

Making History

For the first time in Murray Ridge Center history, one of our own basketball teams won top honors at the recent Special Olympics Ohio State Basketball Tournament.

The 2009 basketball season began in January with more than 135 teams across Ohio competing in play-off games. The Raiders "Team 1" played 15 games through the season against some formidable opponents, including the Cuyahoga Rockets whom the Raiders had never before beaten. This season the Raiders won two out of three games against these tough competitors. "That first win against the Rockets was a milestone," said Bob Burkhardt, head coach of the team. Assistant coach Leroy Keen added "When that happened, there was a noticeable boost in the players' confidence."



Raiders Basketball Team 1, L-R Top: Coach Bob Burkhardt, Albert Mays, Mike Kovacic, Ryan Eliason, Dameion Taylor, Hector Lozano, Charles Johnson and Coach Leroy Keen. Bottom: Volunteer Wendy Johnson, Eric Johnson, Jon Torres, Jeff Torres, Carl Jeans and DJ Overall. Not pictured: Steven Cruz and Raul Torres.



Mayor of Elyria William M. Grace congratulates coach Bob Burkhardt at the Elyria City Council meeting on April 20, 2009.

The team is relatively new, with more than half the players having joined within the last two seasons. However, such inexperience proved to be no obstacle. In his 37 years of coaching for Murray Ridge Center, Burkhardt said that this team is one of the finest basketball teams he has ever coached. "This has been an especially impressive group to work with. Half the team has only been playing for one or two seasons, but their focus and strong commitment to teamwork has enabled the coaches to focus more on complex strategies and less on getting the individual players to work together.

This group has a lot of talent yet to develop, and I believe they have the right attitude for that to happen," said Burkhardt.

The team's accomplishment even got the attention of the Elyria City Council, which formally recognized them at its April 20, 2009 meeting. But even this significant recognition hasn't gone to their heads. Said "Team 1" athlete Eric Johnson, "It was a great experience. All the attention is overwhelming because we're just playing a game and doing our best. I feel honored to be part of the team." Co-team member Charles Johnson, Jr., who has played basketball for Murray Ridge for more than 10 years agrees. "The games we played were very close. Those other teams were really good, but our boys never gave up. They kept playing their best."



Raiders team member Charles Johnson smiles with fan Lexis Klingler.

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Heartfelt Innovations



Keith Rawlinson (right) discusses "Murray," an electronic helper with Janet Winterstein at a recent Open House.

At a recent Oberlin Work/Activity Center Open House, Adaptive Equipment Specialist Keith Rawlinson showcased a very special assistant named "Murray." While Murray may have arrived as merely a box of parts, with some programming and a few turns of a screwdriver, he is now a fully-functional "robot" helper, able to assist consumers in performing such tasks as parts assembly, painting or even playing a game of checkers. Anyone who has seen the movie "Robots" can appreciate the value of our electronic friends. However, it is the conceptual thinking and technological skills of people like Rawlinson that enable this robotic assistance to become a possibility.

For 17 years, it has been Rawlinson's job to evaluate consumer's equipment needs and to develop the tools necessary to meet those needs. As a nine-year-old experimenting with a science kit—a gift from his dad—in his backyard, he didn't realize he would spend his life applying technological solutions to problems encountered by persons with disabilities. But many years later, and many backyard experiments later, Rawlinson would find himself responding to a Murray Ridge Center posting at a job fair shortly after graduating from college.

With formal degrees in Electrical Engineering and Science Education, teaching in a traditional classroom seemed the natural course. But when he saw an opportunity to *apply* his craft on a daily basis, and to help people accomplish their own tasks while doing so, he grabbed it. "It's funny how things fall into place sometimes. I didn't especially plan to work for the Lorain County Board of MRDD, but when I look back over everything I've done in my life, my jobs, my education, my hobbies—it all seems to have brought me right here. It's serendipitous," he smiles reflectively

Over the years, he estimates that he has created hundreds of pieces of adaptive equipment. One piece he is

particularly proud of was an electronic interface switch that he placed on the headrest of a wheelchair for an individual who has quadriplegia. This switch enabled the person to interface with sophisticated computerized document scanning software. "This individual had the mental capacity to do this complex job, but his physical limitations precluded him from it. It gave me enormous personal satisfaction to be able to create the tool he needed to perform the job he wanted."

With a mind that seems to be ever-churning with curiosity and ideas, this Renaissance Man has some other unexpected skills. While riding a bus to campus one day during college, he saw a couple of individuals signing to one another. His interest was gauged and he immediately set about learning this new language. Several courses later, he found himself on that same bus signing with other deaf individuals. He now voluntarily teaches sign language classes for Murray Ridge staff. He also uses his natural teaching ability to help consumers learn a variety of computer skills. Currently, he is helping a more advanced student to design a video game concept.

In the end, whatever Rawlinson does, every innovation or lesson plan reflects his commitment to helping our consumers. It's a rare blend of innovation and compassion, science and heart.

History...

Continued from page 1

While understandably excited about their season and proud of their accomplishments, this still humble, but enthusiastic team has no plans to rest on its laurels. They are already discussing strategies for improvement for next year. When

asked what their 2010 goal is, Burkhardt smiled and replied "Repeat."

We are very proud of our Raiders and look forward to cheering them on in many future seasons, win or lose.



Team 1 celebrates after winning the Special Olympics Ohio State Tournament.

