

Murray Ridge Athletes Big Winners at 2008 Special Olympics Summer Games



As the whole world prepares for the excitement of the Olympics in Beijing this August, we at Murray Ridge Center are congratulating our own Special Olympians on yet another victorious trip to Columbus for the Summer Games.

Judy Hartung, Habilitation Manager for Recreation, said of this much anticipated annual event, "it's a long weekend, and by the end everyone is exhausted...but our athletes put in tremendous effort all spring. Clearly, with so many trophies, their dedication paid off again at the 2008 Summer Games." Indeed there were some impressive performances this June. Winning the Gold medal in the very difficult pentathlon for the second year in a row was Carl Jeans. And, competing in the pentathlon for the first time—and winning the Silver—was fellow teammate D.J. Overall.

Each of our athletes gave a stellar performance. However, one athlete's story is particularly inspiring. Donald Durkee, a senior consumer with Murray Ridge Center, has been playing bocce for more than 15 years, and he has competed in the Summer Games several times. But between health issues and difficulties with mobility, this past year has been especially challenging for Durkee. Many athletes retire under such challenges. Donald Durkee, on the other hand was determined to get to Columbus. Toward this goal, he pur-

chased his own bocce set, practiced nearly every day, and even refused to go on favorite leisure outings in order to prepare for the Summer Games.

Even with all of his preparation, it was not an easy road to the Summer Games. "Donald's greatest obstacle this year was just getting around...he uses a cane now, and can't move as quickly as before," said Vicky Cooley, Durkee's Bocce coach. But Durkee wasn't going to let limited movement get in the way of the thing he loves most. Says Durkee, "it's the only thing I like to do, and I wanted to do it. So I did it."

Other winners at the 2008 Summer Games were:

Gold Medal Recipients—Team 1 Volleyball—Traditional Volleyball; Mens Bocce 4-person Team; James Peters—200 meter dash and standing long jump; Eric Bryner—200 meter dash; Adrian fortune—100 meter dash and standing long jump; Shari Reitenbach—2K walk; Jackie Allen—cycling.

Silver Medal Recipients—Ladies Bocce 4-person Team; and Jon Woodyard—cycling

(Continued on page 5)

Couple Shares Marriage Story

Bob and Wendy Challen met uncere-
moniously in January of 1993, as
Wendy was getting a snack in the
cafeteria at the Oberlin Work Activity
Center. But, from that simple moment,
Bob was smitten. Shortly thereafter,
Bob mustered the courage to ask
Wendy to have dinner with him on his
birthday. When she agreed, Bob said
that he already knew Wendy was the
only person he wanted to date. Jokes
Wendy, "I just saw it as having dinner
with a friend. I didn't know marriage
was in the deal."



Bob and Wendy Challen hold hands as they talk about how they met, their long engagement and their secret to a happy, successful marriage.

That date went so well that Bob de-
cided to surprise Wendy with a spe-
cial delivery on Valentines Day. Bob
made arrangements for an elaborate
gift of flowers, balloons and candy to
be delivered to Wendy at work. "I
was embarrassed because I was the
only one at work who got flowers,"
recalls Wendy. Many more dates
would follow in the subsequent
months, and by August of 1993, the
couple was officially in love.

Bob decided he would ask Wendy to
marry him. On the evening of August
21 they went on what Wendy believed
to be a casual dinner date at a local
TGI Friday's. She noticed that Bob had
an unusual bag with him, but dropped
the issue after several protests of "it's
nothing." Once the couple had fin-
ished their meal, however, Bob
reached into the bag and produced a
small box. Wendy said she was too
excited and shaky to open the box, so
Bob did the honors. He laughs as he
says "this is embarrassing to admit,
but when I tried to put the ring on her
finger, it didn't fit." After several at-
tempts, the waitress came to the table
and whispered that he was trying to
put the ring on the wrong finger.
Luckily, the ring did fit on the correct
finger, and Bob then asked Wendy to
marry him. Wendy said "yes" and, as
Bob recalls, "the whole restaurant
started clapping."

Wendy adds with a smile, "we got
pizza, too!" Bob recalls that, during
the reception, Wendy's father began to
cry. He approached his new father-in-
law and assured him "you didn't lose a
daughter, you gained a son."

