

The View From The *Ridge*



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

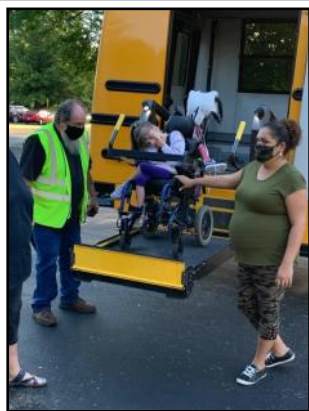
Murray Ridge School Begins a New Year of Classes



Murray Ridge School reopened August 31, featuring two educational options like many other local schools: a hybrid model (in-school two days/remote three days) and a totally online model.

Pictured clockwise from top left are:

- Aide **Matt Rositano** and **Robert (RJ) McGinnis**
- Owen Richardson** and Aide **Vanessa Medina**
- Staff members **Peggy Smith, Stacie Starr** and **Dann Swift**
- Sariah Lugo**
- Bentley Spooner**
- Dann Swift** welcoming **Bentley Spooner**
- Anastasia Teodecki**
- Jose Smith**
- Aide **Martha Hoyt** and **Jose Smith**



'Virtual' Adult Day Services Connects and Showcases Consumers

Murray Ridge's Adult Services Department has received positive feedback about a newer service model called **Virtual Adult Day Support (VADS)** which enables staff to connect with participants who are staying at home during the COVID-19 Pandemic and to teach important skills to and explore interests with these individuals through the Zoom internet application.

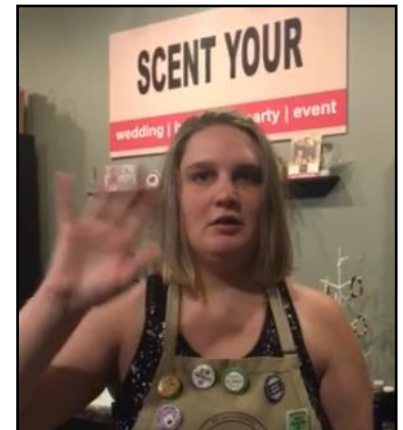
During a recent session held over Zoom, participants talked about program participant **Chelsie Jenkins** (pictured right and below) sharing a video tour of Sandstone Candle Works in Amherst - her family's business where she works. Chelsie has helped out in the candle shop for many years, but with more free time during the closure she has been spending more time helping customers at the shop. She will tell you that the shop and all the employees (including herself) are following all the recommended guidance to keep customers safe and are wearing face masks.

Chelsie has worked with Supported Employment. She is also one of the first program participants with Murray Ridge Center to attend a Project STIR (Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility) training and is now training her peers to be self-advocates. She is one of the founding members of the Self-Advocacy group at Murray Ridge Center and supports new members in finding their voices to speak up for themselves and others.

Chelsie is participating in all four classes offered through Virtual Adult Day Support at Murray Ridge Center: Leisure/Recreation Activities; Self-Advocacy; Physical Fitness; and Socialization/Communication and Community Awareness.



Program participant Chelsie Jenkins was featured in a video tour of her family's candle shop, showing available products and demonstrating mask wearing.



Showcasing Their Artistic Side . . .

Kelly Aston (right), is an accomplished artist who participates in programs at Boots to Grasses Therapeutic Horsemanship program in Berlin Heights. Some of her most special work was commissioned by Boots to Grasses to commemorate their stable of therapy horses and other animals. Many of these works are available for sale at Boots to Grasses as prints, Christmas ornaments, mugs, note cards, t-shirts, sweatshirts, tote bags, and key chains.

Kelly receives referral and linkage services from the Murray Ridge Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department. According to her website - kastonart.com - her mediums include watercolor, acrylic paint, and pencil. She also creates larger works in wheelchair art, painting by using her chair as a brush. Influenced by the world around her, and her disability, the circumstances overlap and help her to create unique artwork that transcends the mere visual. Her style is focused on abstraction and Abstract Impressionism stemming from the acquired knowledge of her body and mind.



Wendy Smitkowski, (left), daughter of Cheryl Smitkowski, owner of The Workshop Art Gallery in Oberlin, has been spending her coronavirus 'stay-at-home time' creating art. Wendy said, "I want to make something pretty and happy to share with everybody."

