

Consumers Express Themselves Through Art

For centuries visual artists have poured their energies into drawings, paintings, sculptures and a variety of other creative mediums to express their emotions and to interpret the world around them. Some of these artists have found great acclaim from their works, while others perhaps simply found a meaningful outlet in which to express themselves. The latter is precisely what staff at the Lorain Work/Activity Center (LWAC) encourage adult consumers to do.

Sixty-seven-year-old consumer Eileen Frances has limited mobility and use of her arms, as well as limited verbal communication capability. For her, painting provides a method for self-expression, as well as an opportunity to engage in something physical that she enjoys.

Workshop Aide **Diana Markwood**, found a creative way for Frances to participate in something she has enjoyed since childhood, but found increasingly difficult to do as the years passed. Explains Markwood, "I assist Eileen by



Murray Ridge staffer **Diana Markwood**

providing her with a glove that has a paintbrush attached to it. She is then able to dip her brush into bowls of paint and then move the brush back and forth on the paper until she is ready for a different color. She will continue to do this with each work until she's happy with the way it looks," says Markwood.

Frances uses an Alternative Communication Device that is programmed with statements chosen by her with help from the speech therapist. With this device she is able to communicate short sentences by clicking on an icon. She chooses certain icons to talk about her art. "I like painting because I never know



Eileen Frances smiles in front of some of her artistic works.

what it's going to be when I'm done!" She smiles and adds "My first picture is called 'A Cat in the Wind.'"

Utilizing her device, Frances goes on to talk about her childhood, family and the people now in her life. "I am happy because Diana helps me to paint. She is a special person to me," she says.

Another individual who has enjoyed expressing himself through artistic endeavors is 20-year-old **Tony Harris**. Harris began receiving vocational training at LWAC nearly a year ago after graduating from Admiral King High School in Lorain.

Continued on page 2...

Lady Raiders Win Silver Medal at State Tournament

For the first time in its four-year history, not only did the Lady Raiders Basketball Team win the Division II championship in the North Section Special Olympics Ohio Basketball Tournament, it went on to win the Silver Medal in its division at the Special Olympics Ohio State Basketball Tournament in Bowling Green, Ohio on March 25.

Being a relatively new team, basic rules and skill development have been the focus. The 13 team members each have different skills that have proven to be a successful athletic mixture. "The players each have strengths and weakness that, collectively, round out the team really well," said **Judy Hartung**, Habilitation Manager of Recreation for Murray Ridge. Hartung added "The ladies worked together really hard this year, and it showed. They have never made it this far before. They were all thrilled to be able to compete in the State Tournament."

We are proud of the Lady Raiders for such an impressive season and look forward to seeing what they do in future seasons!



Pictured—Bottom, l-r: Sarah Ward, Dominique Flores, Leona Hunsucker, Alicia Lawrence, Jen Hunsucker, Megan Craig; Top, l-r: Lisa Martin, Britiny Bennett, Maria Poling, Jen Jones, Shari Reitenbach, JoAnn Gall, Stephanie Budweg, Coach Vanessa McKissick and Katie Mihalek.

Consumers Express Themselves...

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Tony Harris smiles in front of a couple of his favorite works of art.

Harris' medium of choice is drawing, though he says he would like to learn how to paint. His inspiration comes from such popular characters as Scooby Doo and Sonic the Hedgehog. Markwood recently encouraged Harris to enter into a Lake Erie Crushers drawing contest, which he did. However, he says he isn't concerned with winning. He simply enjoys creating art. "Art makes me feel perfect," he says, and adds "I just like to do art." He proudly points out his many works of art which grace the walls of LWAC. He then says that he likes his drawings, but believes that his photographs are better. He takes out his camera and navigates through the many photos he has taken of family and friends. "I like to take pictures, too. Taking pictures is easy and it makes me happy. I am happy that the staff help me do art."

Harris says he also likes the work he does at LWAC and, like many others, he enjoys watching movies and going to dinner. But he says it is his art that makes him happiest. While it remains to be seen if these artists will find the acclaim of a Renoir or a Picasso, there is little doubt that they have all found a beautiful way to express themselves.

Special Visitors



Murray Ridge Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, left, talks with **Lorain City Mayor Tony Krasienko** at the Lorain Work/Activity Center Open House.

Recently, the **Mayor of Lorain, Tony Krasienko**, visited the Lorain Work/Activity Center during its Open House. While there, Mayor Krasienko was able to talk with staff and consumers, tour the facility and learn a little more about the vocational and habilitative services and programs provided by Murray Ridge Center to nearly 1,000 Lorain County adults with developmental disabilities.

A few days later, **Elyria Mayor William Grace** and Deputy Safety Services Director **Kevin Brubaker** took a tour of Murray Ridge School where they learned about the programs and

services provided to more than 165 Lorain County students with the most profound developmental and physical disorders.

