

The Murray Ridge Courier

December 2007

A Message From The Superintendent



As 2007 winds to a close, and we begin to prepare for the coming year, we indeed have much to be thankful

for. Forty years ago, in December of 1967, County Boards of MR/DD were created by Ohio's General Assembly through Senate Bill 169. Since that time, there has been enormous growth in the programs and services available to citizens with developmental disabilities.

Today, Murray Ridge Center serves more than 2,000 individuals each year, providing services ranging from early intervention for infants and toddlers at risk of developmental delays to special programs for senior citizens who participate in our Adult Day programs. Importantly, while most individuals with MR/DD reside in the family home, we are able to provide community-based residential care to hundreds of individuals in need of this service. However, a significant challenge faced locally and across the nation, is the existence of many individuals with MR/DD who reside with aged family caregivers. In Lorain County, many of these individuals will be dependent upon Murray Ridge to provide comprehensive care and supervision when their families are no longer able to do so.

The state FY 2008/FY 2009 Biennium Budget provides some relief to county boards seeking to meet critical needs for residential services. As a result of a long-standing class action lawsuit, the "Martin case," the Ohio Department of MR/DD's budget provides state Medicaid match of \$6.5 million in FY 2008 and \$29 million in FY 2009, to support an additional 1,500 Medicaid waivers statewide. (Waivers pull down federal funding for 60% of the cost of certain supports for people with MR/DD, while requiring a 40% state or local match to the federal dollars.) The Lorain County Board of MR/DD looks forward to reducing our residential waiting list through the use of "Martin waivers."

While we have received good news about funding for residential services, state funding for other services remains flat despite rising costs, and may be reduced significantly in coming years. Consequently, it is important to continually look for opportunities to conserve resources and to enhance long-term financial stability. To this end, the Board is constructing a building for its Service and Support Administration (SSA) department on the grounds at Murray Ridge School. This facility will ultimately save the agency hundreds of thousands of dollars in rental fees. We look forward to moving our SSA's into the new building by March of 2008.

Another goal for March of 2008 will be the passage of a five-year 1.6875 mills renewal levy.

The Board has requested that this levy be placed on the March 4 ballot because our current 1.6875 mills levy is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2008. This levy, originally passed in 1988, provides nearly 25% of our agency's operating revenue. Clearly, **the passage of this ballot issue is critical for the continuation of programs offered through Murray Ridge Center.** The current "effective millage" on this levy is less than 1.12 mills, and it will cost the owner of a \$100,000 home approximately 9 cents per day. Importantly, **this levy will cost local tax payers no new money.**

In closing, I would like to extend a message of gratitude to the citizens of Lorain County, without whom many opportunities and critically necessary services for people with MR/DD could not exist. Local levies currently supply about half of the funding for Murray Ridge Center, funding that is needed to pull down state and federal dollars. But the contributions of the local community go well beyond the provision of financial support. At this time, local businesses provide community-based employment options for more than 350 Murray Ridge consumers, and more than 150 individuals volunteer at Murray Ridge each year.

In the months ahead, as we celebrate 40 years of partnership with our community, I encourage everyone to speak often to friends and neighbors about the scope and importance of county board services.

May you all enjoy a safe and happy holiday season!

Amber Fisher

Special Olympics Award Banquet: Honoring Our Champions

Nearly 300 Special Olympic athletes, family members, coaches, volunteers and friends gathered recently to celebrate the bravery and perseverance demonstrated by our athletes this year at the Special Olympics Awards Banquet. The Keynote address was given by Aaron Tredway, founder and goal keep of the Cleveland City Stars, a professional soccer team in Cleveland. Mr. Tredway shared his childhood dreams of playing professional soccer after his father introduced it to him during a backyard game at age five. With the encouragement



*Pictured above: Special Olympics athlete **Charles Johnson** and **Aaron Tredway**, founder and goal keeper of the Cleveland City Stars.*

of his family, Tredway did grow up to play professional soccer for such teams as The Black Aces of Zimbabwe and the Avondale Team of South Africa. Eventually he founded the Cleveland City Stars where



*Pictured above: Special Olympic athlete **Donald Lappin** after receiving an award.*

he also plays the position of goal keeper. Tredway wanted to give others the encouragement and opportunity to pursue their dreams that he received throughout his life. Aside from providing the highest level of professional outdoor soccer in Northeast Ohio, the Stars also hope to bring education and positive role models to those who are often overlooked. The team regularly provides soccer training, Information Technology education and other life-enriching skills to the underprivileged youth of Cleveland.

