

A Legacy of Commitment: Jim Uldrich

While he may be known by many for the tasty sauce he prepares for the annual Murray Ridge Support Group Spaghetti Dinner, the commitment **James H. Uldrich** has made to Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities is derived from a recipe of much stronger ingredients.

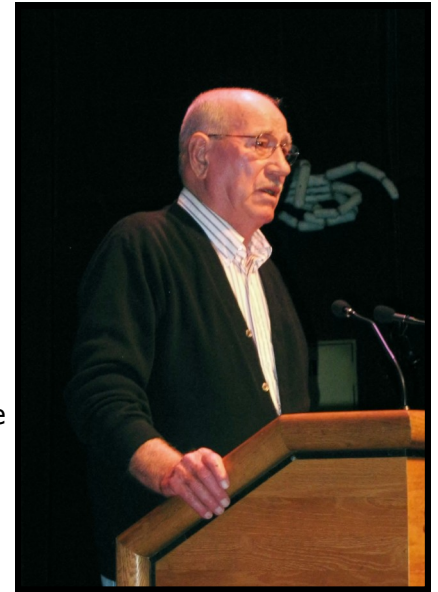
"I don't believe in problems. I believe problems are the beginnings of opportunities."
-Jim Uldrich

Uldrich first became involved with Murray Ridge Center in 1980 when his then-14-year-old daughter Linda began attending Murray Ridge School. He wanted her to attend the School because he felt she would get an education more suited to her needs and abilities there, than at the public school she had previously attended. According to Uldrich, the transition for Linda was even easier than he thought it would be and she thrived in her new environment. "She was suddenly amongst other children like herself, so she was no longer in a position where she felt she couldn't keep up. That had been very frustrating for her. The difference in her confidence was like night and day" he said.



Murray Ridge Center Board President Michele H. Hunt (left), and Superintendent Amber Fisher (right) present the Marilyn Hupfer Volunteer of the Year Award to Board Vice President James H. Uldrich.

Happy that his daughter was now receiving the tools she needed to become as independent as possible, Uldrich threw himself into helping the organization that he felt made this possible. He first began volunteering with Linda's Special Olympics Swim Team. "That was a lot of fun. It was great to see those kids have the chance to compete and strive for goals. They felt great about themselves," said Uldrich.



Jim Uldrich talks about his time with Murray Ridge.

A few years later, he met with the then-titled Parent Support Group (now the Murray Ridge Support Group) to discuss how they might garner more support for people with developmental disabilities from other parents, family members, guardians and the community at large. "It started off as a small dinner and discussion in my daughter's classroom, but ended up as the inception of the annual Spaghetti Dinner," said Uldrich. That was 25 years ago. Maybe it was his famous sauce that made the event so successful, but this modest railroad worker from West Virginia believes it is the compassion and concern of Lorain County citizens for people with developmental disabilities that has made it so successful and long-lasting.

In 1986, he was approached by former Lorain County Commissioner Herbert Jacoby about joining the Board of the Lorain County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (now the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities). He says he had previously had no aspirations to join the Board, but duty called. He said it was an honor to serve the organization that had done so much for his daughter. By all accounts, his tenure on the Board, as a member, as President and as Vice President, has been successful. Former Board President **Dan White** said "Jim is a wise, honorable, pragmatic man whose only interest is in providing equality

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A Team That C.A.R.E.S



Paul Siegwarth, Assistant General Manager for the Lake Erie Crushers receives the Murray Ridge Center C.A.R.E.S. Award on behalf of the Crushers.

In a time where people across the country are losing jobs and finding it difficult to find employment, Murray Ridge Center adult consumers who also needed jobs had an opportunity to work this summer due to the support and good will of the Lake Erie Crushers.

