers to people with developmental disabilities. Through the services and support offered by Murray Ridge Center, thousands of **children and adults** with developmental disabilities have had the opportunity to develop critical skills, expand their vocational horizons, and receive necessary care.

## COVID Can't Stop Creative Fundraising



Each March for more than 10 years, Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center program participant **Jesse Frisch** has captured the spirit of St. Patty's Day by dressing up as a leprechaun and making the rounds at several Murray Ridge facilities to collect donations for one of his favorite causes — Friendship Animal Protective League in Elyria. Although COVID put a damper on Jesse's 'in-person' fundraising activities this year, he didn't let that stop him.

This March, Jesse donned his festive green costume (left) and shot a video appeal for donations to the APL. Back in December, Jesse transformed into Santa Claus (below) to record a similar fundraising message. Jesse's example is just one of many that shows how people with developmental disabilities are highly motivated to give back within our community. Here's wishing Jesse the 'Luck of the Irish' as he raises funds for a very worthy cause!





***To thank the Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) of Lorain County, the Murray Ridge Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department has produced a video incorporating DSPs from many different backgrounds and organizations. The video highlights agency and independent providers and the number of years they have delivered services to Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities. Thank you to all DSPs for their continued dedication! To view the video, go to <https://vimeo.com/518631897>***



**Your mental health is just as important as your physical health.**

**COVID CareLine:**  
**1-800-720-9616**

Help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week

#IN THIS TOGETHER  
Ohio



## A Sweet Time Had by All at LOVC



Thanks to Lorain Opportunity/Vocational Center (LOVC) Manager **Jill Camp** for sharing the news that LOVC staff recently baked cookies, made frosting and divided it all up so that consumers could safely participate in cookie decorating fun.

Pictured during this sweet activity are:

Right: **Nick Perez** showing one of the 'finished products'

Left: Staff member **Erin Leverknight** (far left) with consumers **Sarina Fries, Ken Kiser** and **Emilie Grosel** giving a 'thumbs-up' to the fun activity




## New Program Planned to Help Young Adults with Social Skills

Congratulations to Murray Ridge Speech and Language Pathologist **Jennifer Hakko** for recently completing her certification to deliver an evidence-based program from UCLA, PEERS® - Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills for Young Adults.

Murray Ridge Supported Employment staff is currently providing recommendations for a limited class (12 participants) that will run from the week of July 5 until just before the agency's winter break in December. Young adults will be taught social skills through direct instruction, discussion and role-play demonstrations, and then practice these skills during group socialization activities. Social coaches, familiar family members and friends will attend separate sessions and be taught how to assist young adults in making and keeping friends.


For the first 2021 session, this class will be offered virtually through Zoom on an evening that works best for the group as a whole. Upon successful completion, this program will be offered again in 2022. Anyone interested should contact Jennifer Hakko at [jhakko@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:jhakko@murrayridgecenter.org)



OhioGuidestone Presents:

### Triple P Positive Parenting Program


NOW AVAILABLE VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE



**Every Monday!**  
9:30am-11:30am

- April 5, 2021 – Dealing with Disobedience
- April 12, 2021 – Managing Fighting and Aggression
- April 19, 2021 Developing a Good Bedtime Routine

Register for as many sessions as you would like! Pick one or come to them all!



Raising children can be stressful. Triple P Positive Parenting Program teaches parents strategies to help manage their children's challenging behaviors, help them learn, and to motivate them to do their best!

**IT'S FREE TO REGISTER! Call Kathleen Donnelly 440.260.6468 or email [kathleen.donnelly@ohioguidestone.org](mailto:kathleen.donnelly@ohioguidestone.org)**  
[www.OhioGuidestone.org](http://www.OhioGuidestone.org)

# DON'T HIBERNATE.

Care for your  
mental &  
physical health  
-- stay active.



Places to physically and mentally recharge in Lorain County.

## AMHERST

Beaver Creek Reservation, 913 N Lake St.



## AVON LAKE

Miller Road Park, 33760 Lake Rd.

