



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

The Murray Ridge Courier

February 2015

A Message From The Superintendent



Superintendent Amber Fisher

In the September, 2014 and January, 2015 editions of the Courier I provided information about two aspects of a recent rule made by CMS (the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services), the federal Medicaid agency. One part of this rule relates to community-based service delivery (see a brief history of this movement re-printed

on p. 6). Another part of this rule, which requires "Conflict Free Case Management," suggests that county boards of DD will not be allowed to directly provide Medicaid waiver (e.g. IO Waiver and Level 1 Waiver) services because county boards also provide Service & Support Administration. Aside from the fact that both issues are addressed in the same rule and both may profoundly impact service delivery to people with developmental disabilities, the two issues are not related. If Murray Ridge Adult Services meets all of the CMS expectations for community-based service delivery, it will still not be able to receive Medicaid funding for services provided to waiver recipients. (For example, Murray Ridge will not be allowed to provide Community Employment services through the Medicaid waiver programs.) Additionally, Medicaid waiver services delivered by providers other than the county board will need to meet the community-based service requirements of the CMS rule.

Regarding movement toward a community-based model of service delivery, CMS has required every state to develop and, after taking public feedback, submit a Transition Plan. In January, many program participants and their family members/advocates attended Transition Plan meetings hosted by the Ohio Department of DD in order to learn more about the vision of Ohio's Transition Plan Committee, and ask questions about it. A special thank you goes to the Murray Ridge Support Group for making arrangements for dozens of program participants and their loved ones to attend a Transition Plan meeting

on January 8. Many questions remain about how the community-based services model will work for the very diverse group of Ohioans with developmental disabilities who are enrolled on Medicaid waivers. Currently, Murray Ridge is actively exploring challenges and opportunities associated with community-based service delivery, recognizing that we must continuously evolve to enrich the lives of those we serve.

Regarding the 'county board as Medicaid waiver provider issue,' which is entirely unrelated to the Transition Plan, CMS has now requested that our state submit a Corrective Action Plan. In Ohio, we were hopeful that CMS would, at a minimum, allow waiver recipients currently served by county boards to continue to receive services from the county boards as long as this was their choice. However, CMS has taken the position that, once there are enough providers in a county to provide adult services to all waiver recipients in the county, the county board may no longer provide both (Medicaid) direct services and case management (i.e. SSA) to individuals, regardless of whether or not they have served them before. Further, CMS is expecting Ohio to comply with the Conflict Free Case Management provision of its rule before 2019. Public feedback on this topic will not be officially requested.

The Murray Ridge Support Group has shared that it will continue to assist program participants and their families to learn about and 'weigh in' on issues impacting their futures. I will provide updates, as new information becomes available. We, at Murray Ridge, remain dedicated to working with eligible individuals, their family members, community partners, local businesses, a network of service providers, and our exceptional staff to implement and impact change in a way that is responsive to the needs, preferences and aspirations of all Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities.

Amber Fisher
Superintendent

Murray Ridge Raiders Basketball Teams



Team 1

Back row, l-r: Coach Tyler, Jeff Torres, D.J. Overall, Ryan Eliason, Steve Locurto, Carl Jeans, Joe Garsky, Coach Leroy. Front row, l-r: Albert Mays, Jonathon Torres, Ray Begner, Leif Hammond, Ryan Brown.



Team 2

Back row, l-r: Coach Russ, Jeremy Foster, Charles Johnson, Pat Whitworth, Dan Montgomery, Tim Dammeyer, Dough McCartney, Coach Wes. Front row, l-r: Tony Harris, Raul Torres, Hector Lozano, Isiah Wicks, Jesse Kimbrough, Jason St. Mary.



Team 3

Back row, l-r: Coach Sean Morris, Coach, Bill Lacko, Eric Bryner, Kurt Caris, James Peters, Kevin Long, Victor Elder, Coach Jim Ward. Front row, l-r: Angel Rivera, Mark Evans, Marko Govich, Matt Griffin, David Zsigray.