After months of negotiations and working out the details, the Lake Erie Crushers provided employment for as many as six consumers during each home game, with more than 50 consumers having an opportunity to work over the course of the summer. These employees began cleaning All Pro Freight Stadium in May, working at nights during the games and in the mornings after games. It took them some time to build their skills, but the management and staff of the Crushers was supportive and patient. The jobs provided by the Crushers allowed these consumers to earn a paycheck, as well as the respect of the team's management.

And this organization's generosity didn't stop with paychecks. When the Crushers made the playoffs, they gave tickets to both staff and consumers to see them play. Later, at our annual golf outing, the Crushers generously donated tickets and autographed baseballs to help with the event.

In their inaugural year, the Crushers chose Murray Ridge to be a part of their organization, they chose to treat our consumers like family, and most of all, they chose to help people. And with that kind of commitment to caring for others, we were pleased to present the Lake Erie Crushers with the 2009 Community Awareness Recognition Education and Service, or C.A.R.E.S. Award. Truly, this is an organization that personifies the Murray Ridge motto of *helping people*.

Things are Going Swimmingly



The Murray Ridge Raiders Swim Team dove right into the competitive spirit this season and will be competing at the Area Qualifier in Strongsville in November.

Bring Your Child to Work Day



Children of Murray Ridge Center staff spent a day learning about what their parents do at work every day during "Bring Your Child to Work Day." While visiting the three Work/Activity centers, children engaged in various activities with consumers and left with many new friends.

Honoring Staff for 30 Years of Service

Recently, Murray Ridge Center honored **Barbara Payne** and **Shirley Wingard**, two staff members who have served Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities for 30 years.

A teacher at Murray Ridge School, Barb Payne is described by her



Barbara Payne

peers as being a passionate advocate for students who continually works towards providing them with the tools they need to be successful. Families and faculty alike remark on her dedication and her kind nature. In her 30 years with Murray Ridge, Payne has been part of the growth and development of many children as they grow into adults. She has truly been a dedicated educator, and everyone from students, to teachers to family members have had opportunities to learn from her.

Long-time Residential Program Manager **Shirley Wingard** has worked in every Murray Ridge Group Home except for Meister Road, since 1979. She has seen many residents of these homes grow from young adults to seniors. She has seen their joys and accomplishments, as well as their sorrows and disappointments. She has seen them acquire more skills and move into their own apartments. In her 30 years, Wingard has been witness to the various events that take place in an individual's life and feels privileged to have been in a position of celebrating those moments with them.



Shirley Wingard

With such dedicated staff as Payne and Wingard, Murray Ridge Center is able to fulfill its mission of serving Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities. On behalf of the individuals and families we serve, we extend our warmest thanks and congratulations go to them both!

Scarecrow-A-Go-Go

Recently, Laura Dahl from the Firelands Association for the Visual Arts, or FAVA, came to the Oberlin Work/Activity Center to provide a scarecrow-making workshop for adult consumers with developmental disabilities. Participants eagerly assembled straw, gourds, old clothing and festive hats to create cute, funny and scary scarecrows. These fall-inspired creations were then entered into the "Scarecrow-A-Go-Go" contest held October 9-11. This benefit raised money for the Oberlin Community Services Food Pantry. These adults with developmental disabilities welcomed this very creative way to give back to others in their community and are eager for the next artistic adventure.



Genevieve Graovac (left), Andrea Frcka (middle, back) from the Oberlin Work/Activity Center, and Laua Dahl from the Firelands Association for the Visual Arts, or FAVA, work together to create a scarecrow for the "Scarecrow-A-Go-Go" contest.

Uldrich

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and opportunities to persons with disabilities." But Uldrich dismisses praise. "I didn't set out to get pats on the back. I just wanted to help with the continued betterment of Murray Ridge as a whole. We can't serve 100% of the needs to 100% of the people 100% of the time, but we have to do the best we can to make decisions that do the most for the greatest number of people," he said. When asked about the challenges or problems he's faced as a Board member, he stoically replies "I don't believe in problems. I believe problems are the beginnings of opportunities."