Now, after recently celebrating 12
years of marriage with a dinner at a
local Applebee's, the couple still seems
to be very much in love. When asked
what their secret is for such a long,
happy marriage, Wendy exclaims with
a grin "we had really good counseling
before we got married!" To that Bob
adds, "and a good sense of humor."
Both agree that a good friendship and
staying active are key. "We like to do
things together," says Bob.

For example, for their 7th anniversary,
the couple decided to take a romantic
cruise on the Nautica Queen. "It was
special," says Bob, and adds "we do
lots of things like go to baseball
games, movies and out to eat."
Wendy adds, "we have fun."

When asked if they ever disagree, Bob
answers "Sometimes we fight." He
pauses, then adds, "but we always talk
it out."

Following the advice of loved ones, the
couple decided to enjoy a long en-
gagement. "We got to know each
other better," says Wendy. Then, on
June 15, 1996, the couple tied the knot
at the Family Fellowship Foursquare
Church in Amherst, Ohio. They mar-
ried at 2:30 in the afternoon and had
around 125 friends and family in atten-
dance.

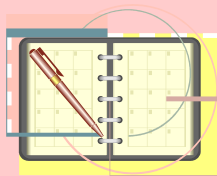
Bob said they just wanted a simple
reception with cake and punch; but



Further News You Might Use...

We are often in receipt of information
from external sources on offerings
designed for people with MR/DD.
Some examples include summer
camps and special interest classes.
Many such offerings have an associ-
ated cost to the participant. Although
we are not in a position to "vouch for"
or promote such offerings, we recog-
nize 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 Ser-
vice & Support Administration. You
may reach him by telephone at 440-
324-2366.

—The Editor



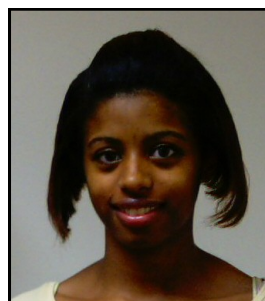
Save the Date

The 8th Annual Ohio Adult Sibling Conference will be held November 7-8 at the Marriott Airport Hotel. This annual conference is designed to give adult siblings of brothers and sisters with developmental disabilities an opportunity to share information, ideas and family experiences. This year's topics include Advocacy and Future Planning, Accessing Services and Supports, Sibling Research, The Vision of the Future and Assistive Technology.

The registration fee is \$85 and includes meals and materials. Registration can be completed online at www.ohiosibs.com, or you may contact Dr. Tom Fish at fish.1@osu.edu for more information.

Limited scholarships are available through the Lorain County Board of MR/DD. For more information, contact Racheal Seibert at (440) 329-3734.

New Faces in Murray Ridge Places



Jazmine Johnson joins the East Ninth Home as a Group Home Aide. Jazmine enjoys walking in the park with her daughter and going to movies.



Elizabeth Tews joins the East Ninth Home as a Group Home Aide Permanent Sub. In her spare time, Elizabeth rescues and finds homes for stray cats.



Young At Heart Seniors Fundraiser

The Elyria Young At Heart (YAH) Senior Program will be selling the 2009 Entertainment Savings Book beginning this August. The book contains savings on dining, movies, travel, dry cleaning and much more. Cost of each book is \$25 and all proceeds will be used to fund future activities for the Elyria Young At Heart Program.

For more information or to order contact Debbie Griffea or Ken Lewis at (440) 284-2720 ext. 236.

Murray Ridge School Book Fair

Come visit the Murray Ridge School during Open House, the week of August 8, to peruse a wide selection of books.

A percentage of all proceeds benefit the School. It's a great way to get some books your kids will love while helping the School they love. For more information, contact Lenora Oefering, (440) 329-3760.



BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of MR/DD convened at 7:30 p.m. on July 15.

Superintendent Fisher presented a request from the Columbia School District to have the Board establish a satellite classroom for students with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. Dr. Fisher and Dann Swift, Director of Educational Services explained that Murray Ridge had successfully responded to similar requests by school districts in the past. The goal, they underlined, is not for Murray Ridge to permanently staff a remote educational site, but to initiate the program in a manner that empowers the requesting school district to eventually staff and manage its own special needs classroom. Following discussion, the Board unanimously approved efforts to proceed with the project. Dr. Fisher also informed the Board that discussions regarding retaining or eliminating the phrase "mental retardation" from MR/DD organizations continued to take place, and she shared a recent edition of the ODMRDD official newsletter which reflected various views on the topic.





