

MONTHLY



MURRAY RIDGE COURIER

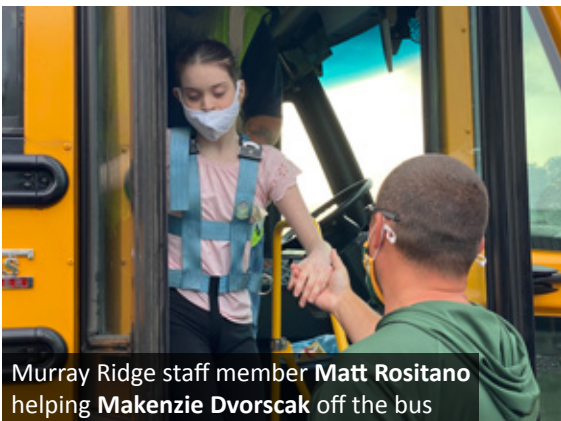
NEW LOOK!

SEPT 2021



Ja'Leigha Sanders and Alex Verdova

On Thursday, August 26th, Murray Ridge students arrived for the first day of their 2021-2022 school year!



Murray Ridge staff member **Matt Rositano** helping **Makenzie Dvorscak** off the bus

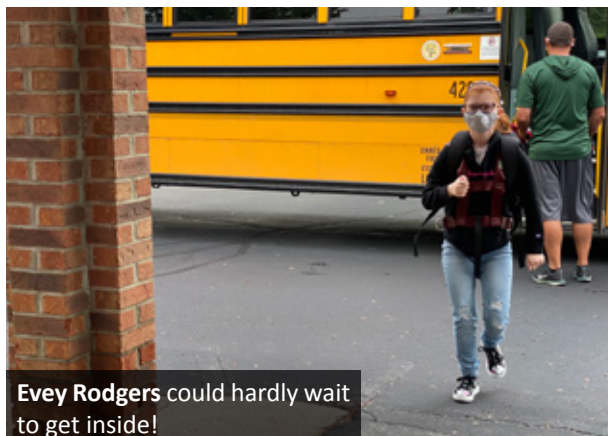
First Day of School!

The first day of school is always full of excitement and anticipation. As the buses arrived at Murray Ridge School, the face masks could not conceal the smiling eyes of students and staff alike as they began their first day of classes! We would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our new students and staff members. Have a wonderful year, everyone!

Murray Ridge Schools

Over 50 Years of Excellence

For more than a half-century, our school has provided a positive and nurturing environment that enables students to develop functional skills in a way that fosters self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment. In addition to a solid life-skills curriculum supplemented by academics, art, adaptive physical education, music, science, and more, students' classroom learning is enhanced by community experiences and volunteer opportunities.



Evey Rodgers could hardly wait to get inside!

Murray Ridge School receives IDEA Part B grant funds. If you would like to review, or provide suggestions concerning our use of these funds, please contact our Director of Educational Services **Dann Swift** at 440.329.3760.



AUSTIN CARPENTER'S PRIZE-WINNING PONIES

Murray Ridge program participant **Austin Carpenter** swept up quite a few awards at the Avon Lake Saddle Club's 2021 Open Miniature Show on July 31st! In addition to winning two 1st place ribbons, he won 2nd place in the costume class, earned a 5th place ribbon, and was named Champion of Champions. Congratulations, Austin!

Thank You and Farewell to Dawn & Joseph Neubauer

Service and Support Administrator **Dawn Neubauer** and her husband, Information Services Manager **Joe Neubauer**, will be leaving Murray Ridge Center after more than 40 collective years of working for our organization! Their contribution to our community has been invaluable, and they will be deeply missed. Dawn celebrated her 30th year of employment at Murray Ridge in February of 2020, and Joe passed 10 years in July of 2020. During the statewide COVID-19 shutdown, Joe and his team ensured that Murray Ridge employees had the technological resources and network access they needed to continue coordinating services and support for our program participants. Outfitting staff to work remotely was a monumental task, and Joe and the rest of the IS team worked diligently to ensure that the process went smoothly. Dawn and Joe will be relocating to Florida to enjoy some sunnier weather. We at Murray Ridge would like to extend our deepest gratitude to them both!

