

The View From The *Ridge*



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE ... FOR A LIFETIME

Message From the Superintendent



Supt. Amber Fisher

As we ring in a new year ... and a new decade ... we at Murray Ridge remain grateful for your support, and energized to tackle new challenges and work strategically to enhance opportunities for those we serve.

2020 will bring a significant number of new Medicaid waiver enrollments (with 65 new enrollments approved for the year), expanded availability of funds through our Family Support Services Program (see the December 2019 edition of the Courier), and numerous programmatic endeavors. Some areas of concentration in the year ahead will include: development of self-advocacy skills of local citizens with developmental disabilities, and more formal measurement of the effectiveness of associated supports; exploration and integration into person-centered plans of technologies that promote independence and quality of life; pursuit of additional accessible options for transportation to community destinations; and recruitment of a variety of service providers capable of addressing the diverse needs and desires of Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities.

Additionally, we plan to work collaboratively with other organizations on an initiative to promote access of infants and toddlers with developmental delays to formal intervention at the critically important ages of 0-3; and will continue to directly serve hundreds of children and families through our Early Intervention Program. Murray Ridge School, where enrollment in the School Age Program has grown steadily

during the last decade, will remain an option for local students with significant disabilities, and an extraordinary community resource. Meanwhile, support of the transition of Lorain County students with developmental disabilities into rewarding vocational activities will be a focus of our Service & Support Administration (SSA) Department.

In 2019, continuing education as a post-secondary option for people with intellectual disabilities in Lorain County was supported through the establishment of a new program, 'echoingU,' which is operated by Echoing Hills Inc. on the campus of Lorain County Community College; this program will continue into the future. We will continue to focus on expanding community-based employment of, and facilitating community participation by eligible adults. At our Opportunity & Vocational Centers (OVCs), we will continue to facilitate service clubs, and support 'acts of giving back' by those we serve; in 2019, 245 such acts were performed by 193 participants at the Murray Ridge OVCs. Hats off to local citizens with developmental disabilities for so enthusiastically helping others in need within our community!

It is a pleasure and a privilege to serve such wonderful individuals, and to work with the incredible staff and partners of Murray Ridge. We deeply appreciate, also, the many providers and local businesses that work with and employ those we serve. Happy new year to all of you, and thank you for all you do to support the mission of Murray Ridge Center!

Amber Fisher
Superintendent

Triumph through the Challenges Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Who should attend?

This course series is for nurses, social workers, counselors, physicians, educators, parents, and caregivers who work with individuals that may have had prenatal exposure to alcohol/drugs.

Learn about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and how to best work with those affected in order to reach his/her fullest potential.

Gather useful tips and local resources!

Discover ways to succeed!

2020 Spring Course Series

Evening Sessions:

April 21, 2020: Section 1, 6-9 p.m.

April 23, 2020: Section 2, 6-9 p.m.

April 28, 2020: Section 3, 6-9 p.m.

April 30, 2020: Section 4, 6-9 p.m.

Location:

Murray Ridge Center LCBDD
Lorain County Board of Developmental
Disabilities Service & Support Administration Bldg.
9740 Murray Ridge Road, Elyria, 44035
Building at the rear of Murray Ridge School
*Evening parking available at Murray Ridge SSA
lot. Please enter in back door.

Register

Contact : Kathy Bevaque, M.Ed., D.S. w/LCBDD
(440) 284-3655

e-mail: kbevaque@murrayridgecenter.org

No fee to attend. Space is limited.

Bring your own personal refreshments and food.

Facilitator:

Kathleen Bevaque, M.Ed., D.S. w/LCBDD



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Series Details

- **Section 1:** FASD Basic Facts; Characteristics; Chronological vs. Developmental Age
- **Section 2:** Neurological Issues & Behaviors of FASD: Coping Skills
- **Section 3:** Developing Effective Strategies for FASD: Advocacy & Finding Resources
- **Section 4:** Advocacy in Schools; Behavioral Strategy; Daily Living & Future Planning for Individuals with FASD

Contact Hours Available

- Social workers, counselors, and chemical dependency RCH: provided by the ADAS Board of Lorain County
- Developmental Disability hours provided by Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities, now including EI .
- Certificate of Attendance for contact hours
- Ohio Approved Specialized Training for Early Childhood SUTQ, ODE, ODH (pending)



Consumer Profile: Martha Lombeida



Martha and her family on vacation in Corsica.

Martha lives in South Amherst with her family and has lived in Lorain County for most of her life! Her family is originally from Ecuador. Martha is a very active and social person. She always has a positive attitude. She is easy going and always willing to help others. Martha loves knitting, crocheting, coloring, and playing her violin!

Martha loves traveling with her family every chance she gets! She especially enjoys going to New York, Ecuador and Vienna, Austria, where her brother and his family live! Martha is supported by her **Murray Ridge Service and Support Administrator** Tracy Dunlap.