Pictured below, l-r: Director of Educational Services **Dann Swift**, Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, Mayor of Elyria **William Grace** and Deputy Safety Services Director **Kevin Brubaker**.



The Murray Ridge Support Group Thanks You!

The Murray Ridge Support Group (MRSG) would like to extend a sincere "thank you" to all who joined them for the Annual Spaghetti Dinner on March 12. The group would also like to thank AmVets Post 55 in Sheffield Lake for generously donating its food, facility and volunteer time for the third year in a row! The event was a great success and raised more than \$3,500 to go toward programs and activities for Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities.



Consumer **Sarah Ward** enjoys the annual spaghetti feast.

For more than 20 years, the MRSG has been providing support for programs and activities for persons impacted by developmental disabilities. Comprised of parents, siblings and other advocates, the MRSG plans educational seminars, sponsors several dances throughout the year, hosts the annual Transition Ceremony Luncheon for graduating Murray Ridge School students, organizes the annual Spaghetti Dinner and provides funds for various Murray Ridge Center events such as Santa's Shop, Senior Prom and Bring A Child To Work Day. Currently the MRSG is seeking new members willing to participate in its activities.

If you would like to know more about the MRSG and how you can join, contact Andrea Elek at (440) 323-2741.

Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities Welcomes Returning Board Member



Daniel White

We are very pleased to welcome **Daniel White** as he returns to serve on the Board of the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Having previously served on the Board for 12 years (and many of those years as Board President), Mr. White says that he is eager to continue his service to Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities. Mr. White also brings with him first-hand knowledge of the adult services provided by Murray Ridge, as his son receives vocational training at the Elyria Work/Activity Center. In addition to his service to the Board, he has also served on the Murray Ridge Housing Corporation Board and participates in many community activities. We are delighted at the opportunity to work once again with Mr. White and are honored that he has chosen to return to serving the mission of Murray Ridge.

Murray Ridge Center Volunteer Reception

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Reception will be held on Wednesday, April 20, 2011 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Elyria Work/Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road in Elyria.

Refreshments will be served and the Volunteer of the Year award will be presented.

Look for your invitation in the mail or call Racheal Seibert at 329-3734 to RSVP.

April is Autism Awareness Month

April is National Autism Awareness Month and is a perfect time for individuals to educate themselves about this developmental disability that, according to the Centers for Disease Control, affects approximately one in every 110 American children. Symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorders, or ASDs, typically begin before the age of three and are characterized by impaired development in communication, social interaction and behavior.

If you would like to learn more about ASDs or the programs and services offered by Murray Ridge School, contact Joan Peterson or Lenora Oeftering at 329-3760.

"Exceptional Service Award" Nominations Sought by Board

If you are a consumer, parent, guardian, sibling or other relative, or a community member and would like to participate in recognizing a Murray Ridge Center employee whose work efforts reflect remarkable dedication in meeting the needs of Murray Ridge consumers, you are encouraged to nominate those staff members who, in your opinion, have made significant contributions to the lives of those we serve. The nominating criteria are purposefully wide to reflect the diversity of staff duties and contributions, but in general, the nominees will reflect a standard of service that exceeds, *in the opinion of the one making the nomination*, the already high standard of service set by the agency.

Nominations for this award should be submitted to Tim Donohue, Director of Communications (tdonohue@murrayridgecenter.org). When making a nomination, it is requested that you write a brief narrative (of at least one paragraph), outlining your reasons for nominating the employee.

All nominations will be forwarded to the Board for selection at its discretion.

It is the intention of the Board to present this quarterly award to its recipient (s) at one of its regularly scheduled meetings, which will normally be held on the last Friday of each month at 12:30 p.m. in the Board Room.

If you have any questions, contact Tim Donohue, Director of Communications, at 440-329-3734.










BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on March 25, 2011:

Tim Donohue, Director of Communications, presented a new logo option for Board consideration. Following this, Board President Michelle L. Hunt asked the Board to approve a resolution of appreciation to local radio stations WOBL and WEOL. The Board approved unanimously. Jeff Miller, Director of Vocational and Transportation Services, reported on the Board Transportation Subcommittee meeting of March 24, 2011. Mr. Miller said there will be a customer satisfaction survey done for those consumers receiving adult services through the Board. Superintendent Amber Fisher then recommended no change to the current charge of \$7,500 per student to the local school districts for preschool services in the upcoming school year. The Board unanimously approved this recommendation. Superintendent Fisher further recommended that for typically-developing preschoolers in the program, the Board continue to charge \$5.00 per day per student. It was also suggested that the additional charge of \$7.50 per day if agency transportation services are accessed be retained for typically-developing preschoolers, that charges continue to be billed in quarterly installments, payable in advance, and that there be a pro-rated reimbursement should a student disenroll. The Board unanimously approved these recommendations. Dr. Fisher then updated the Board on the recently released Governor's biennial budget, stating that it includes a 7.6% cut in funding to the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities; the cuts will be passed onto County Boards of DD, which will result in an estimated reduction of 45% to the agency's state subsidy. Additionally, Dr. Fisher informed the Board that it has been made clear that the intent is to eliminate the GRF dollars being used to hold county boards harmless for the loss of the Tangible Personal Property Tax revenue; this will result in a loss of \$1.6 million per year to the agency. There is also a proposal to change the rate at which the TPPT hold harmless will be phased out, depending on how reliant agencies are on it. Finally, Dr. Fisher informed the Board that the Help Me Grow funding currently received by the agency has been cut by more than \$4,700 for this year. In other business, Al Sprague, Director of Residential Service and Support Administration, updated the Board on the quarterly Family Support allocation, and the Board unanimously approved the requested Second Quarter budget. Following this, the Board unanimously approved the Governing Rules and Regulations that are reviewed annually. The Board also unanimously approved revisions to the Ethics Council, Powers and Duties and Retention of Board Records policies. Director of Business John Bonko notified the Board of the intent to change the Inventory threshold from \$50 to \$250.