Lady Raiders

Back row, l-r: Coach Mary, Diana Clement, Sherri Reitenbach, Maria Pincura, JoAnn Gall, Alicia Lawrence, Stephanie Budweg, Coach Lisa. Back row, l-r: Elena Reinhold, Katie Mihalek, Jennifer Hunsucker, Megan Craig, Sarah Ward, Stacy Smith, Maria Poling.



Skills Team

Catch your favorite team at one of the remaining season games!

2/7/15	Team 3	Away	Medina County	10:30 am
2/12/15	Team 3	Home	Elyria Vipers	6:00 pm
2/12/15	Team 2	Home	Elyria Vipers	7:30 pm
2/14/15	Team 1	Away	Cuyahoga Cnty	10:00 am
2/19/15	Team 3	Away	Stark County Blue	6:30 pm
2/23/15	Team 3	Away	Elyria Vipers	6:00 pm
2/23/15	Team 2	Away	Elyria Vipers	7:30 pm

Murray Ridge School Students Graduate from Veggie U

After a five-week learning program, the Murray Ridge School Veggie University Graduation Ceremony and show was held Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 1:00 in the school's gym. The ceremony consisted of a brief veggie-themed performance by each Murray Ridge School primary classroom; the ceremony concluded with a graduation certificate awarded to each student, followed by a veggie recipe tasting in each Veggie U sponsored classroom.

Veggie U is a national non-profit organization. It has been working with schools since 2003, and has contributed Classroom Gardens to more than 5,000 classrooms in 36 states; 14 schools in Lorain County have been involved with Veggie U. The organization's mission is to supply Classroom Gardens and a standards-based, five-week science program to elementary and special needs students. They are dedicated to increasing children's awareness of healthy food options, and teaching them how real food reaches their plate.

"We were so excited and honoured to be invited to attend the Veggie U graduation ceremony at Murray Ridge School," said Veggie U Marketing Director Vicki Jenkins. "Murray Ridge students are among the first

'graduates' of our A+ program for students with special needs. It's so rewarding for our staff when we are able to see the students' enthusiasm and how our program makes an impact. We'd also like to thank the Nordson Corporation Foundation for helping fund Veggie U in Lorain County."

Staff at Murray Ridge School were equally impressed with what the students gained from the experience. "It's important to address proper eating habits early on in a child's life," said Dann Swift, Murray Ridge Center's Director of Educational and Children's Services. "This fun and interesting project hopefully will lay the foundation for a lifetime of healthy eating."

Congratulations to all of the Murray Ridge School Veggie University graduates!



Above: Superintendent Amber Fisher, Director of Education Dann Swift, Teacher Kristin Dickerhoff, and special guests from Veggie University: Vicki Jenkins, Marketing Director; Nadia Clifford, Executive Director; Lynne Eirons, Education Manager; and Caracol Hadley, Veggie U volunteer and Oberlin College student.

Right, top: Each classroom harvested its veggies for the graduation ceremony. Right, bottom: Cameron Conn and Shelly Stipe smile in their veggie outfits.



Gift Gives Voice to Murray Ridge School Student

Xavier Moore has found his voice.

On January 29, two representatives from A Special Wish Foundation visited Murray Ridge School and presented Xavier with a brand new voice output device. A voice output device (VOD) gives a child a voice when he or she is unable to produce functional speech independently; it allows a child to make choices, express wants and needs, and engage in social interaction with peers and adults in more appropriate ways. The device, more commonly known as a "talker," typically runs around \$3,000, and is often-times a difficult item for families to purchase, even though it can be life-changing.

A Special Wish Foundation is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to granting the wishes of children and young adults, from birth through age 20, in Erie, Huron, Lorain, and Medina Counties who have been diagnosed with a life threatening condition. Last year alone, the organization made more than 25 donations to young people throughout these counties. The group's revenue is solely donation-based, and the gifts they present can run from small gifts to large trips, depending on the specific wish of the family.