## ELYRIA

Cascade Park, 387 Furnace St.

## LAGRANGE

Carlisle Reservation, 12882 Diagonal Rd.

## LORAIN

Day's Dam, 2720 East 31st St.



## NORTH RIDGEVILLE

South Central Park, 7565 Avon Belden Rd.  
Shady Drive Complex, 37077 Shady Dr.



## PENFIELD

Penfield Recreational Park, 40756 State Route 18



## WELLINGTON

Downtown Sidewalks, 115 Willard Memorial Sq.



*Locations with a snowplow are committed to clearing their  
paths during snowy weather.*



**Lorain County  
Public Health**  
For the Health of Us All

Find free fitness videos at  
[united we sweat.org](https://unitedwesweat.org)



## Consumer Profile — Meet Thomas Djordjevic

Thomas lives in Avon Lake with his parents. He also has two brothers, Greg and Charlie. Thomas feels it is important to have his family involved in his life and is most happy when he is helping others! Thomas is a big movie fan, and he especially enjoys Marvel movies! He has a huge collection of movies. He also enjoys listening to music. Thomas is a lover of sports and is a HUGE New York Yankees fan. He enjoys going to the Metro Park and going to the YMCA to work out.

Thomas has a Level One Waiver and is supported by his **Murray Ridge Service and Support Administrator (SSA)**, Robert DeVenny. Robert helps Thomas with the development of his Individual Service Plan (ISP) which lists the services and supports that assist Thomas with living his life the way he chooses. Robert also oversees Thomas' services and keeps his ISP up-to-date as Thomas's life ambitions change and evolve.



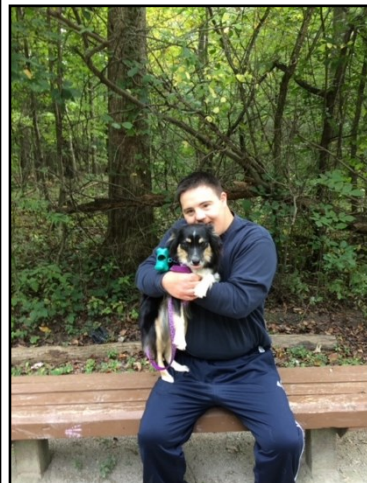
**Thomas showing off his Yankees Pride!**



**Thomas loves superhero movies. Here he is wearing a 'Super Tom' shirt made by a family friend.**

Thomas uses his waiver to attend the **LakeShore Adult Center** program on Monday through Friday. LakeShore is located in the **Force Sports** center in Rocky River. According to its website, "In 1969, Patricia Wilhelm and Fred Jennings started a camp to help reinforce academics over the summer break for students who struggle at school, naming it LakeShore Day Camp. LakeShore continues to run summer camps and activities throughout the school year." LakeShore Adult Center opened in July 2017. LakeShore's goal is to "serve adults with disabilities so that all individuals have the potential to expand their opportunities and feel accomplished at home, at work, and in the community. Individuals are empowered to initiate and act upon personal choices in a supportive setting, to build a unique schedule of activities, and to acquire skills that will be useful in their daily lives." Thomas works on developing his vocational skills while

attending LakeShore Adult Center. He participated in the "Money Matters" program where he worked together with his peers at a mini coffee shop, learning about money and receiving/giving correct change. He has also worked at other various job sites including cleaning at the Force Sports Center and helping to package boxes. One of Thomas's future goals is to get a job in the community. He has been working hard to develop his vocational skills with the help of LakeShore Adult Center staff in order to make this goal a reality!



**Thomas enjoying the metro parks with his brother's dog, Bella**

When he is not working, Thomas likes to have fun with his friends at work! He enjoys coffee time where he can relax and socialize with his friends. Since LakeShore is located in the Force Sports center, Thomas has access to an indoor soccer field. He enjoys going to the soccer field with his friends to run around and play kickball! Thomas also really enjoys when LakeShore has a therapy dog visit! He also looks forward to going out into the community with his friends and staff at LakeShore.

