

MONTHLY



# MURRAY RIDGE COURIER

JAN 2022



Travis Thompson from Ohio School Plan presenting Business Director Gregory Westgate with a \$2,500 check for Murray Ridge Center !

## AGENCY AWARDS

### Insurance Award

Murray Ridge Center Receives

The Mike Davis

Best Practice Award!

Murray Ridge Center is proud to have received the **Mike Davis Best Practice Award** from Ohio School Plan, the insurance provider for our agency. Last May, representatives from Ohio School Plan came out to perform a routine risk analysis of our agency, and **Greg Westgate**, our Director of Business, showed them a template used by his department to help ensure that our vendors are complying with their contracts' insurance provisions. They were so impressed with the process that they asked if Ohio School Plan could share the template with its other clients, and nominated Murray Ridge Center for the Best Practice Award



Behavior Analyst **Sherry Lacko-Chutes**, Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, C.A.R.E.S. Award recipient **James T. Walther**, Judge Walther's Bailiff, Deputy Court Administrator **Jessica Moore**, and SSA Manager **Angela Toich**

### C.A.R.E.S. Award Presented

C.A.R.E.S. stands for Community Awareness Recognition Education and Service. Each year, Murray Ridge Center recognizes an individual or organization that has gone 'above and beyond the call of duty' in helping people with developmental disabilities. The 2021 C.A.R.E.S. award was given to the honorable **James T. Walther**, Lorain County's Probate Judge. Of Judge Walther, Murray Ridge Behavior Analyst **Sherry Lacko-Chutes** says, "his thoughtful, committed desire to learn and truly listen to what is being said is what has made a huge impact on Lorain County citizens both with and without disabilities." Congratulations to Judge Walther!

## EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED



Congratulations to **Sherry Lacko-Chutes**, who has been awarded this quarter's Exceptional Service Award! Sherry is a Behavior Analyst who works in our Service & Support Administration Department. One of Sherry's important responsibilities is evaluating and assisting caregivers to address very challenging behaviors. Her nominator, the honorable James T. Walther, Lorain County's Probate Judge, says Sherry "always comes prepared with multiple resources and possible solutions when working out difficult situations," and that she "is an astounding advocate and truly cares for the individuals she serves here in Lorain County."

Sherry has worked at Murray Ridge Center since 2011, and she brings a lot of experience to her role as a Behavioral Analyst. Heather Gurchik, Sherry's supervisor, says "She is dedicated, observant, compassionate, knowledgeable, resourceful, and, overall, an amazing person." Congratulations, Sherry!



I have witnessed the dedication and relentless effort Sherry puts forth on behalf of consumers.

-James T. Walther

## FREE DENTAL SERVICES!

Lorain Community College has a dental department that offers free preventative dental hygiene services, which includes a free cleaning and x-rays. This is a great resource for Murray Ridge program participants and individuals with developmental disabilities in Lorain County!

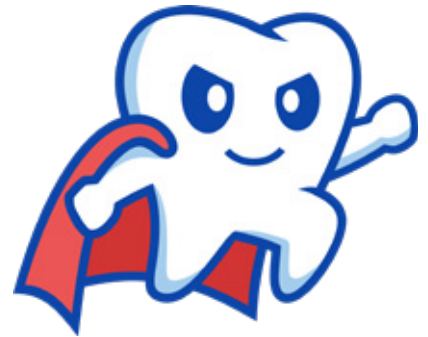
**The Dental Clinic is open:**

**Tuesdays 4:00pm-8:00pm**

**Wednesdays 8:00am-12:00pm and 1:00pm-5:00pm**

\*Please note this service only includes cleaning and x-rays (no fillings or treatments).

**Interested? Make an appointment by calling Cheri Hilenski (239) 560-7540**



## ADVOCACY WEDNESDAYS



Every Wednesday at 11AM, the Ohio Self-Determination Association (OSDA) and We Thrive Together hold an hour-long virtual meeting to discuss self-advocacy and awareness issues within Ohio's disability community. The discussions are very informative and are a valuable resource for our DD community! Some recent sessions included discussing assistive technology, learning how to make one's voice heard in local and state politics, and even a talk given by a published author who has autism. If you'd like to participate, be sure to tune in each Wednesday!

**Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8010396858>**



## THREE REMARKABLE INDIVIDUALS!

## Community Engagement

At Murray Ridge Center, one of our primary goals is to promote greater community inclusion of people with developmental disabilities. This can come in many forms: volunteering, community employment, arts and culture, etc. Here are three of our program participants who have made remarkable achievements in their communities!



Matthew Melvin on air!

## Rafael Bonet

Rafael participates in one-on-one karate classes each Monday at Tracy's karate Studio in Amherst Ohio. Rafael has really taken to martial arts, and his training has actually helped improve his walking ability! Rafael lives and receives residential services with two other gentlemen. He enjoys shopping, going out to lunch, and hanging out with his friends. Rafael goes to Church on the North Coast, where he is very popular with the congregation. Rafael is also a big fan of the Marines, and he likes to dress in military gear. If you were to ask Rafael what he wants to be, he would say a Marine.



