

Let Them Be Brave....

More than 300 athletes, coaches, family members and volunteers attended the annual Special Olympics banquet on November 3 to celebrate the accomplishments of the athletes, as well as the spirit of friendly competition.

The keynote address was given by Sanford Washington, Jr., who is currently the Administrator for Echoing Lakes. Washington grew up in Youngstown, Ohio, where he was an All-American athlete in football, baseball and track. Following high school, he went on to play football for the University of Michigan where he competed in the Blue Bonnet Bowl, the Gator Bowl and twice in the Rose Bowl. Due to his collegiate athletic success, he was invited to try out for the Denver Broncos in 1982. While he ultimately did not make the team, he did make it to the final round, exemplifying the Special Olympics oath of "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Washington recounted the year he was to try out for the Broncos. He hurt himself in a game leading up to the Rose Bowl. Determined, however, not to let down his team, his coach, his family or, more importantly



Athletes Wally Schrenkel (left) and Alexshaun Averett chat during the Special Olympics Banquet.



Sanford Washington, Jr. talks to the athletes about attitude and perseverance.

himself, he worked hard to recover and to return to the football field. That year, he came back to play in the Rose Bowl. Said Washington of life's challenges, "You have to play through the adversity and persevere."

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Before leaving the stage, Washington reminded everyone that four key phrases help him to keep things in perspective: life isn't always fair; no one is perfect; life is a series of choices; and attitude is everything. This message was not lost on the audience as they enthusiastically applauded.

Judy Hartung, Habilitation Manager, Recreation, then expressed her appreciation and congratulations to the assembled athletes for a tremendous year of successes and sportsmanship. She called attendees forward for personalized recognition, and each was given a commemorative bag with the Special Olympics logo and the words "Special Olympics Ohio, Lorain County, Murray Ridge Center" by Board President Michelle L. Hunt and immediate past President Daniel White.

From Lorain to London and Back



Steven Slutzker talks about his recent vacation to London, England.

Traveling the world is a dream that many of us have, and Murray Ridge consumer Steve Slutzker shares this dream. This globe-trotter has seen many places since he began traveling in 1991, and most recently added London, England to his list. Intrigued by Windsor's Castle and "funny accents," he decided that his vacation plans this year would involve double-decker buses and a Queen.

After saving up all the money he could from his job at an Amherst theatre, and receiving some assistance from his family in arranging a specialized tour group for persons with challenges, Steve embarked on an eight-hour flight from Philadelphia to London. In London he stayed in the Kensington Close hotel which, he said, was "beautiful but you had to pay for extras like swimming and more tv channels. The staff were nice, though." He also had the opportunity to see such famous landmarks as Buckingham Palace and Big Ben. Said Slutzker, "I saw a lot of history."

While possibly his favorite trip to date, this journey was not his first excursion outside of the United States. A seasoned traveler, Slutzker has also seen such places as Nova Scotia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Ireland, where he says he "kissed the Blarney stone," and was able to enjoy the Irish Stew and Shepherd's Pie. He says that he likes to travel because "I like being around other people...there are a lot of people to meet." He claims

that, when meeting these new people, language never poses a barrier, "I don't speak other languages, but I don't have problems communicating. We figure it out."

Slutzker has also traveled extensively within the borders of the U.S., visiting places like Orlando, Florida, Las Vegas, Nevada and San Francisco where he was able to tour Alcatraz. "That place was a little spooky," he said.

Future plans might include travel to China to see the Great Wall. But, for now, as much as he has enjoyed all his travel, Slutzker said he was happy to return home to Lorain County. "I grew up here...I am happy here."



I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.

—Charles Dickens

Horsing Around



Steven Fosdick snuggles up to a furry friend who came to visit students at Murray Ridge School. Oberlin dentist Dr. Jeffrey Buckley and his team of volunteers delighted students at the school with a visit from several miniature ponies.

Spreading Holiday Cheer

The Murray Ridge Choraleers are gearing up for another season of holiday performances. On November 22, the musical group performed for more than 300 people at the annual Thanksgiving Dinner for the homeless at the Lorain Lighthouse Methodist Church. And on November 23, they sang at Midway United Methodist Church and enjoyed a holiday feast, themselves, afterward.

Many more individuals throughout Lorain County will have the opportunity to enjoy these angelic voices as the group travels to various organizations throughout the month of December to sing holiday music. If you are interested in having the Choraleers perform at your organization, please contact **Danielle Musat**, Choraleers Director, at (440) 329-3760.



The Murray Ridge Choraleers perform for more than 300 people at the Lighthouse United Methodist Church.

Murray Ridge Teachers Invited to Speak at Autism Conference



Two years ago, teachers from Murray Ridge School began training in an innovative new model for autism education. This method, the "Ziggurat Model," focuses on positive behavioral interventions and supports. Our team of educators has been so successful in the implementation of this model that they were invited to present their methods and strategies re-

cently at the Network of Autism Training & Technical Assistance Programs, or NATTAP, Conference. NATTAP is the premier international autism conference in training, technical assistance and strategies for autism education.

