

Murray Ridge Support Group Receives Murray Ridge Center Volunteer of the Year Award

On April 20, Murray Ridge Center held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Reception at the Elyria Work/Activity Center to honor the more than 170 community members and staff who donated their time and talents to individuals with developmental disabilities receiving services from Murray Ridge in 2009.

This year, the "Marilynn Hupfer Volunteer of the Year Award" went to the Murray Ridge Support Group, or MRSG, which has been providing support for programs and activities for persons impacted by developmental disabilities for more than 20 years.

Prior to the start of the MRSG, many parents and caregivers were involved in Parent Teachers of Retarded Children (PTRC), a group which began in the 1960's. "Once all the children of the members graduated from the School, the parents left the group. But there was still a need for a group that could help other families and people with developmental disabilities," said original MRSG member and

parent **Nadyne Hamner**. So, in 1989, at the suggestion of then-superintendent Dr. Ellen Payner, the Murray Ridge Support Group was established in order to provide support for families impacted by developmental disabilities and to generate resources for special projects and events that were beneficial to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Since then, the MRSG has touched the lives of individuals and their families in innumerable ways. Comprised of parents, siblings and other advocates, the MRSG plans educational seminars, sponsors several dances throughout the year, hosts the annual Transition Ceremony luncheon for graduating Murray Ridge School students and provides funds for various Murray Ridge Center events such as Santa's Workshop, Senior Prom and Bring a Child to Work Day. "While we do a lot more than just sponsor dances and lunches, the truth is that the social activities are the only opportunities some of these kids *get* to be social," said Hamner.

All of these activities are made possible through the tireless fundraising efforts of the group. The most popular, of



MRSG members Jon Storr, Don Winemiller, Marge Winemiller, Pat Hamner, Nadyne Hamner and Andrea Elek accept the Marilyn Hupfer Volunteer of the Year Award on behalf of the Murray Ridge Support Group.

MRSG member and former Board member **Jim Uldrich**, this event "began as a small dinner and discussion in my daughter's classroom, but ended up as the inception of the annual Spaghetti Dinner." It has since become a tradition and raises thousands of dollars which then go to support various programs and activities for consumers of Murray Ridge Center.

There is little question that the MRSG is a valuable resource for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. But with a dwindling membership base, it becomes increasingly difficult to continue to provide the many programs and activities on which consumers and their families have come to rely. According to parent, MRSG member and staff member **Andrea Elek**, replenishing membership is critical to the future of the group and the services that it offers. "Finding new members willing to give time and thought to administration of the group is essential," she said.

We at Murray Ridge Center would like to extend our sincere thanks to the members of MRSG for the countless hours they've spent supporting Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities.

Mike Narvaez Receives Exceptional Service Award



Board member Jane Spiegelberg, Ph. D., right, presents the Exceptional Service Award to Mike Narvaez, left.

Mike Narvaez, Workshop Specialist II at the Elyria Work/Activity Center, or EWAC, was recently honored with the

first Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities "Exceptional Service Award." This award, which is given to an employee who, in the opinion of those nominating him or her, reflects remarkable dedication in meeting the needs of Murray Ridge consumers. Nominations are made by consumers, family members/guardians and community members only.

Debbie Radowenchuk, one of the people who nominated Narvaez, said "I would trust him with my son at any time, which is not an easy thing for me to say...I just think he needs to be recognized for the wonderful person that he is."

At EWAC, Narvaez trains consumers on various vocational tasks and keeps consumers engaged in meaningful activities during periods of low production. When he is not working at EWAC, Narvaez volunteers his time with Murray Ridge Special Olympics, coaching bowling, basketball and softball. He is also the EWAC resident art teacher, helping consumers to create colorful murals for the walls of Area D.

When asked how he felt about receiving this award, he chuckled and said "I don't know if I deserve it more than anyone else because everyone here cares. But for me, I've learned that you just need to really listen to people. Listen to what is on their minds and how they're feeling. Then you need to be there for them." Indeed, with that attitude, there is little wonder why Narvaez received this award.

Helping the Hungry in Our Community

It seems the whole world was touched by the recent earthquake in Haiti. From sending money to volunteering their time, people everywhere helped in any way they could. Oberlin Work/Activity Center consumers **Shasta Knarr** and **Melanie Ladina** were also moved by the suffering of the Haitian people and felt compelled to help others in need. After learning that there are also people in Lorain County who are in need, they decided to act. "We want to help people less fortunate than ourselves," said Ladina, then added "we all need to help the people in our community." With the assistance of Murray Ridge staff member **Tammy Stanley**, they contacted Harvest for Hunger to see how they could help.