Linda Uldrich smiling big for the camera

## Matthew Melvin

Matt has worked for Boom Radio, Lorain County Community College's student radio station for years as part of the college's work study program. More recently, he was hired as part-time station manager and DJ at the station. A highlight of his time at the station was hosting a phone interview with Ian Anderson, the lead singer and flautist from Jethro Tull! Living in his own fully-adapted apartment, Matt handles his own finances, acts as his own authorized representative, and does his own budget. Matt prides himself on being as independent as he can possibly be, and he works everyday to maintain and develop that independence.



Rafael Bonet with his karate instructor Mike Duncall

## Linda Uldrich

Linda has worked at Giant Eagle for an impressive 29 years! In fact, she was the first person that Murray Ridge Center assisted to secure a job with a local employer. A Murray Ridge School alumni, Linda lives with her father, and her siblings help her get to and from work. In her free time, Linda enjoys watching M.A.S.H., The Price is Right, Perry Mason, Matlock, Let's Make A Deal, and The Match Game with her dad. She also enjoys playing card games with her sister. She regularly participates in volunteering opportunities, and is an auxiliary member at the American Legion Post 118.

# HOLIDAY SPIRIT AT MURRAY RIDGE!

## Christmas Festivities at the OVCs!



**Bud Opel and Joyce Cox** decked out in their holiday best!



**Nick Perez, Alexshawn Averett and Ernest Harrell** singing Christmas karaoke!

### Oberlin OVC

The holiday spirit was in full swing at our Opportunity/Vocational Center in Oberlin this year! Program participants celebrated the season by decorating the facility, making gingerbread houses, playing Christmas themed games, and more!

### Lorain OVC

LOVC held its Christmas party on December 16th! Everyone was full of Christmas spirit, and Santa and his Elf even came to visit. Among the various activities were Christmas bingo, karaoke, cookie decorating, Christmas movies, Christmas (temporary) tattoos, and a dance contest. Congratulations to **Carl Jeans, Robert Serrano, and Tyler Watkins** for winning the dance contest!

### Elyria OVC

Each year, the Elyria OVC holds a "Santa Shop", where consumers can go to get their loved ones gifts for Christmas. In addition to donated items, Adult Program Instructor Penni Shuster finds all sorts of fun things for the shop, including candles, figurines, bobble heads, and more. Anyone can donate to the Santa Shop, and the sales proceeds go toward the next year's Santa shop. There is something for everyone in the Santa shop!



**Penni Shuster and Michael Hawley** checking out some gifts at the EOVC Santa Shop

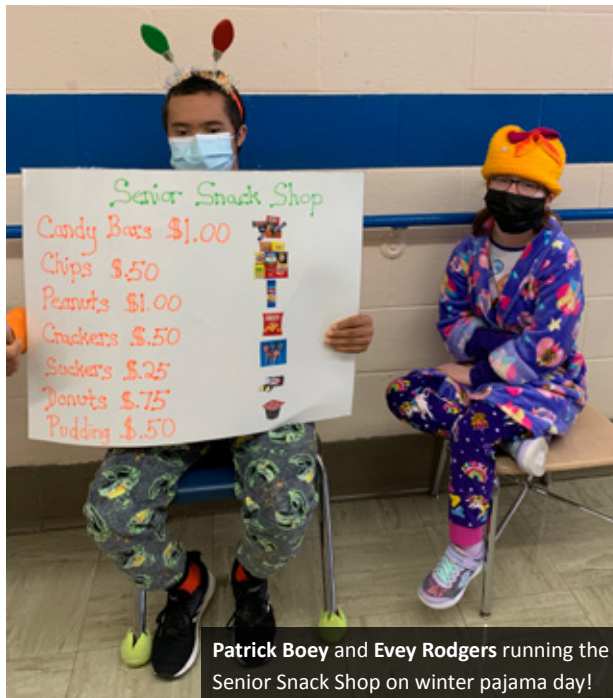
## Santa Shop!





# Holiday Highlights at Murray Ridge School!

The holiday spirit was in full swing at Murray Ridge School this year! During the week before winter break, students and staff had a holiday countdown, during which there was a special theme for each day, such as Grinch Day, funny Christmas sweater day, winter pajama day, and gingerbread house day, and more. On top of that, students exchanged handmade Christmas cards, decorated Christmas cookies, read holiday books, and sang Christmas carols.



Patrick Boey and Evey Rodgers running the Senior Snack Shop on winter pajama day!



Aryanna Contreras with her gingerbread house! Students got to make their own gingerbread houses as part of a week of Christmas activities before winter break.

Check out our Facebook pages for more great holiday photos!



Dorian Dye made the Grinch's heart grow three sizes when he gave him a hug!

## A visit from the Grinch!

Oh no! It looks like the Grinch tried to steal Christmas from Murray Ridge School this past December 10th! Unfortunately for him, the holiday cheer of the students and staff was too strong even for the famously curmudgeonly green monster. Throughout the day, everyone had fun showering their guest with Christmas spirit; everyone, that is, except for **Melanie Liddy**, a teacher who was conspicuously absent that day...



Cameron Conn managed to elicit some rare Christmas cheer from the Grinch!