Scenes From the 2009 Family Fun Fair

The 8th Annual Family Fun Fair was held at the Murray Ridge School on Saturday, April 25. The Fair included music, a consumer art sale, a remote broadcast and prize wheel by WOBL 1320 AM and Kool Kat Oldies 1380 AM, food and many games and art activities. A great time was had by all, and we would like to extend a sincere thanks to all who helped to make it a success.



The charm and humor of Johnny Z (far left) from Kool Kat 1380 AM and Fast Eddie (near left) from WOBL 1320 AM put even more "fun" into the Family Fun Fair.



Murray Ridge consumer Bob Farmer (above) displays one of his masterpieces.



Murray Ridge teacher Nevan Eilbeck (above) and Board member Bob Gajdos (right) entertain the crowd.



WOBL's Wheel of Fortune draws a big—and small—crowd.



Games, crafts and other activities added to the day's festivities.



Murray Ridge Raiders "Team 1" made an appearance and was recognized for the recent state-level championship.

Summer Volunteer Opportunities

Calling all volunteers! As you gear up for all of those picnics and barbeques this summer, you may be interested in having a little fun while at the same time helping to educate the community about Murray Ridge Center. There are several community events this year throughout Lorain County and Murray Ridge needs volunteers to help staff booths and participate in parades. If you are interested in representing Murray Ridge at any of the following events, please contact Racheal Seibert, Community Education & Volunteer Manager, at (440) 329-3734.

- Lorain International Festival Parade—Sunday, June 28
- Sheffield/Sheffield Lake Community Days Parade—Thursday, July 9
- Amherst Old Time Jamboree Festival Parade—Sunday, July 12
- North Ridgeville Corn Festival Parade—Sunday, August 9
- Lorain County Fair Booth—August 24-30



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.

Mother's Day



As you ponder the best way to honor *your* Mom this Mother's Day, you may be interested to know a little about the history of this special day. With origins dating back to the ancient Greeks' celebration of Rhea, the mother of gods, and the subsequent focus on Mary, the mother of Christ, the day eventually centered around *all* mothers with the establishment of "Mothering Sunday" in 17th century England. Two centuries later, in post Civil War America, Anna Marie Jarvis began a movement to establish a national Mother's Day as a tribute to her own mother. As a result of her determined efforts, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed Mother's Day to be a national holiday on May 9, 1914. We wish all Lorain County mothers a very happy Mother's Day!



You Make Me Feel Like Dancing!

Murray Ridge School will be holding the Senior Prom on Friday, May 8 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the School, 9750 S. Murray Ridge Road, Elyria. The evening's festivities will include dinner and dancing. Admission to Prom is free. Those interested in attending should notify their classroom teachers as soon as possible.

BOARD ROOM BRIEFING



The Lorain County Board of MR/DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on April 24, 2009:

Dr. Fisher informed the Board that she had received a request from Norcare Enterprises, the parent company of Nord Center, to nominate an individual for the Nord Center Board. Dr. Fisher noted that this was reportedly part of a negotiated settlement on the part of Norcare to increase community input with regards to the provision of mental health services by this community-based provider. Dr. Fisher also noted that she had consulted agency legal counsel on the matter, and was assured that the agency had wide discretion with regards to selection of potential candidates and counsel found no conflict of interest that might prevent Murray Ridge from positively responding to the Norcare request. Following discussion, The Board unanimously supported nomination of a candidate for the Nord Center and Norcare Enterprises Boards, and charged Dr. Fisher with bringing names for consideration to the meeting of the Board in May. The Board also unanimously agreed to accept the annual Transition Agreement between Help Me Grow and Murray Ridge School. In other business, the Board unanimously agreed to make three Management/Confidential employee policy revisions. Finally, the Board unanimously agreed to rescind the Computer Hardware/Software Policy Manual and to pass a new Board policy titled "Information Systems Usage".



May 2009

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
30						

Activities & Events

- 5/4—Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, 4:15 p.m., Elyria Work Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 5/8—Murray Ridge School Prom, 6:30 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road, Elyria
- 5/11—Family Support Parent Committee meeting, 6:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road
- 5/14—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School
- 5/21—LCBMRDD Finance Committee meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 5/22—Murray Ridge Support Group dance, 7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 S. Murray Ridge Road, Elyria
- 525—**Agency Closed in Observance of Memorial Day**
- 5/28—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School
- 5/29—LCBMRDD Meeting, 12:30 p.m. Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria



Lunch Menus

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.65, Adults = \$2.70

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May 11-15
June 1--5

Monday- Salisbury Steak w/Gravy, Scaloped 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

April 27-May 1
May 18-22
June 8-12

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



May 4-8
May 25-29
June 15-19

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 Web site
www.loraincountymrdd.org

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If you have a news item that you would like to include in the Murray Ridge Courier, please email relevant photos, stories or event information to Racheal Seibert at
rseibert@loraincountymrdd.org.

Submissions are due by the 20th of each month for the following month's newsletter.



Did You Know?



While most Americans recognize Memorial Day as the day we honor Americans who have died fighting in wars, fewer people may be aware of the significance of wearing red poppies on this day. This practice was originally inspired by a poem titled "In Flanders Fields," written in 1914 by physician John McCrae. The poppies mentioned in the poem grew abundantly in a field where World War I soldiers had been buried, and are thought to have represented the blood shed by these soldiers. American Moina Michael was so inspired by the poem that, in 1915, she began selling artificial poppies in remembrance of fallen soldiers, and to help others impacted by the war. Whether or not you choose to wear poppies on this day, we at Murray Ridge wish all Lorain County residents a happy and peaceful Memorial Day!



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.