

## A Message from the Superintendent



As we ring in 2009 at Murray Ridge Center, we face a number of exciting opportunities and necessary challenges. It is tradition, at the start of a new year, to establish resolutions that we believe will enhance our personal quality of life. So too with organizations, the new year provides an opportunity to look afresh at ways to build upon past accomplishments, and to confront emerging obstacles with positive energy.

As is the case with personal planning, organizations set the best course for success when there is a clear focus on desired outcomes, and a keen understanding of cause and effect. The purpose of the Lorain County Board of MR/DD, simply stated, is to help eligible individuals to **be healthy, enjoy life, and make accomplishments** by assisting people of all ages to address barriers experienced as a result of developmental disabilities. Because of the financial challenges currently confronting most agencies -including Murray Ridge, it is more important than ever that our programs be tailored to yield high returns in terms of our established goals.

Exceptional stewardship of public funds and design of high impact services are concepts well ingrained within the 40 + year history of Murray Ridge Center. This past year, for example, we were able to move our Service and Support Administration (SSA) department from a leased location into an agency-constructed facility behind Murray Ridge School, a move that not only significantly improved the functionality of SSA, but also will result in a large savings of funds over time. During 2008, the SSA Department used Medicaid waivers (funded primarily with state and federal dollars) to provide new residential services to 33 individuals, most of whom were either in emergency status or resided with aged family caregivers. Last year was marked also by a series of operational cost savings initiatives too numerous to list in this space, and by many low cost/life enhancing activities that can be credited to the ingenuity and resourcefulness of our staff and volunteers. Some examples of the latter include methods employed within Murray Ridge School classrooms for children with Autism (which were applauded at the 2008 Network of Autism Training & Technical Assistance Programs Conference); on-going engagement of the residents of Board-operated group homes in special leisure/recreation opportunities run by Oberlin College students; and a variety of hori-

zon-expanding activities within our Adult Day Program, such as "armchair travel" and the establishment of the acclaimed Murray Ridge Bell Choir.

To fund existing programs and services, Murray Ridge Center is dependent upon a combination of state, local, and federal funding. Unfortunately, one needn't look hard to observe the significant financial decline within our economic environment. The growing trend of failed businesses, job loss, and home foreclosures within Lorain County alone is concerning. On the national front, the unemployment rate has reached nearly 7% and in 2009, without federal stimulus action, the US Gross Domestic Product is expected to experience the steepest decrease since the Great Depression. In the next two years, Ohio is expected to confront the most serious erosion of revenues that it has experienced in the last 40 or 50 years. Given that County Boards of MR/DD are 41 years old, this means that today Murray Ridge Center faces the least favorable financial climate in the history of its existence.

In 2008, the Lorain County Board of MR/DD lost \$370,000 in state funding, and additional cuts are anticipated early this year. On-going action will be necessary to address projected financial shortfalls in the years ahead. To this end, everyone can help.

What you can do:

- Improve our understanding of how we can most effectively and efficiently serve people with developmental disabilities by providing feedback, as requested, throughout the year.
- Do your part to guarantee the success of efficiency initiatives. For example, if you attend our Adult Day Program, call us in the morning if you plan to be absent for the day. Doing so enables us to adjust staffing levels while ensuring that properly prepared staff are in position upon the arrival of consumers.
- Promote the use of natural supports and other community resources.
- Help ensure that the importance of the services provided by Murray Ridge Center are well understood within our local community and beyond.
- Attend the "Call2Action" meeting to be hosted by Murray Ridge on January 16 at 2 PM - see p. 3

*Continued on page 2....*

## Philanthropists in the Making



During the holiday season we often reflect on the things for which we are thankful. This feeling of "thanks" was the topic of a recent discussion in a Murray Ridge preschool class, as students expressed their gratitude for such things as warm clothes, food and family. The recognition of their own good fortune prompted these youngsters to con-

sider the lives of those not so fortunate, and in doing so, these 22 children decided to bring items that many of us take for granted. Over the course of two weeks these young philanthropists donated gifts of food, clothing, household supplies and even gift cards for a special family in need. During the holiday season, we all enjoy receiving gifts, but it is so nice to be reminded by youngsters that the greatest gift of all is in helping people.

## Superintendent

*continued from page 1*

Working together in an environment of open communication and energetic collaboration, we will be successful in minimizing the impact of financial challenges on those services that produce the most important outcomes for our consumers. Through our collective efforts and creativity, we can also find new and exciting ways to assist Lorain County citizens with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities to lead rewarding lives while giving back to the community. I look forward to serving and working with you in the year ahead.

*Amber Fisher*



If you would like to receive The Murray Ridge Courier via email, contact Racheal Seibert at (440) 329-3734 or email her at [rseibert@loraincountymrdd.org](mailto:rseibert@loraincountymrdd.org).

