



MurrayRidgeCenter  
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

# The Murray Ridge Courier

November 2014

## Murray Ridge Center's Annual In-Service

On October 17, the staff of Murray Ridge Center came together to celebrate the men and women who work tirelessly each and every day in our school, Early Intervention Department, Adult Services programs, group homes, SSA, and administrative and support roles.

Superintendent Amber Fisher delivered the annual address, discussing the many changes the Agency will face in the coming year, saying "As with any and every other task brought to bear, we will face what lies ahead energetically, strategically, and, most importantly, with the best interests of people with developmental disabilities and their families as our guiding principle."

Superintendent Fisher then highlighted the successes of the Agency throughout the past year, and each department was asked to stand and be recognized.

Special recognition was given to individuals who this year reached the benchmark of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years of dedication and service to our Murray Ridge consumers. Also recognized were some 100 staff members who contributed hundreds of volunteer hours, in addition to their regular duties throughout the year, to support the mission of Murray Ridge, and the 22 staff members who had perfect attendance from October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2014. Congratulations to our amazing Murray Ridge staff!

Another notable acknowledgement was the presentation of the annual C.A.R.E.S. award. C.A.R.E.S. stands for Community Awareness, Recognition, Education, and Service. Every year, a C.A.R.E.S. award is presented in recognition of an individual or organization that has gone above and beyond the call of duty in helping people with developmental disabilities. The 2014 C.A.R.E.S. award was given to Margaret Grignon (pictured right, seated middle) from Genesis House, for her tireless efforts in educating and helping to protect people with developmental disabilities against victimization, physical and sexual abuse, and domestic violence.

This year saw a new award being presented—one that is historically given at the Agency's annual Volunteer Appreciation Reception: the Marilyn Hupfer Volunteer of the Year Award.

This award was created eight years ago to commemorate the life of a woman who personified the spirit of helping people. Each year, a volunteer is nominated to receive this

distinction in honor of the example inspired by Mrs. Hupfer during her time with Murray Ridge Center.

This year Murray Ridge honored Kathleen Oblak (pictured below, seated right), a woman who has been a parent, supporter, and volunteer with Murray Ridge Center for almost 40 years. Through her son, David, and his 25 years at Murray Ridge Center, Kathy was a strong supporter of the Agency. After his passing in November of 2000, Kathy created the David Elsasser Spirit Award to commemorate her son's spirit and time at Murray Ridge Center. This award, given to a deserving graduate, consists of an Indians t-shirt and tickets to an Indians game in honor of her late son, who was an avid sports fan. Kathy now continues working with Murray Ridge School as a weekly classroom volunteer.

Finally, Superintendent Fisher presented the Quarterly Exceptional Service Award—traditionally given at the monthly Board Meeting (please see Exceptional Service article on page 5).

Murray Ridge would like to thank all of our staff members for their outstanding work throughout the year. As Superintendent Fisher noted, "...if we provide an abundance of encouragement and support for one another and for those we serve, and if we always act in accordance with our mission to maximize the quality of life of people with developmental disabilities, then together we can accomplish what is difficult to achieve, what is improbable and, yes, what for many may be unimaginable."





Gregg Heiden presents Kathy Piskur with her 30 years of service award.



Above, Staff members Patti Crissinger, Mary Gigliotti, Holly Ralich, Barb Kidney, Barb Dalton, and Larry Schuman smile before the day kicks off. Below, R.I.C.H.E.S. members Donna Williams, Diane Knoble, Kathy Justy, Tammy Stanley, Jennifer Doseck, and Starr Price.



Murray Ridge Center November 2014

## Throughout the past year...

### Early Intervention:

- Licensed an EI Specialist in the PLAY (Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters) Program
- Made strides towards being "as paperless as possible" through use of a scanning program
- Began the process of generating revenue under the Title XX program

### Murray Ridge School:

- Continued to be a preferred choice of school for many families throughout the Lorain County districts
- Created a positive learning environment maintained by staff at the school

### Opportunity/Vocational Centers:

- Incorporated new electronic technologies (adapted Wiis, iPads, internet access) and experiences such as armchair travel, current event discussions, switch activated activities, bell choir, and talent shows
- Provided community-based classes, such as Zumba, Tai Chi, swimming, and volleyball
- Displayed artwork at libraries and Metro Park locations

### Supported Employment:

- Began utilizing bus bench advertising to increase public awareness of Murray Ridge Center's Supported Employment services
- Made 19 community job placements in 2014, thus far
- Added an enclave at LCCC, and expanded an enclave at the Port Authority

### Residential staff:

- Received a perfect licensure survey this fall at the Meister Home
- Worked with families towards exploration of Supported Living as an alternative to larger licensed facilities

### Service and Support Administration

- Planned and implemented changes to rules on behavior support, human rights, and the positive intervention culture
- Began transitioning to model of service planning that begins by focusing on each individual's life goals

### Administrative Departments:

- IS Department rolled out the TimeStar payroll system and expanded the use of iPads and technology by staff and consumers
- Business Department met multiple challenges in the area of payroll processing
- Investigative Agent unit implemented and trained the entire provider community on new (M)UI rule
- Nursing Department continued to address highly specialized health needs of consumers
- Human Resources ensured personnel functions were handled smoothly and appropriately
- Public Relations Department continued to solicit media coverage on our many activities and breadth of services
- Maintenance implemented a number of key projects to keep our buildings in good repair



# Veggie U Comes to Murray Ridge School

The Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities has partnered with Veggie U to bring a five-week learning program to students at Murray Ridge School.

