



MurrayRidgeCenter  
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

# The Murray Ridge Courier

May 2015

## Consumer Spotlight: Bobby Farmer

Murray Ridge Center is fortunate to have many adult program participants who have been with us for decades. Such is the case with Bobby Farmer, who was with the agency before it was Murray Ridge, before we had adult programs...even before we had a school.

In 1967, the Ohio Senate passed Amended S.B. 169, which created county boards of MRDD, and charged them with serving adults and children with developmental disabilities.

Around that time, Bobby began receiving services from the newly formed Lorain County Board of MRDD. He was part of the Lorain City Schools system but attended class in a small building behind Longfellow Middle School for children with similar learning disabilities. As Bobby tells it, his father was approached by a man and woman working for the LCBMRDD, who suggested Bobby use its services.

Bobby left his small class and began attending a new school. They met in a small church, and later left that church for a bigger church that could hold the increasing number of students.

"It was so different. At my old school, I was beaten up a lot; things were thrown at me and kids were mean to me because I was different," Bobby remembered. "When I started at the new school, it felt like I was home. I was around people like me. It made me feel like I had another family."

In 1967, Bobby became part of the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Murray Ridge School in Elyria. There he learned valuable life skills, such as cooking, cleaning, and money management. After graduation,



Bobby holding one of his favorite paintings, an old schoolhouse.

he began at the first "workshop" which was run in a nursing home behind the jail on Murray Ridge Road. Later, what was then known as the Elyria Workshop (now the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center) was built, and Bobby moved over there to learn vocational and social skills.

"I learned how to act, how to respect others, and how to work and make money," he said.

Bobby eventually moved over to the Lorain adult day center when it was built, and there he met and fell in love with his future wife, Darlene. Bobby and Darlene moved to Kentucky for a few years, then moved back to Lorain due to

Darlene's medical issues. This year, they will celebrate their 12 year anniversary.

During his courtship with Darlene, Bobby started experimenting with painting, something he had never tried. Bobby quickly realized that he had incredible talent, and began painting animals and scenery almost exclusively.

"At first I didn't want to share my artwork with other people," he said. "But I had to quit being afraid and worrying about what people think of it. I had a lot of people outside of Murray Ridge telling me that there was no way I did that art because I am mentally retarded. But I did. It's mine."

Bobby now has his artwork



Bobby's painting of a lighthouse.

*Continued on page 2.*

on display throughout Lorain County at the local libraries and in our adult Opportunity/Vocational Centers. He has found that, although he has a disability, it has no influence on his many abilities. And his passion for art, for life, and for other people has shown what a truly remarkable person Bobby Farmer has become.

"I used to hate being marked as a 'handicap' person. I was embarrassed. But you know what? I am who I am. I used to be very bitter about that, but I'm not anymore. Somewhere along the way, I grew up. I like who I am."

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## New Threads for the Murray Ridge Raiders Special Olympics Athletes

This year marks Murray Ridge supporter Olivia Sliman's fourth annual clothing drive. Olivia has clothing donation boxes all over her hometown of Amherst at all of the Amherst schools, St. Joseph school and parish, Nativity Parish, Amherst Public Library, and in other locations throughout Lorain County such as Curves in Elyria, Blind Dog Gym, Sliman's Jeep, and more! She sorts through the collected items and distributes them to those she thinks could use them the most.

This year, her focus was on the Murray Ridge Special Olympics athletes. "Sports are a huge part of my life," Olivia said. "So I decided this year to open up the clothing drive to include sports equipment donations. I started seeing a lot of gently worn athletic clothing, and thought maybe it was something that the Special Olympic athletes could use."

And she was right! On April 30, Olivia brought her donated sports clothing and equipment to the Elyria

Opportunity/Vocational Center, and the Special Olympics athletes were invited in to shop. The athletes were thrilled at the selection and have been proudly wearing their new duds to practices, work, and around town.

Olivia is thrilled with the response she's seen from the community. "People from all different walks of life have donated clothes over the years," she said. "It's so rewarding to sort through the donated items and see how generous people are in giving to others."

But none more generous than Olivia! Thank you to her and all who donated for her cause!



Olivia poses with her piles of donated clothes.

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## Exceptional Service at Murray Ridge Center

On April 24, the Lorain County Board of DD honored Jason Keiser, Adult Program Instructor at the Lorain Opportunity/Vocational Center, with the Exceptional Service Award for the first quarter of 2015.

Jason was nominated by Joan Maloy, legal guardian of Eric Roman, an adult who attends the LOVC.

In the nomination letter, Joan stated "Since Eric has been working with Jason, he has grown so much. Mr. Keiser has taken the time to work with, not only Eric, but with all the clients in the area. To have Eric's respect is a monumental thing. Jason was able to achieve that level."