## EWAC "Travels"

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have a luau in Hawaii, ski down a Swiss mountain, or go on a safari in Africa? Well, every Thursday 15 consumers at the Elyria Work Activity Center get to experience the world through an activity called "Armchair Travel." By choosing a new "destination" and getting a video and books from the library each week, Murray Ridge Center employee **Kiki Watchorn** leads consumers on a journey to places they may otherwise never see. And all without the hassle of airport layovers and lost luggage. Concepts like these provide consumers with inexpensive yet imaginative ways to expand their horizons and to gain a greater understanding of the world around them.

This is not the only such activity that consumers are able to enjoy. Each week, a variety of activities, such as cooking classes, games, art and music, are offered to keep participants learning new skills and information, while also having fun. We are proud of our staff and volunteers for their inventive ways of serving Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities!



**Kiki Watchorn, Nancy Seighman and Rose Buery take consumers at the Elyria Work Activity Center on a "trip" to the Circus.**



# January 2009



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

4		6	7		9	10
11	12	13	14	15		17
18			21		23	24
25		27	28	29		31

## Activities & Events

- 1/5—Murray Ridge School Classes resume
- 1/8—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School
- 1/16—Call2Action Meeting, 2-4 p.m.
- 1/19—Agency Closed in Observance of MLK, Jr. Day
- 1/20—Family Support Parent Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road
- 1/22—LCBMRDD Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Elyria Work Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road
- 1/22—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School
- 1/26—Murray Ridge Support Group meeting, 4:15 p.m., Elyria Work Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 1/30 —LCBMRDD Meeting, 12:30 p.m. Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria

## Call2Action

### Learn How to Influence Your Legislators

For 25 years, the Ohio Association of County Boards of MR/DD, or OACBMR/DD, has been committed to enhancing the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. In 2006, it developed the *Call2Action* program to recruit, train, inform, organize and assist volunteers in their advocacy efforts. Today, the organization's concern and advocacy shifts to the current financial crisis the *State of Ohio* is facing, as it works to prevent any additional state cuts from occurring in areas affecting individuals with developmental disabilities. It also seeks legislation to remove administrative burdens so that our system maximizes the resources available for services.

OACB has scheduled several regional sessions around the State of Ohio targeted to equip volunteers to effectively advocate on behalf of Ohio's County Boards of MRDD, and the people they serve. **On Friday, January 16, the Lorain County Board of MRDD will host a Call2Action session from 2-4 p.m. at its administrative office: 1091 Infirmary Road in Elyria.** State Representative Matt Lundy will be on hand to answer questions and give suggestions.

The session is free and open to the public. **To reserve a space, please contact Linda Oda at (614) 431-0616 or [loda@oacbmrrdd.org](mailto:loda@oacbmrrdd.org).**

## Santa's Workshop



**Tim Christian pauses for the camera during a shopping excursion at Santa's Workshop. Items in the Workshop are donated so that consumers may do some holiday shopping for loved ones at bargain basement prices.**

## Support the Raiders!

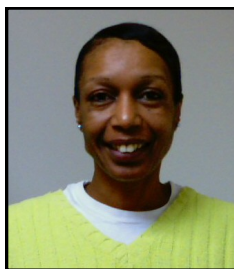
Come cheer for the Murray Ridge Raiders Basketball Teams!

January and February 2009 **Home Games** are as follows:

- **January 7**—Girls Team vs. Sandusky, 6:00 p.m.
- **January 7**—Team 2 vs. Sandusky, 7:00 p.m.
- **January 13**—Team 1 vs. Berea, 6:00 p.m.
- **January 22**—Girls Team vs. Geauga, 6:00 p.m.
- **January 24**—Team 1 vs. Cuyahoga Rockets, 10:00 a.m.
- **February 2**—Team 1 vs. Stark 1, 6:00 p.m.
- **February 7**—Girls Team vs. Medina, 10:00 a.m.
- **February 7**—Team 2 vs. Medina 11:30 a.m.
- **February 10**—Girls Team vs. Stark Ladys, 6:00 p.m.
- **February 11**—Team 2 vs. Geauga, 6:00 p.m.
- **February 11**—Team 1 vs. Geauga, 7:00 p.m.
- **February 17**—Team 2 vs. Stark Blue, 6:00 p.m.



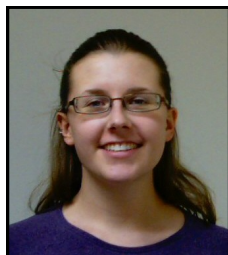
## New Faces in Murray Ridge Places



**Glenda Nelson** joins the East 9th Home as a Group Home Aide/ Housekeeper. Glenda resides in Elyria and enjoys talking long walks, cooking Sunday dinner and volunteering for Voices for Children in her spare time.



**Bob Pando** joins Murray Ridge as Custodial Services Manager. Bob resides in Amherst with his wife and three children and enjoys camping, fishing, boating and billiards.