A Brief Look at the History of Developmental Disabilities...

Disability Rights activists in the 1970s paving the way for a more inclusive future



A Sad Look Back...

For decades, many people with developmental disabilities were placed in large, segregated facilities across the country, away from society and their families. One such facility, the Cleveland Developmental Center* (right), was demolished in 1977.



*Never affiliated with Murray Ridge

THE PATH TO COMPASSION

For much of American history, many people with developmental disabilities were cloistered away from society into large - and often inhumane - institutional care facilities, where little, if any, attention was given to their education, health, or personal development. During the '60s and '70s, however, in what is now known as the Family Movement, the loved ones of people with developmental disabilities began to push back against these dehumanizing institutions and demand more inclusive, compassionate programs, services, and resources. Today, agencies like Murray Ridge Center have been founded to take the place of these segregated institutions by coordinating services and support for people with developmental disabilities and placing a focus on independence, growth, and community engagement. Pictured below: Murray Ridge program participants taking part in the 2019 Sheffield Lake Parade. Standing are: Tim Quisenberry, Alyssa DeAngelis, Torie Ambers, Michael Elliott, and Mike Hawley.

...and a bright view ahead!



CONSUMER PROFILE: MEET KELLY MCMILLAN

By Sarah Bohannon

Kelly McMillan is an adventurous, happy-go-lucky person who loves participating in all kinds of activities. Kelly is supported by her **Murray Ridge Service and Support Administrator (SSA), Sandy Desai**, who assists Kelly in utilizing her I.O. (Individual Options) waiver and developing her Individual Service Plan (ISP). Kelly's ISP lists the services and supports that she has decided will work best for her, and she works with Sandy to keep her ISP up to date as her goals evolve and change.

Kelly lives with two roommates in a small group setting in Lorain, where she receives supports from **Our Lady of the Wayside (OLW)**. OLW is an agency that supports people with daily life tasks such as taking care of personal needs, doing household chores, cooking meals, shopping, scheduling medical appointments, paying bills, and taking medications.

Kelly showing off a puzzle she completed at Pathways



Kelly is happiest when she is out in the community. She loves going to Cedar Point, attending Lake Erie Crushers games, picnicking in the park, shopping, eating out, and hiking. At the end of each day, she enjoys counting how many steps she's taken with her FitBit.

Kelly is very close to her family, especially her mother, whom Kelly spends time with on the weekends and relies on for support and guidance. They both volunteer together at the local APL and food pantry, and they love taking mother-daughter trips to Put-In-Bay.

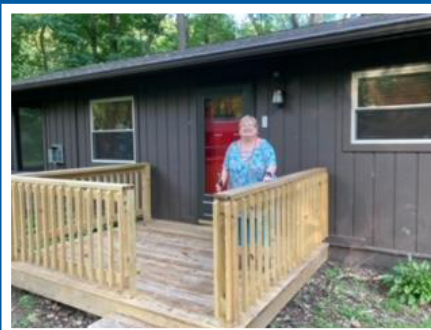
During the week, Kelly spends her time at **Pathways**, an adult day program run by Our Lady of the Wayside. According to their website, "Our Lady of the Wayside's Pathways Program offers day services for more than 250 adults with de-

velopmental disabilities and focuses on personal growth for participants through a variety of activities. Pathways has served the community for over nine years." Originally established in Westlake, Ohio, Pathways now operates five locations in Avon, Westlake, Mentor, Valley View and Garfield Heights.

OLW's vision is to "empower individuals to exercise their right to meaningful, productive lives by creating opportunities to achieve that shared reality." Just a few months ago, Kelly began attending Pathways, where she has been taking cooking classes, making arts and crafts, and learning computer skills. She also loves all of the community activities like shopping, going to museums, visiting parks, and attending baseball games. Kelly looks forward to going everyday to see her friends and staff.