At the conference, the Murray Ridge team discussed how they worked together to find ways for staff and parents to coordinate their efforts, as well as how to select and monitor interventions. Issues and strategies involving such program components as team-building, home/school coordination, behavior support, materials acquisition, time constraints, continuing education and administrative support were addressed.

Said teacher **Joan Lunsford** of the conference, "We presented to over 100 people with a very positive response and had several requests for follow-up information and training. Personally, I felt the greatest compliment we received was after our presentation, when someone told me, 'you all must really enjoy your jobs, I could really see how much you love and care for your kids!' " Congratulations, to the Murray Ridge School team!

Support the Raiders!

Come cheer for the Murray Ridge Raiders Basketball Teams as they gear up for another exciting season.

December **Home Games** are as follows:

- December 17—Team 2 vs. Lake County, 6:00 p.m.
- December 18—Team 2 and Team 1 vs. Erie County, 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- December 22—Team 1 vs. Summit County, 6:15 p.m.



New Faces in Murray Ridge Places



Doug Johnson joins the Oberlin Work Activity Center as a Workshop Aide.



Samantha Smith joins the East College Home as a Group Home Aide/Housekeeper.

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 440-324-2366.

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.

BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of MR/DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on November 21, 2008:



Superintendent Fisher informed the Board that 13 counties had MR/DD levies on the ballot during the November election and all but one passed. President Hunt and Dr. Fisher reported on their service as the Murray Ridge Board delegates to the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD Delegate Assembly held on October 27. They noted that, while the resolution to support the legislative efforts to remove the words "mental retardation" from county board titles passed, it did so with a provision that allows Boards to maintain references to "mental retardation" in ballot language when levies are put before voters; they also explained that a resolution regarding the potential ownership of property by county boards resulted in a tie vote, which constitutes "failed to pass". A resolution to support legislation that would allow county boards to use tax dollars for levy campaigns failed. In other business, Dr. Fisher asked the Board to approve five additional Level 1 waiver enrollments. The request was unanimously approved. Board members Henry Patterson and Dan White reported that the Special Olympics Committee met and was impressed and encouraged by the dedication of staff and consumers to the success of all the agency's athletic programs. President Hunt added that she was very moved by the annual Murray Ridge Special Olympics Sports Banquet that recognized the contributions of more than 200 consumer-athletes on November 3 at Lorain County Community College. The Board also voted to eliminate the current Adult Services Summer Recreation Program so that it could be replaced with a program that offers more year-round recreation opportunities; and it voted to maintain the Murray Ridge School Day Camp. The Board tasked administrators however with attempting to find ways to reduce and recoup the costs of the camp. Finally, the Board unanimously approved the 2009 operating budget and commended the superintendent and staff for instituting a number of measures resulting in significant savings in a number of areas.



December 2008

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 Murray Ridge School Winter Break Begins. Classes Resume January 5	23	24	25 	26 Agency Closed	27
28	29 Agency Closed until January 2	30	31			

Activities & Events

- 12/1—Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, 4:15 p.m., Elyria Work Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 12/5—Murray Ridge Support Group dance, 7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 S. Murray Ridge Road, Elyria
- 12/9—Family Support Parent Committee meeting, 6:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road
- 12/18—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:00 -6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School
- 12/19—LCBMRDD Meeting, 12:30 p.m. Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 12/22—1/4—**Murray Ridge School closed for winter break. Classes resume 1/5**
- 12/25—**Agency Closed in Observance of Christmas**
- 12/26—1/2—**Program Closing Days**



Lunch Menus

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.65, Adults = \$2.55



December 8-12

December 29-January 2

January 19-23

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

December 15-19

January 5-9

January 26-30

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

December 1-5

December 22-26

January 12-16

February 2-6

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

Lorain County Board of Mental Retardation
& Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
1091 Infirmary Road
Elyria, OH 44035

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Visit our Web site
www.loraincountymrdd.org

Merry Christmas!

It's time once again for decorating trees, baking cookies shaped like reindeer and singing carols. And as you are enjoying the unique joy that comes but once a year, you may be curious to know how people around the world celebrate the Christmas season.

- In the Ukraine, a 12-course meal is prepared, but may not be eaten until the youngest child in the family sees the first evening star through the window.
- In Australia, where Christmas falls in the middle of summer, outdoor barbeques are common.
- Many people in Southern France burn a log in their homes from Christmas eve until January 1st to ensure good luck for the next year's harvest.
- The Swedish honor St. Lucia on December 13, which is considered the beginning of the Christmas season. On this day, the eldest daughter wakes up first, dresses in a long white gown with a red sash and a crown of twigs and candles before waking family members. The family then has breakfast in a room lighted with candles.
- Children in Spain leave their shoes on the windowsill and fill them with straw, carrots and barley for the horses of the Three Wise Men.
- And in Caracas, the capital city of Venezuela, people roller skate to early-morning church services daily between December 16-December 24.

However you and your loved ones celebrate the season, we at Murray Ridge Center wish all Lorain County residents a joyous holiday season!