Since then, they have placed boxes in each Murray Ridge facility in order to collect such non-perishable items as cereal, peanut butter, canned vegetables, soup, tuna and canned beef stew. "I want people to know what we're doing so that they can all help the cause," said Knarr. These philanthropic young women will be collecting food through the end of May and are, according to Knarr "hoping to get a lot of donations so we can help a lot of people."

For anyone wishing to help the cause, you may bring in any non-perishable item and place it in the boxes marked with the "Harvest for Hunger" stickers or contact Tammy



Murray ridge consumers Shasta Knarr and Melanie Ladina collect food for local people in need.

Stanley at the Oberlin Work/Activity Center. Monetary donations are also accepted.

Murray Ridge Athletes to Compete in Special Olympic National Games

Murray Ridge Special Olympic Basketball Team members **Ryan Eliason** and **Dameion Taylor** and Volleyball Team members **Andrew Donald** and **Ryan Busher**, are preparing to compete in the Special Olympics National Games this July 18-23 in Lincoln, Nebraska. It has been more than 20 years since a Murray Ridge athlete has participated in the National Games.

Annually, each state is allowed a certain number of athletes in particular categories of sports that they may send to compete in the National Games. This year, Team Ohio was notified that it could send 66 athletes to the 2010 National Games. Because of the exceptional performances by Murray Ridge Basketball and Volleyball teams at the Special Olympics State Events in 2009, Team Ohio then informed Murray Ridge Center last October that two Team Ohio Basketball slots and two Team Ohio Volleyball slots would be reserved for Murray Ridge athletes.

"It was a tough choice, deciding whom to send, since they are all such talented players, but I think that the four athletes who are going to Lincoln will do a great job overall," said Judy Hartung, Special Olympics Manager for Murray Ridge Center.

Since being chosen for Team Ohio, the athletes have had two meetings in Columbus in order to meet their teammates, have uniform measurements taken, receive updated physical



Murray Ridge athletes (left-right), Ryan Eliason, Dameion Taylor, Andrew Donald and Ryan Busher prepare for the National Games.

exams and have practice sessions with their new team members. "It's very exciting," said athlete Dameion Taylor of participating in the National Games. Win or lose, we are very proud of all of our Special Olympians for their tireless efforts.

Mary Lou Gramer Honored for Dedicated Service to Families



Family Support Parent Committee members and friends honor Mary Lou Gramer. Front, l-r: Lesley Hicks, Mary Lou Gramer, Damita Vanche, Diane Smith. Back, l-r: Mr. Gramer, Ann Findlan, Ted Chmura, Greg Vanche, Sherry Wilson, Heather Weed, Brenda Grimmer and Vassie Scott.

Mary Lou Gramer was recently honored for her sixteen years of service on the Family Support Parent Committee. This group, which is charged with reviewing applications for such critically important supports as respite care, adaptive equipment and other necessary supplies needed by a family member due to his or her disability has been making a profoundly positive difference in the lives of family caregivers for 16 years.

Gramer is a parent of a 45 year old son with developmental disabilities and began raising him with her husband before services from Murray Ridge were available, so she offers a unique perspective to the group. "She was a great advocate for the families whose consumers were adults and whose caregivers were older," said Family Support Coordinator **Diane Smith** of Gramer.

Mirroring this sentiment was Damita Vanche, President of the group. "Mary Lou is a seasoned parent who brought so much knowledge and experience to the group, and who truly put the families of Lorain County first. We're going to miss her."

From all accounts, Gramer's contributions have been many, yet she remains humble. "It was wonderful that they wanted to recognize me like that, but I never thought I was doing anything special. I just knew things needed to be done, so I did them," she said stoically. Indeed, it is, in great part, this thoughtful nature that made her such a valuable asset to Lorain County families.

We Need Your Help

Calling all staff volunteers! As you gear up for all those fun 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 or Tracey Chase at 329-3734.