Jason's supervisor, Cindy White, echoed Ms. Maloy's statements, saying "We consider Jason to be our 'gentle giant' at the LOVC; all of the consumers and staff just love him."

Thank you Jason, for your exceptional service! And congratulations on receiving this prestigious award.



Jason Keiser poses with his supervisor, Cindy White, and Board Member Dan White.

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## Mega Championship Wrestling Presents "Breaking Down Barriers 5!"

Mega Championship Wrestling, a local entertainment company, will be presenting an event called "Breaking Down Barriers 5."

As in the past, proceeds from this event will go to the Friends of Murray Ridge, a non-profit charitable organization which supports the mission, community education and informational outreach of the Murray Ridge Center.

Although wrestling may not be for everyone, many of our consumers enjoy watching WWE wrestling and would be interested in attending this event.



**Date:** Saturday, May 16th, 2015  
**Time:** Doors open at 5:30 pm  
Showtime 6:00-8:00 pm  
**Where:** St. John's Lutheran Church Gymnasium, 1140 W. River Rd N, Elyria  
**Cost:** \$8/ticket in advance and \$15 at the door

T-Shirts will be available at the door for \$15.00 (2XX plus sizes will cost more). There will be a concession stand open for you to purchase snacks.

**To purchase tickets in advance for \$8.00 each:**

1. Fill in the section below and cut on the dotted line.
2. Return the completed form below with your money or check in an envelope addressed to one of the buildings below:

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Loretta Binder at the Oberlin Opportunity/Vocational Center  | (440) 774-7400 |
| Amber Fitzgerald at the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center | (440) 284-2720 |
| Christine Mazze at the Lorain Opportunity/Vocational Center  | (440) 282-2131 |
| Beverly Monteleone at the Administration Building            | (440) 329-3734 |
| Peggy Smith at Murray Ridge School                           | (440) 329-3760 |

3. If you are sending a check make it out to: Mega Championship Wrestling **OR** You can stop in at one of the sites listed to purchase tickets.

If you have any questions call the numbers above.

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**Breaking Down Barriers 5 Ticket Order Form:**

**NAME OF PERSON ORDERING TICKETS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NUMBER OF TICKETS (at \$8.00 each):** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT MONEY/CHECK ENCLOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Murray Ridge Support Group Sponsors Zoo at Murray Ridge School

The Murray Ridge Support Group (MRSG) brought a little something wild to Murray Ridge School on May 4.

Using funds donated by the parents of a consumer who recently passed away, the MRSG hired the company Our Zoo to You to bring zoo animals out to the school students. Our Zoo to You, located in Medina County, offers the opportunity for children to interact with exotic animals in a safe and controlled environment.

The students—and staff!- enjoyed their time with Our Zoo to You, and were grateful to the Murray Ridge Support Group for allowing them the opportunity to get a glimpse of the wild side of the animal kingdom!



The students were able to handle the animals; some were "pet only" while others wanted to hold and even wear them! Above: Board President and MRSG member Michelle Hunt pets a tortoise with student, Janson Plumb. Right: Zachary Rader proudly displays a snake necklace. Left, top: Kendric Warner poses with a macaw. Below, left: Brandon Rivera and Deja Sherman pet a guinea pig.





# May 2015

## Activities & Events

- 5/8 - Murray Ridge School Senior Prom; 6:30—9:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 5/12 - Murray Ridge Support Group meeting, 4:15 p.m., Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center, 1095 Infirmary Road in Elyria
- 5/15 - Murray Ridge Support Group Dance, 7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School
- 5/16 - Breaking Down Barriers V, 6:00 p.m., St. John's Lutheran Church, 1140 W. River Rd N, Elyria
- 5/16 - Murray Ridge/Joe Firmant Car Raffle, Rebman Recreation, Lorain, 3:00 p.m.
- 5/21 - LCBDD Finance Committee meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 5/25 - **Agency Closed in Observance of Memorial Day**
- 5/28 - Murray Ridge School Commencement Ceremony, 11:00 a.m.
- 5/29 - Regular Meeting of the Board and Ethics Council, 12:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria

| Sun | Mon  | Tue  | Wed | Thu  | Fri  | Sat  |
|-----|--|--|-----|--|--|--|
| 31  |  |  |     |  | 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   |

## 2015-2016 Agency Calendars

The 2015-2016 agency calendars are now available at [www.murrayridgecenter.org](http://www.murrayridgecenter.org) under Agency Calendar. Visit the website to see the schedules of our programs for the coming year!



### BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

**The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on April 24, 2014:**

Jason Kaiser was awarded the Exceptional Service Award for the first quarter of 2015. The Board discussed the upcoming strategic planning process. Superintendent Fisher provided an update on the residential transition. In other news, the 2015-2016 Agency calendars were discussed and approved. The Murray Ridge Support Group will hold its next meeting on 5/12 and its next dance on 5/15.



**Friends of Murray Ridge &  
Joe Firment Chevrolet Present**

# **2014 Chevy Sonic Raffle**

Raffle held on May 16, 2015 @ 3:00 p.m.  
at Rebman Recreation, Inc.  
5300 Oberlin Ave, Lorain, OH 44053

***Tickets: \$20 each or 3 for \$50***



**Call 440.329.3734 to purchase tickets**  
All proceeds benefit Friends of Murray Ridge

**JOE *FIRMENT***

Contestants need not be present to win • Contestants must be at least 18 years of age to participate •  
Please see [www.murrayridgecenter.org](http://www.murrayridgecenter.org) for Official Rules

# Murray Ridge Raiders Take on the Spring Qualifier

On Saturday, May 2, the Murray Ridge Special Olympics Raiders volleyball, track, and bocce teams participated in the Spring Qualifier. Teams have to compete and win here to advance to the State Games in Columbus this summer. Track and volleyball competed at Bedford High School and bocce competed at Wickliffe competing. Great job to all our athletes!



Above: Modified volley ball took 1st place. Middle: Volleyball team about to begin game #2 vs. Lake County. Bottom right: Bocce players enjoying a beautiful day at the Wickliffe qualifier. Top right: Carl Jeans and Alicia Lawrence - Gold medal long jump champions celebrate with Slider!

## RESULTS

### Track and Field

#### Gold Medal:

Diana Clement - 4x100 relay  
Diana Clement - 100 m  
Diana Clement - Softball Throw  
Tom Dammeyer - Mini Javelin throw  
Tim Dammeyer - 4x400 relay  
Jacob Danchuk - 4x400 relay  
Adrian Fortune - Standing Long Jump  
Leif Hammonds—4x400 relay  
Carl Jeans - 4x400 relay  
Carl Jeans - Running Long Jump  
Carl Jeans - 1500 m run (6:09)  
Jenna Jones - 100 m  
Alicia Lawrence - 400 m  
Alicia Lawrence -4x100 m relay  
Alicia Lawrence - Running Long Jump  
Kevin Long - Standing Long Jump  
April Pizzoferrato - 4x100 relay  
Maria Poling - Standing Long Jump  
Elena Reinhold - Softball Throw  
Elena Reinhold - 4x100 relay  
Wendy Smitskowski - Softball throw  
Ashley Spradling - Standing Long Jump

#### Silver Medal:

Joey Cechura - Softball Throw  
Tom Dammeyer - 1500 mile run  
Tom Dammeyer - 4x 100 relay

Jake Danchuk - Standing long jump  
Adrian Fortune - 4x 100 relay  
Leif Hammonds - Mini Javelin throw  
Kevin Johnson - Standing Long Jump  
Bill Lacko - 4x100 relay  
Kevin Long - 4x100 m relay  
Maria Poling - 100 m  
Elena Reinhold - 100 m

#### Bronze:

Robert Baker - 100 m  
Robert Baker - Standing Long Jump  
Stephanie Budweg - Standing Long Jump  
Tim Dammeyer - Mini Javelin Throw  
Jacob Danchuk - 400 m run  
Leif Hammond - 1500 m run  
Kevin Johnson - 100 m dash  
Sandra Kilgore - Softball throw  
Mark Lacko - Softball Throw  
Kenny Martin - Softball Throw  
Wendy Smitskowski - 100 m walk  
Ashley Spradling - 100 m

### Bocce

#### First place:

Alex Averett & Andy Rivera  
Julie Knight & Rebecca Wilson  
Timothy Stewart

Kimberly Herman & Kay Wilson  
Janice Nicola & Beverly Ross

#### Second place:

Doreen Alaksa & Donna Wolf  
Brian Austin & Ben Lewis  
Lynne West & Juanita Young  
Tim Farkas  
Charity Anderson & Chrissy Brant  
Lillian Bennett & Todd Buchanan

#### Third place:

Kevin Plata & Jason Rulong  
Cindy McGough & Lori Rhodehamel  
Kelly Fath & Michael Ward  
Joan Burton & Mary Greasler  
Linda Brewer

#### Fourth place:

Alec Jones  
John Fath  
Jessica Johnson & Cory Sims



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



### **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  
(440) 984-3470



### **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](mailto:jjudkins@murrayridgecenter.org).