Kelly with Charlie Brown at Cedar Point



In past years, Kelly has used her I.O. waiver to attend summer camps, but she was unable to do so this year due to the pandemic. This summer, she chose to go to Mohican State Park with one of her OLW staff instead. She got to stay in a cabin and had a great time exploring all of the hiking trails the park had to offer.

BECOME YOUR OWN CHAMPION



A Special Self-Advocacy Workshop Event

hosted by Murray Ridge Center this past August 13th and 14th

Encouraging Self-Advocacy!

Recently, Lorain County residents took part in 'Becoming You Own Champion,' a two-day self-advocacy event. Participants of the event took part in workshop sessions where they learned strategies and techniques for more effective self-advocacy. We were proud to present this valuable program for local citizens with developmental disabilities, and we look forward to continuing to find new and creative ways to foster self-advocacy by those we serve.

Special thanks to the organizations who presented at the event: Advocacy and Protective Services Inc., the Lorain County Sheriff's Office, Total Homecare Solutions, The Improvaneer Method, LLC., Elyria Mayor Frank Whitfield, the Lorain Fire Department, The Center for Applied Drama & Autism, and community advocate Sam Battle. Murray Ridge employees Megan Pintner, Jaclina Rush, and Jessica Smith presented, as well.

"Become Your Own Champion" was funded by the Community Foundation of Lorain County, Myrtle's Endowment Fund, and Murray Ridge Center.



A Visit From Mayor Whitfield

Elyria Mayor Frank Whitfield attended both days of the event, hosting a special "town hall" session where he spoke about ways one can be active in his or her community. He's pictured above with Murray Ridge program participant Carl Jeans.



Elyria Mayor Frank Whitfield hosted a special townhall session for Murray Ridge program participants.

Want to see video of the event? Check out this video by Cinécraft Productions here:
<https://bit.ly/BYOCVideo>



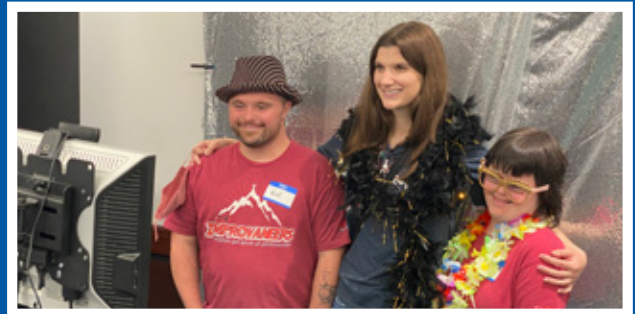
The inimitable **Sam Battle**, a community advocate for developmental disabilities, hosted a "Show What You Know" session for Murray Ridge program participants.

INDEPENDENCE & GROWTH

Here at Murray Ridge, one of our main goals is to foster independence and growth within in our program participants. We strive to ensure that people with developmental disabilities are active members of our Lorain County community, and that they are not marginalized. One of the primary ways we can realize this objective is by empowering our program participants by educating them about their rights, and doing everything we can to help them lead healthy, fulfilling lives **on their own terms.**

Stay tuned for future self-advocacy events!

"Become Your Own Champion" will not be the last event of its kind! We intend to continue to host workshops like this one and help make our Lorain County community stronger, more inclusive, and happier.



The event featured a special performance by the "Improva-neers", who bill themselves as "the world's first all-Downs-syndrome comedy troupe!" Pictured: Improva-neers Assistant Director **Nick Doyle**, Lead Trainer **Maggie Bisesi**, and Assistant Director **Audrey Costilow**.

What is "Self-Advocacy"?

Simply put, self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself. Successful self-advocates need to know themselves, know what they need and desire, and know how to pursue those things. This is especially important for people with developmental disabilities, and is one of the central pillars of Murray Ridge's philosophy.

