



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

The Murray Ridge Courier

January 2015

A Message From The Superintendent



Superintendent Amber Fisher

As we begin a new year with positive energy and enthusiasm, there remain many unanswered questions about our services delivery system.

In the September edition of the Courier, I highlighted some provisions of a new federal rule governing Medicaid Waivers, including Ohio's Individual Options Waiver and Level One Waiver.

Last year, many program participants and those concerned about their futures attended Town Hall meetings hosted by the Murray Ridge Support Group. These meetings specifically addressed a provision of the new rule that could eliminate or very significantly limit the future ability of county boards of DD to directly provide Medicaid Waiver services. Of particular concern was the impact that the rule could have on Murray Ridge Center's ability to continue to receive Medicaid funding for services provided through our Supported Employment and other adult services programs. Although we were told that an official decision would likely be made about this before the end of 2014, no official decision has been communicated as of this time.

In addition to containing provisions impacting the role of county boards of DD as direct service providers, the new Medicaid rule calls for community-based service delivery. (A history of the community-based services movement has been re-printed on page 3 of this edition, for your reference.) To this end, a Transition Plan has been developed for submission to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal Medicaid agency, following a period of public comment. Information about a series of regional forums on the Transition Plan has been publicized; please contact Jennifer Judkins (Public Relations and Volunteer Director) for more information about these meetings, which are being sponsored by the Ohio Department of DD.

Regarding Adult Services, the Transition Plan calls for the creation of a consultant-led stakeholder group that will be charged with developing a waiver service package that increases opportunities for integrated employment and

wrap around supports. In the meantime, we at Murray Ridge will continue to challenge ourselves as a provider to offer individualized and ever more enriching opportunities to all who we serve. We will further explore community places where individuals served may spend time learning and enjoying themselves. We will reinforce our efforts to assist individuals to access community-based volunteer activities, and we will continue our strategic pursuit of community-based work opportunities for those who desire them. Murray Ridge has a strong track record of successfully coordinating supported employment, and strategic initiatives in this area resulted in the number of competitive job placements secured by Murray Ridge more than doubling in 2014, as compared to 2013.

Commitment to Murray Ridge School and Early Intervention Services remains strong and, in 2015, we will continue to explore and embrace cutting edge techniques for educating and serving children with developmental disabilities and delays.

Within our Service and Support Administration Department, we will focus on person-centered planning, and empowering people to express preferences and be a part of informed decision-making.

In the year ahead, we will continue to develop supported living options for individuals who reside in county board-operated group homes. Additionally, we will seek to reinforce our partnerships with and support of families. For 2015, our Board has approved I.O. Waiver enrollment of 23 individuals with intensive needs and aged family caregivers, and has authorized a \$60,000 increase in funding of our Family Support Services program.

2015 promises to be a busy year; of utmost importance will be relationships with community partners, local businesses, service providers, families and other natural supports, the highly skilled and committed staff of Murray Ridge Center, and, most importantly, Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities.

I very much look forward to working with all of you in the year ahead.

Amber Fisher
Superintendent

MRC Program Participants and Staff Donate to the Not Forgotten Box This Holiday Season



Ian Nicoll and Mike Cooper pose with some of their donated gifts at the Chronicle-Telegram in Elyria.

This Christmas, in a show of caring and incredible philanthropy, two Murray Ridge Center adult program participants made a donation of more than 156 items to the Not Forgotten Box, a toy and food collection program through The Chronicle-Telegram. All items are distributed through the Salvation Army in Elyria.

Mike Cooper, who has been donating at Christmas with his family for years, enlisted the help of friend Ian Nicoll to see how far they could each stretch \$100 this holiday season. They watched the papers for specials and visited closing stores to find great deals to make their money go as far as possible and, in the end, they had an impressive selection of toys to be delivered throughout Lorain County this holiday season.

Mike donated his to the Chronicle-Telegram location, while Ian handed over his sizable collection to the North Ridgeville Care Center.

Additionally, the staff at Murray Ridge Center collected and donated items to be donated towards the same cause!

In total, the Not Forgotten Box collected more than 8,000 toys and food items for citizens of Lorain County! Thank you to Mike and Ian for contributing to that number, and helping many families have a happy and healthy holiday season.



MRC staff at the Administration Building pose with their donations.

A Winter Parade!



On December 5, LOVC attendees participated in the downtown Amherst 9th Annual Miracle on Main Street Parade. This is the group's second year marching in this chilly wintertime parade! The group decorated the para-transit vehicle in fun and festive penguins, and each participant enjoyed watching other floats and groups throughout the event.

Pictured l-r: Judy Wood, Chelsie Jenkins, Keith Hupfer, Donna Wolfe, Ashley Spradling, Kasia Broz, Moses Velez, and Candace Moore.

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 comments on Ohio's draft Transition Plan are currently being solicited.

Holiday Happenings at Murray Ridge!

At the school...

Murray Ridge School once again hosted Santa Claus for students and staff this holiday season. The man who plays Santa is a bus driver who works for First Student and transports our students. He's been coming ever year for many years to do this.

Additionally, every classroom in the building participated in building holiday houses – called Santa's Village – that are on display in the school lobby. The students all helped in the creation of the houses and loved to see all of the village houses and lights that adorned the hallways and lobby! All of the staff really got into this project and had fun with their students creating their depiction of a Christmas Village House! The boxes were donated by Stewart's Appliance Store and Lowes.