August 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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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
31						

Activities & Events

- 8/2—Lorain County Family Fun Fair, Oberlin
- 8/10—North Ridgeville Corn Festival Parade, 2:30 p.m.
- 8/14—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 S. Murray Ridge Road, Elyria
- 8/18-8/24—Lorain County Fair
- 8/26—First Day of School for Murray Ridge School students
- 8/28—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School
- 8/29—LCBMRDD Meeting, Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria, 7:30 p.m.



Lunch Menus

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.55, Adults = \$2.55

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August 4—8
August 25-29

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

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August 11—15
September 1-5

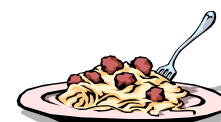
Monday- Chicken Patty on a Bun, Potato Rounds, Corn, Crushed Pineapple, Cookie

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/Lowfat Dressing, Fresh Fruit, Nutri-Grain Bar

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



July 28—August 1
August 18—22
September 8-12

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

Tuesday- Ham & 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

Always Young at Heart



Recently, the YAH, or Young At Heart, senior's group got together at the picturesque Mill Hollow Park on the Vermilion River Reservation for its Annual Picnic. Pictured above, seniors **James McElya** (left), **Larry Tomasheski** (center) and **Donald Durkee** (right) enjoy great food, music, games and one another's company.

Special Olympics, *(continued)*

Bronze Medal Recipients—Team 2 Volleyball—Modified Volleyball; Soccer Team; Aquatics Relay Team—4x50 meter relay; Eric Bryner—standing long jump; Benji Lewis—shot put; Shari Reitenbach—shot put; Wendy Smitkowski—100 meter walk; Jenn Storr—50 meter walk; Jon Woodyard—cycling; and Jackie Allen—cycling.

Also noteworthy are Benji Lewis' 4th place win in the 800 meter walk and Jenn Storr's 5th place finish in softball.

All in all, the Summer Games were, indeed, a great victory for our dedicated athletes and coaches. Says Hartung "I would like to thank all the coaches and volunteers for an excellent Spring Sport/Summer Game season. All of their efforts are appreciated."

Pictured right:
Carl Jeans
(center) and **DJ Overall** (second from left) receive their Gold and Silver medals for the pentathlon at the 2008 Summer Games.



Helping Makes Her Happy



Volunteer **Wendy Johnson**, left, with Murray Ridge School student **Joseph Linden**.

Between putting in full days twice a week at the Murray Ridge School and assisting with Special Olympics, hardly a day passes when volunteer **Wendy Johnson's** smiling face can't be seen around Murray Ridge Center.

When Johnson attended her husband's Special Olympics basketball practice more than two years ago, she hadn't planned to do anything but cheer for the team. However, once she saw the excitement on the faces of the children watching, she decided then and there that she wanted to volunteer for Murray Ridge.

Ever since that night, helping Murray Ridge consumers has taken a high priority in Johnson's life. From assisting teachers in classrooms and on field trips, to getting water for Special Olympic athletes, Johnson tirelessly looks for ways to help. Says **Judy Hartung**, Habilitation Manager for Recreation, of Johnson's assistance "She has done a nice job helping with Special Olympics...she is a big fan of the Raiders!"

Clearly, the consumers and staff at Murray Ridge Center benefit from Johnson's volunteer work; but what, we wondered, does *she* get out of it? "I love kids. Seeing the kids smile and getting their hugs after they've just accomplished something...that makes me happy. And the staff at Murray Ridge are so great. I love every minute I spend there," says Johnson.

Don't Forget...

To visit us between August 18-24, 2008 in building 19 at the Lorain County Fair!



Lorain County Board of Mental Retardation
& Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
1091 Infirmary Road
Elyria, OH 44035

Visit our Web site
www.loraincountymrdd.org

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Murray Ridge on Parade



Murray Ridge Center was represented in the Sheffield Lake Community Days Parade.

Pictured left to right:
Landon Hunt, Racheal Seibert, LCBMRDD Board President **Michelle Hunt, Patty Clickner, Takisha Taylor, Steve Tucker, William Hunt** and **Ruby Board**.