The leadership and commitment shown by the Stars is just what being a Special Olympian is all about. Congratulations to all Murray ridge Special Olympic athletes and best of luck during the 2007-2008 season!

Recycling Program Saves Center Dollars

Did you know that of every 100 pounds of trash thrown away in the United States, 35 pounds is paper? The good news is that almost all paper is recyclable, and some companies will actually compensate organizations for taking the time to collect recyclables.

This is why, more than two years ago, Murray Ridge Center employees **Trena Albrecht**, **Donna Smith** and **Micky Woods** suggested that Murray Ridge recycle the paper used throughout the agency. The idea was well-received, so Murray Ridge began working with Abitibi Consolidated, which then donated recycling bins to the Murray Ridge Work Activity Centers in Elyria and Lorain, the Murray Ridge School and the Service and Support Administration site.

Funds gained from this process are used to offset costs associated with MRDD consumer activities such as recreation, sports and the Special Olympics. For example, enough money has been earned over the last two years to purchase basketball hoops and basketballs for the three Work Activity Centers.

Murray Ridge Center is proud to care for our environment, and to be fiscally responsible while doing so. We encourage you to help our environment by recycling, and to consider dropping *your* paper recyclables in the Abitibi containers at any of our sites.

New Faces in Murray Ridge Places



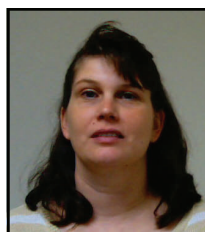
Beth D'Ambrosio has been hired as an Intervention Specialist for Murray Ridge School. Beth earned her B.S. in Special Education from Mansfield University. She enjoys reading, playing with her children, boating and cooking.



Eric Gilbert has been hired at a Workshop Aide at Oberlin Work Activity Center. Eric studied graphic design at West Liberty State College and previously worked for REM of West Virginia. He enjoys basketball and art.



Amber Fox joins Meister Road Home as a Residential Assistant/Cook. She has previously worked for Home Health Supportive Solutions and Home Health TLC. Her hobbies are painting, arts and crafts, and reading.



Sue Null joins South Professor Home as a Group Home Aide/Permanent Sub. She graduated from Western Reserve High School and received a certificate in Early Childhood Development from EHOVE Career Center. Sue enjoys walking, crafts, reading, camping and family parties.

Halloween Fun



Debbie Griffee, takes a moment to smile for the camera during the Elyria Work Activity Center Senior's Halloween party. Griffee and co-worker **Ken Lewis** delighted party-goers with a fun, and spooky, haunted house.

Board Room Briefing

At the November 19 meeting of the Lorain County Board of MR/DD:

Superintendent Fisher announced that the Lorain County Commissioners unanimously endorsed the Board's request to put a 1.6875 mills renewal levy on the March 4 ballot. Dr. Fisher added that the Murray Ridge Levy Committee had informed her that they were already successful in securing strategic media opportunities for effective communication of the levy issue. Board President Dan White was selected to serve as Board delegate and Superintendent Fisher as the alternate delegate at the Ohio Association of County Boards of MR/DD delegate assembly being held in Columbus, on December 5. In other business, the Board approved a new two-year contract for representation of Murray Ridge by the Lorain County Prosecutor's Office; and a new chain of command reflecting the elimination of the Assistant Superintendent position, and the addition of a Director of Communications, and manager-level Community Education and Volunteer Coordinator. Superintendent Fisher also introduced the agency's 2008 Operating Budget, which was unanimously approved by the Board. Bill Flecher, Director of Operations, reported that construction of the new SSA building was continuing to proceed on time and on budget.

December 2007

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	31 Program Closing					

Program Closing

Murray Ridge Center Events

12/3—Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, Elyria Work Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Rd., 4:15 p.m.