Wendy has been working with paints, yarns, fabric, glass, rocks and slate to create artwork to share her happiness. Wendy, who displayed her art for sale on Sidewalk Sale Saturday, August 1, in front of The Workshop Art Gallery, is a program participant at Murray Ridge's Oberlin Opportunity/Vocational Center.



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

Just one of the many ways Murray Ridge Center's Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department is helping those we serve during the current pandemic is by providing information about local food banks and assisting families with picking up food.

Pictured (right) is **Kenny Bulfinch**, one of several Lorain County residents who recently obtained food with the help of SSA staff.

Check out the Murray Ridge Center Facebook Page for regular posts about the many food acquisition opportunities available throughout Lorain County.



Tom
Dammeyer



May the Force Be With You . . .

On his way to drop off some paperwork, SSA **Robert DeVenny** decided to pick up some of **Tom Dammeyer's** favorite goodies. Prior to Robert's visit, Tom mentioned his interest in Star Wars. Tom has worked hard during the pandemic to help his mother around the house with various chores, so the surprise from Robert was well-deserved! Robert delivered to Tom a combination of pizza to share, Star Wars books, and Star Wars themed plates (pictured left). Thank you Robert for your commitment to the Lorain County residents and thank you Tom for being awesome. May the force be with you!

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 Begins Cautious Return To Special Olympics Sports with Golf Skills Maintenance Session



Murray Ridge Special Olympics athlete **Ben Lewis** teeing off at Indian Hollow Lake Golf Course in Grafton.

Although Murray Ridge decided not to organize and field Special Olympics Softball and Soccer teams for the 2020 season because of ongoing concerns about the safety of athletes during the COVID-19 Pandemic, a four-week golf skill maintenance program was permitted this year due to it being an individual sport held outdoors which facilitated social distancing.

Golfers and unified partners teed it up at Indian Hollow Lake Golf Course in Grafton in order to keep their golf skills sharp given that there are no regional or state competitions scheduled for the rest of the year. Taking part were: **Ben Lewis** and **Ken Lewis Sr.**; **Ryan Eliason** and **David Eliason**; **John Ahart** and **Don Hartman**; and **Steve Slutzker** and **Shawn Hatcher**. Murray Ridge would like to thank **Doug Gardner** at Indian Hollow Lake Golf Course for their long-time support of our program and athletes.

A screenshot of a website for Barstool Sports x Baker Mayfield merchandise. The page features a banner with the text "BARSTOOL SPORTS x BAKER MAYFIELD" and the Special Olympics Ohio logo. Below the banner are several t-shirts and sweatshirts with various designs, including the number 6 and the name "BAKER MAYFIELD". The website URL "STORE.BARSTOOLSPORTS.COM" is displayed, along with the text "100% OF NET PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO SPECIAL OLYMPICS OHIO".

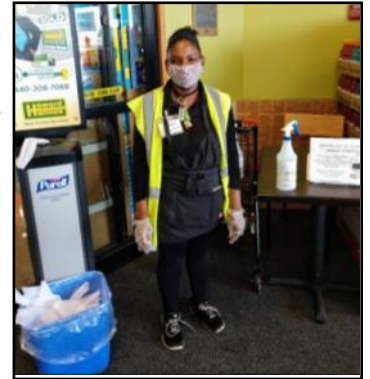
Baker Mayfield gear!

Get limited edition Baker Mayfield merchandise.
100% of proceeds benefit SOOH athletes!

Supported Employment During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Since mid-March, Murray Ridge Supported Employment (SE) staff have offered assistance and resources for those in the SE Program to remain connected with family and friends, and to help ease the frustrations of quarantine. As the economy began to re-open in May, Murray Ridge cautiously resumed support of eligible individuals to participate in community-based work. During the pandemic, our agency's job developer and Vocational Placement Specialists (VPSs) have worked with employers and consumers in a variety of ways.