For Xavier, who was born with cerebral palsy, cortical blindness, and hearing loss, having the talker will allow him the freedom to express himself and offer a level of communication that he currently only has at school, where he uses a Murray Ridge Center owned machine.



Teacher Vickie Nagy shows the new talker to Xavier, his sister, Hannah, and his mother, Sarah.

"Probably the most important part of gaining a VOD for a student is that the student's self esteem increases greatly as people begin to actually listen to them," said Xavier's teacher, Vickie Nagy. "This device will benefit Xavier in the classroom by allowing him to be more engaged, to use his voice to interact with others, and to fully express himself."

Joining Xavier for his special day were mother, Sarah, and sister, Hannah, who are thrilled to have the opportunity to communicate with Xavier at home.

"We have no way to talk to him now," Sarah said. "Right now, there's no verbal communication at home. It's basically just knowing him and responding to things that we think he needs. This will change that completely."

SSA Director Completes Doctor of Management



Board President Michelle Hunt awards Jeff with a plaque at the Board meeting.

After eight years of hard work and dedication, Jeff Neal earned a Doctor of Management degree from Colorado Technical University in Colorado Springs, CO. He was honored at the January 30 Board meeting for his accomplishment.

Jeff, the Service & Support Administration Director at Murray Ridge Center, spent three years taking classes and five years on research to earn his degree. Since this accomplishment, Jeff has co-authored a book that was published in October of 2014. His goal is to someday teach part time. Congratulations, Jeff!

Call 440.329.3760 to purchase tickets

Murray Ridge School Prom

fundraiser

Sunday, March 1, 2015
from 3:00 - 7:00 pm
(during the Cavs/Rockets game)
at Ziggy's Pub & Restaurant
193 Park Avenue, Amherst



Tickets are \$20 each and include:
All you can eat pizza and all you can
drink draft beer and fountain drinks

Many chances to win:
50/50 Raffle
★ Square-board for the game ★
Gift Basket Raffles
Door Prizes

Important Weather-Related Announcements

Murray Ridge program closing information will be available on TV station Fox 8, on the Fox 8 website fox8.com, and on radio stations WEOL 930 AM and WOBL 1320 AM, as it has in the past. **There will be two separate listings for Murray Ridge Center:**

- **Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers**
- **Murray Ridge School**

Parents and caregivers of school students should disregard the "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers" listing, and follow only the listing for "Murray Ridge School." Conversely, adult consumers who attend our Opportunity/Vocational Centers and their parents/caregivers should disregard the "Murray Ridge School" listing, and follow only the listing for "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers."

If "Open—No Transportation" follows the announcement for "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers," parents/caregivers are welcome to transport adult consumers to their day service sites. Regular programming will be provided. Consumers should be dropped off no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and must be picked up by 3:45 p.m.

In the event of bad weather, the decision to transport individuals to Murray Ridge Center will be based on the ability of our buses to travel safely on city and county roads. Regardless of whether or not transportation is available through Murray Ridge Center, if our Opportunity/Vocational Centers are open, but there is an individual concern about the weather, adult consumers should feel free to stay home. Likewise, parents/caregivers of Murray Ridge School students who have individual concerns regarding the weather should feel free to keep their child at home.

Please be aware that transportation to enclave sites is generally available even if transportation to the Opportunity/Vocational Centers is cancelled. Murray Ridge Center does not broadcast the status of enclave transportation on the television or radio. Consumers should assume that enclave transportation will be available unless they receive a phone call from a member of our Supported Employment program.

First Student bus company can be reached at 288-2222

Some Background on the Community-Based Services Movement

Often referenced in the discussion about community-based services is a lawsuit called **Olmstead v. L.C.** which resulted, fifteen years ago, in a ruling that requires "states to eliminate unnecessary segregation of persons with developmental disabilities and to ensure that persons with disabilities receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs." Five years ago, the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) initiated an "aggressive effort to enforce the Supreme Court's decision in Olmstead v. L.C." Although the original lawsuit involved residential services, the ruling has more recently been applied to settings in which people with developmental disabilities receive day services.