If you'd like to learn more about self-advocacy, check out our eight-part video series called "Knowing My Rights"! The videos cover a wide range of topics, including Vocational Training and Citizenship, Respect and Choices, Mental and Medical Health, Nutrition and Wellness, Living Conditions, Bullying, Decision Making, and Advocating for Yourself. The full video series can be found at: murray-ridgecenter.org/health-and-news-alerts/



Murray Ridge program participant **Marilyn Flanders** cheering for the camera



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 Kevin Naughton, 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 Kevin at (440) 329-3734 or kevin@murrayridgecenter.org

Boardroom Briefing

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

Board member Cathie Leimbach, Board liaison to the Murray Ridge Housing Corporation (MRHC), provided an update on MRHC activities. The Board unanimously approved a revision to the Management & Confidential policy on Tuition Reimbursement. Superintendent Amber Fisher provided an update on transitions within the Murray Ridge Adult Services (MRAS) Program. The Board passed a resolution that individuals who were notified that they would no longer be able to receive MRAS after August 31, 2021, would be able to receive Virtual Adult Day Services (VADS) from MRAS after August 31, if they were not receiving in-person Adult Services from another provider. Jeff Miller, Director of Vocational & Transportation Services, presented the Board with a proposed listing of Murray Ridge School bus stops, along with estimated pick-up and drop-off times; the Board unanimously adopted the listing, and authorized the superintendent or her designee to relocate or designate additional bus stops during the school year.

Now Hiring!

FEATURED positions



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.

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.

Job Coach

Provide work skills training to consumers. Complete work on-site as required for demonstration and on-the-job training.

Custodial/Maintenance

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

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 potential candidates:

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

Annual Transportation Safety Instructions

Murray Ridge Center wants you to be safe when travelling. These are guidelines that students, eligible adults, and their caregivers should be aware of when utilizing transportation services.

WAITING FOR THE BUS

- Wait for the bus at least 10 feet from the road.
- Dress properly - winter clothing, hats, mittens, and boots will help keep you warm in the winter.
- Watch for the bus' red lights.
- Wait until the bus has stopped and door opens before stepping into the roadway.
- Wait for the driver to signal to cross. Cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus.
- Use the handrail when stepping onto the bus.
- If you use a wheelchair, it must be equipped with a functioning seat belt. The wheels should lock as well.
- Store all belongings in a backpack so nothing gets dropped.

BUS SEAT SAFETY RULES

- Follow all of the driver's instructions.
- Speak softly so the driver will not be distracted. At railroad crossings, be quiet.
- Stay seated until your stop and keep the aisle clear.
- Never put head, arms, or hands out of the window.
- Never do anything to distract the driver.
- Keep aisles clear and free of tripping hazards.
- Never throw things on the bus or out the windows.
- Tell the driver or monitor if you are being bullied.
- If there is an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.
- Do not eat on the bus, as this could present a choking hazard.
- Store all belongings in a backpack so nothing gets dropped.

GETTING OFF THE BUS AT HOME

- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least ten feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road, until you can turn around and see the driver.
- Make sure that the driver can see you.
- Wait for the signal from the driver before beginning to cross.
- When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
- Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver has signalled that it is safe for you to begin walking.
- Stay away from the bus' rear wheels at all times. If you drop something near the bus, leave it. If you leave something on the bus, never return to get it. The driver may not see you come back and start to move the bus. If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver before you pick it up so he/she knows where you are.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GENERAL SAFETY TIPS

- When you enter or leave a vehicle, watch for slippery or uneven pavement and other hazards that could cause you to fall.
- Have your LCT ID, bus fare, ticket, or pass ready so you don't lose your balance while looking for it.
- Do not carry too many packages – always leave a free hand to grab a railing.
- Allow extra time to cross streets, especially in bad weather.
- If it's dark outside, wear light-colored or reflective clothing.
- Do not talk to strangers. If you are being bothered by someone, tell the driver immediately.
- If you use a stop assistance card, remember to show it to the driver as you board the bus.
- Most LCT stops are not sheltered. Dress appropriately for the winter weather, and utilize sunscreen in the summer.
- Whether you are in a bus, car, or van – ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEATBELT IF THE VEHICLE IS EQUIPPED WITH ONE!

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

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Photo of the Month: Participants at our "Become Your Own Champion" finding comedy in life with the Improvaneers!

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