- Avon Duct Tape Parade—Saturday, June 19
- Lorain International Festival Parade—Sunday, June 27
- Amherst Old Time Jamboree Parade—Sunday, July 11
- Sheffield Lake Community Days Parade—Thursday, July 15
- North Ridgeville Corn Festival Parade—Sunday, August 8
- Lorain County Fair—August 23—29
- Woolly Bear Festival Parade—Sunday, September 19

Overview of Developmental Disabilities

An educational program presented by the Murray Ridge Support Group for consumers, parents, guardians, caregivers and Murray Ridge Center staff.

Thursday, May 20, 2010

7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Elyria Work/Activity Center

1095 Infirmary Road

Elyria, OH 44035

Presenter Steve Harder, Director of the Oberlin Work/Activity Center, will discuss developmental disabilities, their characteristics and causes, history of treatment, various legislation, eligibility for services, and service planning.

For more information, please contact George Gedid at 284-2720.

You Make Me Feel Like Dancing!



Murray Ridge School will be holding the Senior Prom on Friday, May 7 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria. This year's theme is "We're Off to See the Wizard." 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.



If you would like to receive The Murray Ridge Courier via email, contact Racheal Seibert at 329-3734 or email her at rseibert@murrayridgecenter.org. You may also sign up on our website at www.murrayridgecenter.org.

BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on April 30, 2010:

Board member Jane Spiegelberg, Ph.D., presented the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities first "Exceptional Service Award" to Murray Ridge staff member Mike Narvaez for work that reflects remarkable dedication in meeting the needs of Murray Ridge consumers. Following this presentation, the Board unanimously approved the revision to the Excused/Unexcused Absence policy. Jeff Miller, Director of Vocational Services and Transportation, then updated the Board on the transportation issues faced by consumers in Community Employment who utilized Lorain County Transit. After considering transportation alternatives for these consumers, the Vocational Services department suggested that it would be more cost-effective to utilize Murray Ridge staff and vehicles to transport consumers to job sites than it would be to secure additional contracted transportation service for individuals impacted by the discontinuation of LCT routes. In other business, superintendent Dr. Amber Fisher informed the Board that Senate Bill 47 is now pending with the Ohio Senate. This bill proposes to increase the number of members at each county board of developmental disabilities from seven to nine, and require the additional members to be people eligible for services from the county board. Finally, Board member Henry Patterson reported that the Public Relations Committee met and reviewed the activities and effectiveness of the Community Education department with respect to outreach efforts, and stated that the committee was pleased with the departments efforts in traditional media as well as its successes with the agency website. He further stated that the department is considering the possible use of new social media to increase its effectiveness in the community.



May 2010



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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

- 5/7—Murray Ridge School Prom, 6:30-9:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 5/11—Family Support Parent Committee meeting, 6:00 p.m., Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 5/13—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:30—6:30 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 5/14—Murray Ridge Support Group dance, 7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 5/20—Murray Ridge Support Group meeting, 6:00 p.m., Elyria Work/Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 5/20—Overview of Developmental Disabilities Presentation by Steve Harder, Director of the Oberlin Work/Activity Center, 7:00 p.m., Elyria Work/Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road in Elyria
- 5/27—LCBDD Finance Committee meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 5/27—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:30—6:30 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 5/31—Agency Closed in Observance of Memorial Day**

PLEASE NOTE: The next LCBDD meeting will be held June 4 at 12:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria



Lunch Menus

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.75, Adults = \$2.80

May 3-7
May 24-28
June 14-18

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

May 10-14
May 31-June 4
June 21-25

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 17-21
June 7-11
June 28-July 2

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
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
1091 Infirmary Road
Elyria, OH 44035

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www.murrayridgecenter.org

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"Exceptional Service Award" Nominations Sought

If you are a consumer, parent, sibling or other relative, or a community member and would like to nominate a Murray Ridge Center employee for the LCBDDs "Exceptional Service Award," you may email your nominations to Racheal Seibert at rseibert@murrayridgecenter.org, or mail them to Murray Ridge Center, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria, OH 44035.

Please include a brief narrative (of at least one paragraph) outlining your reasons for nominating the employee. All nominations will be forwarded to the Board for selection at its discretion. Nominations should be received by May 18.



Further News You Might Use...

We are often in receipt of information from external sources on offerings designed for people with 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.

Special Visitor at LWAC



Lorain Work/Activity Center consumers Sarah Ward and Marilyn Flanders (front, left to right) and Joshua Fleming (back), enjoy a very special visit.