In July of 2014, Disability Rights Ohio (DRO), an advocacy group previously called Ohio Legal Rights Service, sent a letter to Governor Kasich and several state officials expressing its concern that parts of Ohio's service delivery system for people with developmental disabilities are not in compliance with the Olmstead decision. The DRO letter addressed both residential facilities and adult day services sites, like our Opportunity/Vocational Centers. The DRO letter went on to call for the Ohio Department of DD to begin to implement changes that better allow people with DD to receive needed services and supports in "integrated community settings."

Similarly, a recent rule adopted by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires that services and supports funded through Medicaid waivers (like the Individual Options Waiver and the Level I Waiver) be provided in "community-based" settings. All states that participate in the federal Medicaid waiver program will need to submit transition plans explaining how they will ensure that Medicaid waiver services are provided in community-based settings. Public comment on Ohio's draft Transition Plan has been solicited.

February 2015

Activities & Events

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

2/11 - Family Support Parent Committee meeting , 6:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road in Elyria

2/11 - Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, EOVC, 4:15 p.m.

2/13 - Murray Ridge Support Group Dance, Murray Ridge School, 7-9 pm

2/16 - **Agency closed for President's Day holiday**

2/19 - LCBDD Finance Committee meeting , 12:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria

2/27 - Regular Meeting of the Board and Ethics Council, 12:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road in Elyria

Happy Valentines Day

BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on January 31:

At the **Organizational Meeting**, the Board re-elected Michelle L. Hunt, President, Kurt Koepf, Vice President, and Bob Gajdos, Secretary. President Hunt then made all Board-committee appointments.

At the **Regular Meeting**, Jeff Neal was given an award by the Board for his completion of a Doctor of Management degree. The Board approved a resolution to provide educational services to children ages 6 through 21 at Murray Ridge School for the 2015/2016 school year. Superintendent Amber Fisher updated the Board on options for the Murray Ridge School summer camp 2015; formal requests for funds will be submitted to the Board in March. Superintendent Fisher then requested approval for revisions to the *Administrative Resolution of Complaints* Board policy; the Board unanimously approved. Major activities for 2015 were identified and changes to the Accreditation process and strategic planning requirements were discussed. In other news, the Board discussed the Conflict-Free Case Management issue and the Transition Plan regional meetings. The Board passed a Resolution on Funding of Systems Transformation. Superintendent Fisher shared information about a pilot project to explore community-based services delivery. Director of Human Resources Tom Forhan shared the Agency's Risk Management Plan and progress report. The Murray Ridge Support Group announced that its meeting dates would be changing from the second Thursday each month to the second Wednesday each month. The group also announced that the MRSBG Spaghetti Dinner would be on March 14, and that any and all volunteers are welcome, and needed.

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
1091 Infirmary Road
Elyria, OH 44035

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



The Murray Ridge Support Group is Seeking New Members



The Murray Ridge Support Group, a not for profit organization that exists to support the mission of Murray Ridge Center and local residents with developmental disabilities and their families, is seeking new members.

Some activities of the Murray Ridge Support Group include:

- Provide education and advocacy for people with developmental disabilities and their families
- Conduct fundraisers
- Address special financial needs of consumers
- Sponsor social activities for the benefit of individuals with developmental disabilities and their caregivers

For more information on how you can join the Murray Ridge Support Group, please contact
Joaquin Page 440.453.2576.

Murray Ridge Support Group Annual Spaghetti Dinner

- Saturday, March 14 from 3:00-6:00 p.m.
- AmVets Post 55, 530 Abbe Road in Sheffield Lake
- Sponsored by the Murray Ridge Support Group

This Italian feast, which includes spaghetti with meatballs, fresh bread, salad, desserts, and beverages, is being generously donated by the AmVets Post 55. Take-outs are available! Activities will include a gift basket auction and a 50/50 raffle. Proceeds will go toward programs and services for Lorain County citizens impacted by developmental disabilities.

Tickets are \$8 for persons 6 years of age and up, and free for kids 5 and under. Sponsorships are available.