Students also participated in many festive outings, including teacher Julie Peterson's class field trip to South Park Mall! Pictured, back row, left to right, Gus McKee, Tyler Rudolchick, Sean McCaffrey, Daniel Potter. Front row, left to right, Jose Gonzalez Jr., Emily Gessner, and Hannah McDermott.



Left: Santa greeting Liam Elsleger on December 19th at bussing. Below: Aiden Harper visits with Santa Claus in the



Adult Services...

The Murray Ridge Center adult program participants and group home residents also got into the holiday spirit this December!

The Murray Ridge Academy Court group home (left) was decked out in holiday cheer by staff and residents! And right, John Captain visits with Santa Claus during the EOVC Seniors Program Christmas Party!








MRC Staff...

The Murray Ridge Center Early Intervention Staff again competed in the Zero Proof Mix-Off held on December 4 at the Lorain County Community College Spitzer Center. Although the group's drink, Blue Ice, didn't win, the group had a great time at the event, and look forward to participating for years to come! Pictured l-r: Jen Doseck, Kim Ohl, Heather Knoble, and Stephanie Bondra.

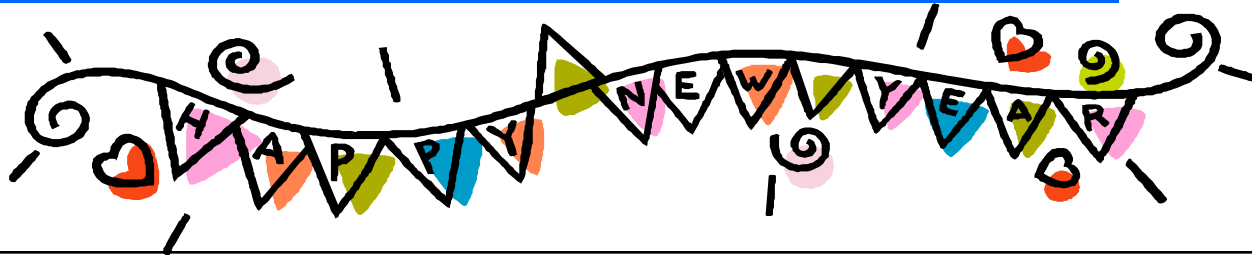


January 2015

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

Activities & Events

- 1/1 - **Agency closed for winter holiday**
- 1/5- **Murray Ridge School resumes classes**
- 1/15 - Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, EOVC, 4:15 p.m.
- 1/19 - **Agency closed for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday**
- 1/22- LCBDD Finance Committee meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 1/30 - LCBDD Organizational Meeting , 12:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 1/30 - Regular Meeting of the Board and Ethics Council begins immediately following the Organizational Meeting



BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on December 19, 2014:

It was reported that the Board Award Committee has an Exceptional Service Award winner who will be honored at the next Board meeting. A synopsis of the OACB Conference/Delegate Assembly was discussed. The Board established the dollar amount that the Family Support Parent Committee is authorized to approve in the first quarter of 2015. Also reviewed and approved were the Individual Cost Ceilings for Supported Living, and an agreement with Murray Ridge Production Center. The Board approved revisions to the *Title XX and Supported Living Program* policies. The Board also approved revisions to the Management and Confidential employee policies on *Holidays and Holiday Pay* and *Program Closing Days*. The 2015 Organizational Meeting will be held 1/30. The 2015 Board calendar was discussed; no meeting will be held in July or October, and meetings will continue to be held on Fridays (usually the last Friday of each month) at 12:30 p.m. The Murray Ridge Support Group announced that it provided 20 \$100 gift cards for the holiday season to families in need who utilize MRC services. The MRSRG will have its next meeting on 1/15/15.

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

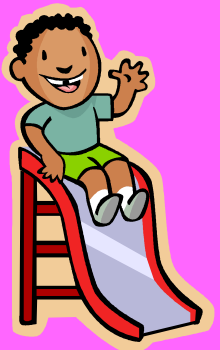


Exceptional Service Award

Do you know a Murray Ridge employee whose work efforts reflect remarkable dedication and have significantly contributed to the well being of people with developmental disabilities? Nominate that employee for an Exceptional Service Award! If you are a community member; consumer; or parent, guardian, sibling or other relative of a Murray Ridge program participant, submit your nomination to Jennifer Judkins, Public Relations/Volunteer Director. Include a brief paragraph outlining your reasons for nominating the employee. All nominations will be forwarded to the Board for consideration. The Board presents Exceptional Service Awards on a quarterly basis at regular scheduled meetings, usually held on the last Friday of each month at 12:30 p.m. in the Board Room. If you have any questions, contact Jenn Judkins at 440-329-3734 or jjudkins@murrayridgecenter.org.

Inclusive Playground FREE Admission!

Visit the Lorain County Metro Parks Inclusive Playground! Free at this time, the unique playground incorporates water play (shut down for season), structured play, and natural play environments. People of all ages and abilities will be able to use the area and enjoy the play features. Stop in and visit today!



47160 Hollstein Drive
Amherst, Ohio 44001
(440) 984-3470

Work at the Ridge!

Check out our website
www.murrayridgecenter.org to see
our open positions!