- Individuals who obtained new jobs in March were unable to start due to COVID-related closures. The SE department assisted with delaying start dates until businesses started working again, and communicated with these employers throughout the closures to keep up-to-date on return dates.
- With individuals who have continued to work during this time, VPSs discussed the changes that their work places were requiring of them due to COVID-19. Challenges that they have had were addressed and ideas about how to deal with those challenges were brainstormed. SE staff also worked with employers to ensure employees understood and were following required safety measures.
- SE staff have periodically responded to individual employer requests for them to help SE Program participants better accept new workplace rules and responsibilities.
- SE staff have continued to assist program participants with updating their resumes, with completing applications, and with scheduling interviews. Interviewing during this time has been mostly virtual, which has required SE staff to assist individuals with accessing the virtual interview and teach them about the specifics of a virtual interview. One individual who worked part-time, primarily at our community-based group employment sites, asked for our help with being hired directly by a local employer. He is now working full-time as an employee of ShurTech Brands through The Reserve Network.
- A number of SE Program participants that were laid off due to COVID-19 were helped to secure other employment. One individual who was laid off obtained a new job at Walmart and then was called back to his other job resulting in him now successfully working two jobs!



Sheila Charlton at Giant Eagle



Scott Stephanchick at Tyson Foods



Top 10 Tips for Parents

During the coronavirus outbreak

- 1 CHILDREN look to adults for guidance.** Keeping your stress in check can help manage kids' worries and anxiety.
- 2 ENCOURAGE children to ask questions and talk about their fears.** This provides parents the chance to give age-appropriate information.
- 3 TEACH children prevention strategies** such as hand-washing and covering coughs. This reduces the risk of infection and gives children a sense of control, which can reduce anxiety.
- 4 ROUTINE and structure are your friends.** Involve children in creating their daily or weekly routine that includes: hygiene, learning, reading, exercise, play, mindfulness, and nutrition
- 5 STAY CONNECTED.** Help kids address isolation and social distancing by writing cards and letters, making crafts, and calling or FaceTiming friends and loved ones.
- 6 FAMILY TIME.** Play board games, cards, checkers, and trivia games. This can help kids feel secure while keeping them connected. Involve kids in sanitizing these items after use.
- 7 USE THE WEB RESPONSIBLY.** Monitor use of social media. There are many online resources for kids to learn. Plan which web sites are appropriate for your children.
- 8 SELF CARE.** Teach children about wellness. Build in time daily for rest and mindfulness activities such as yoga or meditation. Model relaxation techniques like reading a book or a watching a movie.
- 9 BE ACCESSIBLE.** Children need reassurance as the crisis progresses. Be honest and manage expectations. Let them know you are there and will help keep yourself and the family well.
- 10 DON'T PANIC.** The community's response to COVID-19 is evolving daily. Know where to get help and information to help maintain the mental wellness of your children and family.



Ohio

Department of Health
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Sources:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
National Association of School Psychologists and School Nurses - <https://www.nasps.org/News/2020/04/01/Taking-Children-About-COVID-19-Coronavirus-A-Parent-Resource>
American Academy of Pediatrics - <https://www.aap.org/healthychildren/Topics/HealthyLiving/COVID-19-What-Parents-Need-to-Know>
American Psychological Association - <https://www.apa.org/topics/coronavirus>

An Early Intervention 'Virtual' Success Story

We hope you enjoy this testimonial from a local mom regarding Murray Ridge's Early Intervention (EI) Program.

"The stress of being a mom is real. When you have a child who is scaling behind a bit, after a child who is ahead of the charts, can be frustrating. You expect more and it's easier to lose patience. When our Developmental Specialist, Cindy, started to come around, I realized I'm not alone with this. All kids grow at their own pace. Cindy has given us the tools to work with Aiden and help him grow at his pace and allow me to gain the patience with him that he deserves.

We visit almost every two weeks and catch up with life, family, and of course, Aiden's progress. When the shut-down came along, Cindy didn't want to miss a beat with our family. She agreed to keep in contact virtually so we could still have the support we needed. We meaning support for Aiden and Me. When we meet virtually now, things are just as great. We try to do projects with the kids while chatting to keep them involved. I'm so glad she has been there for us, especially during this time of isolation. It really brings joy and happiness to our day!"

Beckey and Aiden Scarborough



Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

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murrayridgecenter.org**

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