**Stephanie Way** joins the South Professor Home as the Clerical Counselor. Stephanie earned her Bachelor's degree in Human Development and Social Relations from Earlham College, and she enjoys reading and tae kwon do.

## BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of MR/DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on December 19, 2008.

Superintendent Fisher updated the Board on changes and challenges with the State Budget, having recently attended a special briefing in Columbus. Dr. Fisher reported that, despite two previous rounds of cuts, additional action will be required to address a currently estimated gap of \$640,000,000 in the state budget. She added that the projected shortfall may be adjusted pending the consideration of holiday retail tax revenues and a potential federal recovery package. Consequently, an additional reduction in funding to the Lorain County Board of MR/DD is anticipated prior to February 2009. For the upcoming state biennium budget (covering the period 07/01/2009—06/30/2011), a \$4.7 billion deficit is expected, even at the previously announced 10% reduction guidance levels. It is believed that the worst case scenario that this could yield is a 35% cut in state funding for agencies. How future cuts will be passed from the Ohio Department of MR/DD to county boards of MR/DD is as yet undetermined. In other business, the Board unanimously approved the 2009 operating agreement between the agency and Murray Ridge Production Center Inc., and 2009 Supported Living Program Policy/ Individual and Group Cost Caps Resolution. Farewells were expressed to departing Board members Dan White and Janet Remalius-Taylor, each of whom received a plaque in appreciation of their years of volunteer services on the Board.

## 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 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 324-2366.

—The Editor



# 2009 Lunch Menu



For the convenience of Murray Ridge consumers and their families, we are posting the lunch menu for the 2009 year in its entirety in this issue of The Murray Ridge Courier. **Please maintain this copy for your records and refer to it in the coming months, as monthly newsletters are not disseminated before the first of each month.** The menu will also be available on our website under the January 2009 monthly newsletter tab. If you have questions or need a replacement copy, please contact Racheal Seibert at 329-3734 at any time during the year.

**Please note that the cost of adult lunches will be \$2.70 beginning January 1, 2009. The cost of student lunches will still be \$2.65.**

**January 5-9**  
**January 26-30**  
**February 16-20**  
**March 9-13**  
**March 30-April 3**  
**April 20-24**  
**May 11-15**  
**June 1-5**  
**June 22-26**  
**July 13-17**  
**August 3-7**  
**August 24-28**  
**September 14-18**  
**October 5-9**  
**October 26-30**  
**November 16-20**  
**December 7-11**  
**December 28-January 1**

**Monday-** Salisbury Steak w/Gravy, Scal-  
loped 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

**January 12-16**  
**February 2-6**  
**February 23-27**  
**March 16-20**  
**April 6-10**  
**April 27-May 1**  
**May 18-22**  
**June 8-12**  
**June 29-July 3**  
**July 20-24**  
**August 10-14**  
**August 31-September 4**  
**September 21-25**  
**October 12-16**  
**November 2-6**  
**November 23-27**  
**December 14-18**

**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, Wheat  
Bread, Cookie

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

**Friday-** Macaroni & Cheese, Cooked Car-  
rots, Diced Pears, Cookie

**January 19-23**  
**February 9-13**  
**March 2-6**  
**March 23-27**  
**April 13-17**  
**May 4-8**  
**May 25-29**  
**June 15-19**  
**July 6-10**  
**July 27-31**  
**August 17-21**  
**September 7-11**  
**September 28-October 2**  
**October 19-23**  
**November 9-13**  
**November 30-December 4**  
**December 21-25**

**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 Mental Retardation  
& Developmental Disabilities

**Murray Ridge Center**  
1091 Infirmary Road  
Elyria, OH 44035

Visit our Website  
[www.loraincountymrdd.org](http://www.loraincountymrdd.org)

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## **The Pizza House—Lunch Served with a Side of Philanthropy**

In order to raise funds for much-needed communication devices, students at Murray Ridge School recently began operating The Pizza House each Thursday, exclusively serving Murray Ridge staff. These ambitious students participate in all aspects of this money-making venture by helping with orders, greeting staff and collecting money.

Pizza costs \$1.50 per slice and staff may choose either cheese or pepperoni. Orders must be placed with Kelly Moe each Wednesday and pick-up begins at 11:30 a.m. on Thursdays. Cancellations must be made by Thursday morning.

**Buono appetite!**



## **Buy Groceries and Raise Funds for Murray Ridge**

We all need to eat, and we all like to support Murray Ridge. So, why not help to raise funds for Friends of Murray Ridge while you're running your weekly errands? When you present your free membership card at any Gordon Food Service, a portion of the proceeds will go to Friends of Murray Ridge. You may use your card at several convenient locations in NE Ohio.

If you would like to know more about how your weekly shopping can benefit Murray Ridge, contact John Bonko at 329-3734.