# Weather-Related Announcements Reminder

**Murray Ridge program closing information will be available on TV station Fox 8, on the Fox 8 website (fox8.com), and on radio stations WEOL 930 AM and WOBL 1320 AM, as it has in the past.**

There will be two separate listings for Murray Ridge Center:

- Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers
- Murray Ridge School

**For the past several years, Fox 8 has displayed information on the status of our Adult Activities Centers as described below:**

- On fox8.com, the information will be under the 'Daycare' tab in the School Closings section.
- On Channel 8, information about the status of our Adult Activities Centers will scroll from left to right beneath the School Closings information at the very bottom of the television screen under 'Daycare.' These listings are in alphabetical order by county; however, no county names will be listed due to the limitations of Fox 8's computer systems. Therefore, if you choose to use the TV to determine the status of the Adult Centers, you must continue to monitor that 'Daycare' listing until it has run a complete cycle.

**NOTE: You can also sign up with Fox 8 to receive text alerts on Murray Ridge School and Adult Activities Centers closings. To do so, click on 'Closing Text Alerts' in the School Closings section of the Fox 8 website.**

Parents and caregivers of school students should disregard the "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers" listing, and follow only the listing for "Murray Ridge School." Conversely, adult consumers who attend our Opportunity/Vocational Centers and their parents/caregivers should disregard the "Murray Ridge School" listing, and follow only the listing for "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers."

If "Open - No Transportation" follows the announcement for "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers," parents/caregivers are welcome to transport adult consumers to their day service sites. Regular programming will be provided. Consumers should be dropped off no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and must be picked up by 3:45 p.m.

In the event of bad weather, the decision to transport individuals to Murray Ridge Center will be based on the ability of our buses to travel safely on city and county roads. Regardless of whether or not transportation is available through Murray Ridge Center, if our Opportunity/Vocational Centers are open, but there is an individual concern about the weather, adult consumers should feel free to stay home. Likewise, parents/caregivers of Murray Ridge School students who have individual concerns regarding the weather should feel free to keep their children at home, even if school is in session.

Please be aware that transportation to enclave sites is generally available even if transportation to the Opportunity/Vocational Centers is cancelled. Murray Ridge Center does not broadcast the status of enclave transportation on the television or radio. Consumers should assume that enclave transportation will be available unless they receive a phone call from a member of our Supported Employment Department.

First Student bus company can be reached at 288-2222.

# Boardroom Briefing

The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 6:30 p.m. on December 20, 2021

Travis Thompson, Director of Risk Management for the Ohio School Plan, presented the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities (LCBDD) with the Mike Davis Best Practice Award, as well as a check for \$2,500.00, for going above and beyond in the area of proactive risk management, specifically through its practices related to oversight of contract provisions; Mr. Thompson reported also that the Ohio School Plan has shared LCBDD's process with other members throughout the state. The honorable James T. Walther, Lorain County Probate Judge, was presented with the 2021 Murray Ridge C.A.R.E.S. Award for partnering with LCBDD so effectively and for his extraordinary dedication to the well being of Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities. Board member Daniel White, Chair of the Exceptional Service Award Committee, presented an Exceptional Service Award to Behavioral Analyst/SSA Sherry Lacko-Chutes, who was nominated for the award by Judge Walther. Judge Walther administered the oath of office to Robert Gajdos and Rebecca Cornman, both of whom will begin their new terms of office in January of 2022. Board member Daniel White reported on a Special Olympics Committee meeting, noting the continued COVID-related changes to the program by Special Olympics Ohio, and the Raiders' victory at the State softball tournament. The Board unanimously passed a resolution to enter into a contract for legal support with the Lorain County Prosecutor's Office, and an agreement with and in support of the Murray Ridge Production Center. The Board also passed its 2022 Budget, and 2022 Strategic Plan. Superintendent Fisher announced that the Director of the Ohio Department of DD, Jeff Davis, will be retiring at the end of the year and will be replaced on January 01, 2022, by Kim Hauck, who currently (prior to 01/01/2022) serves as the DODD Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Direction. Dr. Fisher gave outgoing Board member Daniel White a plaque commemorating his twelve consecutive years of service on the Board.

## Now Hiring!

### 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.

### Custodial/Maintenance

We are looking for as-needed custodial/maintenance help and two full-time Maintenance Technicians. Hours are generally during the day.

## FEATURED positions

### 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.

We are looking for **Intermittent (as-needed) Speech and Language Pathologists**



### School Setting

We have openings available for permanent and as-needed classroom aides

**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"

### All candidates:

Must have valid Ohio drivers license, good driving record, and High School Diploma/GED. Must pass background check, drug test, and physical.

[www.murrayridgecenter.org](http://www.murrayridgecenter.org)

Lorain County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center  
1091 Infirmary Road  
Elyria, OH 44035

Standard Presort  
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**Photo of the Month:** Merry Christmas from the Meister home residents! Left to right: Clayton Rhodehamel, Vito Faga, Danny Velez, Sara Lempeck, Diane Pasa, Mark Salisbury, and Kara Zudell.

## Contact Us

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