Thomas also receives Homemaker Personal Care services from his independent providers, Larry and Kristine Schuman, through his Level One waiver. He likes spending time with his providers out in his community. His favorite things to do with Larry and Kristine are going to local restaurants, attending sporting events, going bowling, seeing movies or plays, and walking and hiking in the Metro Park. Thomas is a hard-working, fun-loving guy who is enjoying his life and doing the things that make him the happiest!

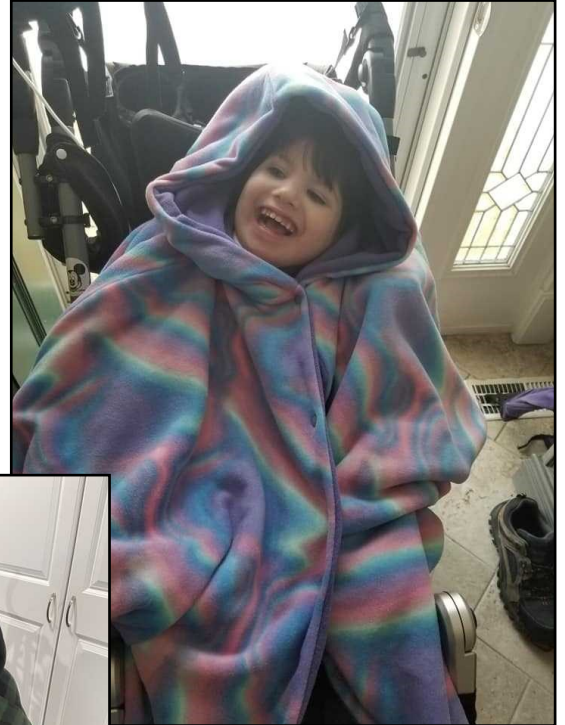


**At LakeShore Adult Center by the list of available activities at the center**

## Elyria Elks Provide Ponchos for School Students

The **Elyria Elks Club** recently wanted to purchase something special for students at Murray Ridge School, but what should they buy? After a brainstorming session between Elks representative **Cindy Marks** and school staff, Ponchos for Pals was the answer.

According to school Supervisor **Stacie Starr**, "The original thought had been to purchase coats – but with many students in wheelchairs, getting a winter coat on and off is often a difficult chore, especially when negotiating chair harnesses and Hoyer safety belts. Ponchos have proven to be much more practical – they are easy to use, cover the front and back of a wheelchair, and are perfect for those cold and wet Ohio days!" Thank you Elyria Elks Club for such a thoughtful and heartwarming donation to the students of Murray Ridge School!



Pictured at home modeling their brand-new ponchos are three students from teacher **Kristi Zgrabik's** classroom.

Above right:  
**Scarlett Wallace**

Left:  
**Calvin Kaminski**

Right:  
**Wyatt Bathurst**



## Program Participant Carries On With Comedy During COVID

Congratulations to **Audrey Costilow** and the unique comedy troupe to which she belongs - 'The Improvaneers' - for recently being featured in a story on Channel 3 News. The Improvaneers, created by Medina resident **Rob Snow**, is an improvisational comedy group made up entirely of people with Down syndrome. According to the news story, live stage performances of The Improvaneers dried up when the pandemic hit - however, the group continued to carry on by creating online classes. Audrey's Service and Support Administrator, **Joshua Mercado**, said that Audrey hasn't skipped a beat during COVID. "She is really impressive," he said. "Audrey works at Mercy Hospital (through our Supported Employment program), volunteers at Amherst Schools, does BuddyUp tennis and has really thrived during COVID by teaching improv to others online."



Photo by Rob Snow



**Audrey Costilow**, pictured above, and also shown at left (fifth from the left) with The Improvaneers at a pre-pandemic performance.



# What You Can Do Post-Vaccine . . . and When

**From the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) - Updated Mar. 9, 2021** COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting you from getting sick. Based on what we know about COVID-19 vaccines, people who have been fully vaccinated can start to do some things that they had stopped doing because of the pandemic. We're still learning how vaccines will affect the spread of COVID-19. After you've been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you should keep taking precautions in public places like wearing a mask, staying 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces until we know more.