April 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 	15 	16
17	18	19	20 	21 	22 	23
24	25	26	27 	28 	29 	30
Murray Ridge School Spring Break 4/25/11-4/29/11						

Activities & Events

- 4/7—Murray Ridge Support Group meeting, 4:15 p.m., Elyria Work/Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road in Elyria
- 4/14—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:30—6:30 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 4/15—Knights of Columbus Free-throw Event at Murray Ridge School, 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
- 4/15—Murray Ridge School Boy Scout Pinewood Derby, Time TBD
- 4/15—Murray Ridge Support Group Dance, 7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 4/20—Murray Ridge Center Volunteer Reception, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Elyria Work/Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road in Elyria
- 4/21—LCBDD Finance Committee meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 4/22—Agency Closed in Observance of Good Friday**
- 4/25-29/11—Murray Ridge Preschool and School Closed for Spring Break**
- 4/27—Family Support Parent Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road in Elyria
- 4/28—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:30—6:30 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 4/29—LCBDD Meeting, 12:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road in Elyria



Lunch Menu

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.80, Adults = \$2.90

April 4-8
April 25-29

Monday- Salisbury Steak w/Gravy, Scaloped Potatoes, Corn, Peaches, Cookie

Tuesday- Turkey or Bologna with Cheese on Wheat Bread, Peas & Carrots, Pears, Nutri-Grain Bar

Wednesday- Meat Lasagna, Green Beans, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Wheat Bread, Cookie

Thursday- Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Banana, Nutri-Grain Bar

Friday- Fish Patty, French Fries, Cole Slaw, Apple Slices, Wheat Bread, Cookie

April 11-15
May 2-6

Monday- Ham, Wheat Bread, Rice Pilaf, Diced Carrots w/Herbs, Applesauce

Tuesday- Hamburger on a Bun, Potato Wedges, Corn, Crushed Pineapple, Cookie

Wednesday- Chicken Patty w/Gravy, Au Gratin Potatoes, Green Beans, Fruit, Wheat Bread, Cookie

Thursday- Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Banana, Nutri-Grain Bar

Friday- Macaroni & Cheese, Cooked Carrots, Diced Pears, Cookie



March 28-April 1
April 18-22
May 9-13

Monday- Chicken Patty on a Bun, Potato Rounds, Corn, Crushed Pineapple, Cookie

Tuesday- Meat Lasagna, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Diced Peaches, Nutri-Grain Bar

Wednesday- Rigatoni w/Meatballs, Green Beans, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Wheat Bread, Cookie

Thursday- Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Fresh Fruit, Nutri-Grain Bar

Friday- Meat/Cheese Burrito, Spanish Rice, Cole Slaw, Applesauce

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
1091 Infirmary Road
Elyria, OH 44035

Visit our Web site
www.murrayridgecenter.org

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If you have a news item that you would like to include in the Murray Ridge Courier, please email relevant photos, stories or event information to Tim Donohue at tdonohue@murrayridgecenter.org.

Submissions are due by the 20th of each month for the following month's newsletter.

Calling all Artists!

Murray Ridge Center will be adding a Consumer Art page to its website soon and is looking for entries. If you paint, draw, sculpt, or have some other artistic visual talent and would like to have your work featured on the Murray Ridge website, submit a photo of your masterpiece to Tim Donohue at tdonohue@murrayridgecenter.org. Submissions must be in a specific format (jpeg) and emailed as an attachment. If you need assistance, call Tim at 329-3734.



Vincent van Gogh



Further News You Might Use...

We are often in receipt of information from external sources on offerings designed for people with DD. Some examples include summer camps and special interest classes. Many such offerings have an associated cost to the participant. Although we are not in a position to "vouch for" or promote such offerings, we recognize that these opportunities may be of interest to our consumers, their families and/or guardians. If you are interested in learning more about such consumer-oriented events and opportunities, please contact Albert Sprague, Director of Residential Service & Support Administration. You may reach him by telephone at 440-324-2366.