In his 29 years of involvement with Murray Ridge Center, Uldrich has had his hands in a variety of things dedicated to the betterment of the agency. Maybe it was his humble Depression-era beginnings, his service in the Air Force, or his care and concern for his daughter that formed his sense of compassion and belief in being of service to others. But whatever the motivating "ingredients" are, there is likely no better way to sum up his legacy of commitment than the Boy Scout oath, which he recalls from years of Scout leadership, and recites proudly even today,

*"On my honor, I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my Country and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight."*

Indeed, Jim Uldrich seems to live this oath every day, and no doubt will continue to live it with each tomorrow.

New Faces in Murray Ridge Places



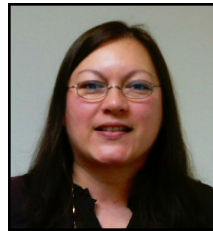
Derek Baker joins Murray Ridge School as a Teacher Aide. He was previously an Aide with Lorain City Schools where he is also the Assistant Football Coach.



David Blevins will assume the role of Marketing Job Placement for Murray Ridge. David received his Bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University and resides in Bay Village with his wife and daughter.



Karen Gross joins the Meister Home as Group Home Aide part-time. She recently moved to Ohio from California, where she was a Teacher Aide for the Long Beach School District.



Joan West joins Academy Court Home as a Group Home Aide part-time. Joan resides in Vermilion.

BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of MR/DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on October 23, 2009:

Superintendent Fisher outlined the Board's responsibility involving the annual payment of the non-federal Medicaid costs. To meet this responsibility, a motion requesting that the county auditor certify the availability of \$1,133,273 for use by the agency in calendar year 2010 for Medicaid match was made; the motion was approved unanimously. In other business, Dr. Fisher told the Board that the Murray Ridge Housing Board has just under \$200,000 in funding and that the Housing Board voted to apply those funds toward the construction of a new home. This new home would be a duplex and fully handicapped-accessible. Dr. Fisher also noted that the home would provide a good option for emergency placement for individuals. Finally, the Board also reviewed four resolutions to be presented and voted on at the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD Delegate Assembly in Columbus on December 2—4, 2009. The Board will be represented at this event by President Michele Hunt, who will attend as Assembly Delegate, and Superintendent Fisher, who will attend as Assembly Alternate Delegate.



November 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					

Activities & Events

11/18—LCBMRDD Finance Committee meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria

11/20—LCBMRDD Meeting, 12:30 p.m. Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria

11/26-11/27—Agency Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving

Gobble, Gobble!



As you sit with loved ones to enjoy your thanksgiving feast, you may be interested in a few fun facts about Thanksgiving from History.com.

- The National Turkey Federation estimated that 46 million turkeys were eaten on Thanksgiving in 2007.
- The cranberry is one of only three fruits—the others are the blueberry and the Concord grape—that are entirely native to North American soil.
- The largest pumpkin pie ever baked weighed 2,020 pounds and measured just over 12 feet long.

Happy Thanksgiving, Lorain County!



Lunch Menus

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.75, Adults = \$2.70

November 16-20
December 7-11

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

November 2-6

November 23-27
December 14-18

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



November 9-13

November 30-December 4
December 21-25

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

Visit our Web site
www.murrayridgecenter.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.



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.

Join the Murray Ridge Support Group

As all parents know, raising children is both a privilege and a challenge. And it can be especially challenging if you're the parent or caregiver of someone with special needs. Sometimes, you just need a little support from other people who understand what you're going through. The Murray Ridge Support Group provides educational services, recreational programs, and emotional support to families and caregivers impacted by MRDD in Lorain County. The Murray Ridge Support Group welcomes new members and anyone in Lorain County may join. Many members have a great deal of personal experience dealing with a variety of issues affecting individuals with MRDD and their caregivers, and can be a great help to anyone needing assistance. If you would like to learn more about how the Murray Ridge Support Group is helping people, contact Andrea at (440) 323-2741.