**Have You Been Fully Vaccinated?** People are considered fully vaccinated: 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, like the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, like Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine. If it has been less than 2 weeks since your shot, or if you still need to get your second dose, you are NOT fully protected. Keep taking all prevention steps until you are fully vaccinated.

**What's Changed** If you've been fully vaccinated: You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask. You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household (for example, visiting with relatives who all live together) without masks, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. If you've been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms. However, if you live in a group setting (like a correctional or detention facility or group home) and are around someone who has COVID-19, you should still stay away from others for 14 days and get tested, even if you don't have symptoms.

**What Hasn't Changed** For now, if you've been fully vaccinated: You should still take steps to protect yourself and others in many situations, like wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces. Take these precautions whenever you are: In a public gathering with unvaccinated people from more than one other household; Visiting with an unvaccinated person who is at increased risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 or who lives with a person at increased risk. You should still avoid medium or large-sized gatherings. You should still delay domestic and international travel. If you do travel, you'll still need to follow CDC requirements and recommendations. You should still watch out for symptoms of COVID-19, especially if you've been around someone who is sick. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should get tested and stay home and away from others. You will still need to follow guidance at your workplace.

**What We Know and What We're Still Learning** We know that COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing COVID-19 disease, especially severe illness and death. We're still learning how effective the vaccines are against variants of the virus that causes COVID-19. Early data show the vaccines may work against some variants but could be less effective against others. We know that other prevention steps help stop the spread of COVID-19, and that these steps are still important, even as vaccines are being distributed. We're still learning how well COVID-19 vaccines keep people from spreading the disease. Early data show that the vaccines may help keep people from spreading COVID-19, but we are learning more as more people get vaccinated. We're still learning how long COVID-19 vaccines can protect people. As we know more, CDC will continue to update our recommendations for both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. Until we know more about those questions, everyone — even people who've had their vaccines — should continue taking basic prevention steps when recommended.

## BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

### The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 6:30 p.m. on February 22, 2021

Board President Beverly Gedid welcomed new Board member Lisa Mager, and made several Board committee appointments. The Board unanimously approved a Platinum Sponsorship of the 2021 Connecting for Kids Lorain County Resource Fair; this event, to be held on Saturday, April 24, is well attended and provides an opportunity for Murray Ridge to get information to families who may benefit from its various programs and services. The Board approved several revisions to the Criteria for Receipt of In-Person Services at the Opportunity and Vocational Centers. Dr. Fisher provided an update on the State biennium budget process currently underway, remarking that the Governor's proposed budget reflects continued emphasis on serving 'multi-system youth,' and that Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Director Jeff Davis presented what was essentially a maintenance budget that continued to reflect past priorities of DODD.

Lorain County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center  
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Elyria, OH 44035

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### Interested Parties Invited to Help With School Wellness Policy

As part of the National School Lunch Program, Murray Ridge School has a Local School Wellness Policy. If you are interested in being involved with the development, implementation, periodic review, and/or updating of this policy, please contact Dann Swift, Director of Educational Services at (440) 329-3760 or [dswift@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:dswift@murrayridgecenter.org).



## News You Can Use

### Connecting For Kids Updates . . .

**March Programs:** There's still time to take part in some of the special programs offered during March by Connecting for Kids. To view the entire March program flyer, go to:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/4a802068201/ca9468ed-626b-4225-9ea3-5ab88f5c7984.pdf>

**Mark Your Calendars:** Murray Ridge Center's Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department and Early Intervention (EI) Program will take part in the **2021 Lorain County Resource Fair**, offering resources for families in Lorain and Western Cuyahoga counties on **Saturday, April 24** (Rain Date: May 8) from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. This is a socially distanced, outdoor event at Lorain County Community College's Courtyard (with a 'Grab and Go' drive-thru option following from 1-3 p.m.)



**Connecting for Kids**

*You're not alone*