12/7—Murray Ridge Support Group Dance, Murray Ridge School, 9750 S. Murray Ridge Rd., 7:00 p.m.

12/13—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School

12/17—LCBMR/DD Meeting, Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria, 8:00 p.m.

12/25—Agency Closed in Observance of Christmas Day

12/26-12/31—Agency Program Closing Days

Pony Whisperer



*Pictured right: Murray Ridge School student **Jimmy Woods** kisses the nose of one of Dr. Buckley's miniature horses.*

Oberlin dentist **Dr. Jeffrey Buckley** and his wonderful team of volunteers recently brought several miniature ponies to Murray Ridge School. The children were delighted to visit with their new furry friends in the school gymnasium.

Happy Holidays!



With all of the delicious aromas, colorful decorations, special music and snow, the holidays can be a magical time of the year. But, it can also bring a significant amount of stress. By following a few simple hints, you can reduce the amount of stress you feel this holiday season. First, set realistic expectations—the holidays do not have to be perfect to be enjoyed. Also, starting a little sooner with your holiday plans, and asking for help along the way, can ease some of the panic that many feel closer to the "big day." Finally, with all the activity taking place during the season, many people forget to take care of themselves by getting proper sleep and exercise. Everyone experiences a little anxiety during the holidays. But, if you follow some simple tips for stress relief, you may enjoy an even happier holiday season.

Murray Ridge Center would like to wish all Lorain County residents a happy—and relaxing—holiday season!



An Apple a Day



Murray Ridge Center Early Intervention student **Braden Hamer** enjoys the fruits of his labor after spending the day picking apples at Apple Hill Orchard.

How Sweet It Is

Murray Ridge Center employee **Krista Brown** recently entered—and won—the Dibs® Quest for a Cooler Workplace contest which focused on positive work environments. The award, which consists of a freezer full of Dibs® ice cream, will be distributed at various Murray Ridge events and activities.



The "Incidental" Column

Hello! I recently had the pleasure of speaking to a veteran MRDD employee. Through this conversation an interesting fact emerged. Prior to the advent of the Major Unusual Incident (MUI) rule, there were no consistent guidelines for reviewing client safety.



John Syrowski

This month I would like to share the genesis of the MUI rule with you. I hope you will find it interesting as well.

In an effort to provide for the safety of all Ohio MRDD consumers in a consistent manner, Ohio House Bill 538 established new requirements in September of 2000 for review of adverse consumer incidents and authorized the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) to promulgate rules governing incident oversight and investigation for consumers. From this impetus the MUI unit evolved, developing into a statewide effort to manage reports of abuse, neglect and other adverse incidents uniformly in all of Ohio's 88 counties. This initiative, which was to become known as the "MUI Rule" became effective on November 23, 2001.

In its most essential aspects, the MUI Rule defines incidents reportable as Unusual Incidents (UI's) and MUI's; establishes time frames by which providers must report MUI's to the county board of MRDD; specifies that incidents meeting certain criteria also must be reported to law enforcement, Children's Services and the Service and Support Administrator responsible for an individual's service coordination. In addition, the Rule specifies time frames that Investigative Agents must follow for reporting to the ODMRDD.

While seemingly complicated, the effect of this Rule is to put tangible guidelines for consumer health and safety into place.

Incidentally Yours,
John

Editor's Note: Over time we hope to feature a guest columnist on a occasional basis. It will give everyone an opportunity to know a little bit more about how different departments work to serve the mission of Murray Ridge.

Lorain County Board of Mental Retardation
& Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
1091 Infirmary Road
Elyria, OH 44035

Standard Presort
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 146
Elyria, OH 44035

Visit our Web site
www.loraincountymrdd.org



Lunch Menus for Murray Ridge Center

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.55, Adults = \$2.50

Week of December 17-21 And Week of January 7-11

Monday- Ham, 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

Week of December 3-7 And Week of December 24-28

Monday- Chicken Patty on a Bun, Potato Wedges, 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, Jelly, Cookie

Thursday- Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Fresh Fruit, Nutri-Grain Bar

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

Week of December 10-14 And Week of Dec. 31-Jan. 4

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