Tracy helps Martha with the development of her Individual Service Plan (ISP); Tracy monitors Martha's services, and helps to keep her plan up-to-date as Martha's needs and wants change. Tracy helped Martha get involved in echoingU.



Martha enjoys attending echoingU at LCCC.

echoingU, which is located on the **Lorain County Community College (LCCC)** campus, is a program offered by **Echoing Hills Village, Inc.** echoingU's mission is to "enable young people with special needs to achieve their dreams through experience-based learning, community integration, and social and professional networking." echoingU is a four-year program designed "to successfully catapult young adults into the next season of their adult life with a purpose and meaning. echoingU has a copyrighted curriculum that enhances differentiating instruction and provides person centered learning."



Being in the water is great fun for Martha!

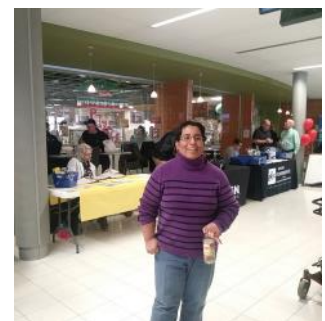
At echoingU, Martha attends a variety of classes to learn independent living, social skills, and job/career readiness skills. She enjoys participating in various classes including job skills, money skills, communication, independent living, and college prep classes. Martha's dream is to go to college and work in an office setting. The echoingU program is helping her to learn the skills that she needs to move toward achieving her goals. She is very happy to have this opportunity!

Martha loves being active. While at echoingU, she enjoys "Fun Fridays" when the class goes out into the community for a variety of activities including going out to eat and bowling! Martha is also a member of the Mercy Recreation Center and the Splash Zone Aquatic Center and attends both regularly. Her favorite exercises are Zumba and water aerobics! She is an active member of her church and takes violin lessons. Martha is an avid tennis player and swimmer and has been awarded numerous medals while participating in the **Murray Ridge Special Olympics program!**

Martha is living her life to the fullest, having fun and doing what makes her happy!

Martha makes the most of every day at echoingU.

In addition to enjoying her classes, she takes advantage of the LCCC Library and socializes at the Student Lounge.





Gajdos Receives Volunteer of the Year Award

Congratulations to Murray Ridge Board President **Bob Gajdos** (pictured left, with Superintendent **Amber Fisher**) for receiving this year's Marilyn Hupfer 'Volunteer of the Year' Award. Bob has spent countless hours on the Murray Ridge board working on behalf of Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities. He is also the father of sons with developmental disabilities and has entertained residents of our Meister Road Home over the holidays by singing and playing the guitar. Thank you Bob for your tireless efforts on behalf of Murray Ridge and the individuals we serve!

Exceptional Service Award Presented to Larry Donaldson



Pictured, from left, are: Ben Lewis's parents, **Ken and Kathi Lewis**, **Ben Lewis**, **Larry Donaldson**, Board Member **Dan White** and Superintendent **Amber Fisher**.

The latest recipient of Murray Ridge's quarterly Exceptional Service Award is **Larry Donaldson**, a driver in our Supported Employment Department.

The nomination letter reads, "Our son Ben is in Community Employment at Dunkin Donuts and has the most wonderful person, Larry Donaldson, driving him to and from his job. Larry always greets Ben with a smile and truly cares for Ben as a person. Larry always makes sure he is in the house before he pulls away. I couldn't think of another person more deserving of this award."

Nominations Sought for Exceptional Service Awards

Do you know a Murray Ridge employee whose work efforts reflect remarkable dedication and have significantly contributed to the well being of people with developmental disabilities? Nominate that employee 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. Please include a brief paragraph outlining your reasons for nominating the employee. 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 cvasco@murrayridgecenter.org

OOVC Holds 50th Anniversary Celebration For Two Consumers



The Oberlin Opportunity/Vocational Center (OOVC) recently held a 50th Anniversary Celebration for two consumers, **Tom Zbydnowski** and **Mary Gressler**. Both have received services from Murray Ridge since 1969 when both attended Murray Ridge School.

The honorees were presented special plaques by Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, commemorating their years with Murray Ridge. Staff members shared a few fond memories, and family members and a residential provider attended the special event. Flower bouquets, cake and punch rounded out the special event.

Athletes, Coaches, Volunteers, Community Supporters Recognized at Murray Ridge Special Olympics Banquet

More than 200 athletes, including some 2019 State Champions, were recently recognized for their accomplishments by Murray Ridge Center at its annual Special Olympics Banquet at Lorain County Community College.

Following a keynote address by former WEOL Radio personality and new 'voice of the Cavs' **Tim Alcorn**, Murray Ridge Special Olympics Coordinator **Shawn Hatcher** presented the following special awards and recognitions:

- **Coach of the Year – Brian Chutes** (a 20-year veteran coach of track and field, softball, basketball, bowling and aquatics)
- **Sportsmanship and Kindness Award – Chad Kothe** (for "having fun, trying his best, being a good teammate, and, being a good opponent to his competitors")
- **Hall of Fame Inductee – Carl Jeans** (for his many years of success in basketball, softball, and various track and field events)
- **2019 Modified Volleyball State Champions – Kim Herman, Chad Kothe, Megan Craig, Jeff Torres, Douglas McCartney, Ryan Brown, Joseph Bellottie, Eric Johnson, Kurt Caris and Noah Griffiths**
- **2019 4x100 Relay State Champions – Elena Reinhold, Sarah Ward, Kayla Stearns and Mark Lacko**

Also recognized at the banquet were all the athletes and coaches who participated in various sports throughout the year, volunteers who helped out in various ways, and three local businesses and organizations who have been long-time supporters of Murray Ridge Center's Special Olympics program:

- **Rebman Recreation** – for supporting Murray Ridge's Special Olympics bowling program for many years
- **Amherst Athletic Association** – for providing two softball fields as Murray Ridge's 'home field' for games
- **Shoreway Sports & Graphics** – for donating and updating Murray Ridge's Special Olympics sports banners



Keynote Speaker Tim Alcorn



Special Olympics Coordinator Shawn Hatcher and Brian Chutes



Shawn Hatcher and honoree Chad Kothe



Shawn Hatcher and honoree Carl Jeans



Modified Volleyball Gold Medalists: Front (l-r), Megan Craig, Kim Herman, Ryan Brown, Joe Bellottie, Chad Kothe. Back (l-r), Noah Griffiths, Coach Jennifer Coleman, Kurt Caris, Coach Rick Rovere, Douglas McCartney, with Shawn Hatcher. (Not present for the photo, team members Eric Johnson and Jeff Torres).



4x100 Relay Gold Medalists (l-r), Elena Reinhold, Sarah Ward, Kayla Stearns, and Mark Lacko with Hall of Fame Inductee Carl Jeans.

Holiday Happenings 2019



'A Charlie Brown Christmas' was a popular theme over the holidays at Murray Ridge! **Pictured above left**, are scenes from the school's Intermediate Wing Christmas play. **Pictured above right**, are Sharon's Signers -- a sign language choir for people with disabilities which recently performed A Charlie Brown Christmas-themed show at Murray Ridge Center's Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center, with several Murray Ridge performers taking part.



Above right: Rachael Oser's senior class and staff recently took a field trip to Big Lots to buy items to donate to the Blessing House and Animal Protective League. The class has been talking about the importance of giving to others. The field trip also allowed the class to work on communication, social and money skills. The students ended the shopping trip with lunch at Pizza Hut.



Left, top and below: Students from Murray Ridge School who have worked this semester with Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SIHP), an organization that builds and delivers beds to children in need, were recently treated to lunch by Roger Dorsey, the founder of the Lorain County Chapter of SIHP. The students enjoyed a catered lunch from Bob Evans. The students also each got to pick out a stuffed animal as a gift.

More Holiday Happenings . . .



The Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center (EOVC) recently held a holiday decorating contest featuring many festive and creative themes.

The winner of the contest was Area B-2, which featured a full nativity scene (pictured right), including a real miniature horse!

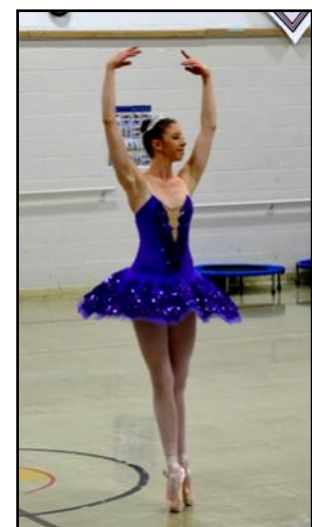
Another area, C-3, was decorated in a 'Christmas Around the World' theme. Pictured left are (l-r) Adult Program Aides **Nicole Skerik** and **Aaron Simmons**, along with one of the contest judges, Administrative Assistant **Michelle Trupo**.



Left: One of the many Christmas 'traditions' at Murray Ridge Center is when 'Santa' **Jesse Frisch**, a program participant at the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center, visits various agency facilities to collect donations for the Make-a-Wish Foundation. One of Santa's stops was to visit **Sherry Hardin** and **Carol Greive** in the Payroll department at the Administration Building.



Above: The Murray Ridge Choraleers had a great time spreading holiday joy in the community with performances for eight different area groups. Pictured (front row, l-r) are: **Tom Altman**, **Tim Quisenberry**, **Steve Mendak**, **Alyssa DeAngelis**, and **Kista Atkins**. Back row (l-r) are: **James Wilson**, **John Hanshumaker**, **Shasta Knarr**, and **Carol Anderson**.



Above left and center: North Pointe Ballet once again visited Murray Ridge School to work with students and perform selections from 'The Nutcracker.' **Above right:** Speech Therapist **Becky Farmer** was the winner of an 'Ugliest Christmas Outfit' Contest at Murray Ridge School. Shown congratulating Becky on her 'win' is teacher **Kristin Dickerhoff**.

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
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Elyria, OH 44035

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murrayridgecenter.org

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