Veggie U is a national non-profit organization. It has been working with schools since 2003, and has contributed Classroom Gardens to more than 5,000 classrooms in 36 states; 14 schools in Lorain County have been involved with Veggie U.

The organization's mission is to supply Classroom Gardens and a standards-based, five-week science program to elementary and special needs students. They are dedicated to increasing children's awareness of healthy food options, and teaching them how real food reaches their plate.

"We believe that children that grow their own food will choose a healthier lifestyle," said Vicki Jenkins, Marketing Coordinator for Veggie U. "We are also teaching them plant science at the same time through fun activities while learning to enjoy vegetables."

Murray Ridge School teacher Kristen Dickerhoff reached out to the local Oberlin chapter, and through funding by the Nord Family Foundation and the Community Foundation for Lorain County, Veggie U was able to donate six Classroom Gardens to the school. Teachers in the Primary wing at Murray Ridge School will teach the lessons while students watch the vegetable gardens grow over the next five weeks. Veggie U will serve as mentors for the program, and teachers will provide feedback and evaluations throughout the program's duration.

"By giving our students a hands-on approach and a start-to-finish view right in our own classroom, growing our own vegetables will make them a real and relevant food that can be fun, exciting, and delicious," Dickerhoff said. "The comprehensive curriculum is already aligned to the Ohio Academic Content Standards-Extended version, so the lesson plans work right into the students' daily education while engaging them in every activity."

Murray Ridge Center Director of Education, Dann Swift, is also excited to see how students will benefit from Veggie U. "This program is beneficial because it helps our students learn proper nutrition, and that is something all schools across the country are trying to do. This is a great program to help Murray Ridge School do just that."



Murray Ridge School teacher Ashley Claus, Veggie U Autism Coordinator Susan Fain, Murray Ridge School Language Development Specialist Karen McKenzie, and Murray Ridge School teacher Kristen Dickerhoff at the kickoff meeting for the school's Veggie U program.

# Horsing Around at Murray Ridge School

On October 3, Dr. Jeffrey Buckley, DDS from Oberlin, brought in his miniature ponies for the students and staff of Murray Ridge School to enjoy.

These gentle creatures spent hours interacting with students, allowing for feeding and petting by interested children.

Thank you to Dr. Buckley and his helpers for this annual event!



Gus McKee, Dr. Buckley, Daniel Potter, and teacher Julie Peterson pose with a pony.



# Vermilion High School Offers Victory Day for Students at Murray Ridge School

Members from the Vermilion High School football team, cheerleading squad, and Peer Leadership class visited Murray Ridge School (Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities) on October 24 as part of Victory Day, a program developed in 2010 as a way to help children with developmental disabilities learn football and cheerleading skills, and have the opportunity to interact with local high school students.

This was Vermilion's first year participating in Victory Day. Under the leadership of Head Coach Robert Duray and teacher Christine Reynolds, the teams and class from Vermilion High School led almost 100 students from Murray Ridge School in a variety of skills stations that helped them learn passing, catching, and agility. They also held a mock game where students had the opportunity to run the ball. Additionally, a ceremony was held at the end, and Murray Ridge School students were given t-shirts and medals for their participation.

"It was a great success!" said Director of Education, Dann Swift. "The Vermilion High School students were excellent with our students, and went to great lengths to ensure all of our Murray Ridge School students were included."



Above: (L to R front row): Kenneth Kingsley, Evan Clarke, Michael Elsleger, Josiah Smith, Landen Pasenow. (L to R back row): Young Killinger, Renee Pumphrey, two students from Vermilion High School, Kristin Dickerhoff, Vermilion High School student, and Cindy Zanny. Right top: Mark Axford runs the ball. Right below: CJ Ackley and players from the Vermilion High School football team pose after a play.













# November 2014

## Activities & Events

- 11/2 - Murray Ridge Center Inland Trail Marathon
- 11/3 - Special Olympics Banquet, Spitzer Conference Center at LCCC, 6:30 pm
- 11/11 - **Agency closed for Veteran's Day holiday**
- 11/13 - LCBDD Finance Committee meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 11/21 - Regular Meeting of the Board and Ethics Council, 12:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road in Elyria
- 11/26 - **Murray Ridge School closed for day before Thanksgiving Day**
- 11/27 - **Agency closed for Thanksgiving Day**
- 11/28 - **Agency closed for day after Thanksgiving Day**
- TBD - Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, EOVC, 4:15 p.m.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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16	17	18	19	20	21 	22
23	24	25	26 	27 	28 	29

## Exceptional Service Award

Each Quarter, the Lorain County Board honors a staff member whose work efforts reflect remarkable dedication and have significantly contributed to the well being of people with developmental disabilities. This award, the Exceptional Service Award, is the result of a nomination from a community member; consumer; or parent, guardian, sibling or other relative of a Murray Ridge program participant.

Traditionally, this award has been given at the monthly Board Meeting. This quarter, the award was presented at the annual Agency In-service in order to ensure that this individual was recognized despite the lack of Board Meeting in October.

Our 2014 3rd Quarter recipient, Ron Hauch, has been described by his supervisor as hard-working, positive, and friendly. The nomination letter reads "He is a wonderful person to work with; he is faithful, consistent, trustworthy, and a man of integrity. Throughout the years, he has proven time and time again to us that he is all the things I described and more. He loves the residents and treats

them like family. He truly deserves to be recognized for all the great work he has, and is doing."

In addition to receiving this award, Ron was also honored at the In-Service for the 25 years of service he's given to Murray Ridge Center. Congratulations to Ron Hauch, the Murray Ridge Center 2014 3rd Quarter Exceptional Service Award recipient.



Ron accepting his award from Superintendent Fisher.



# Murray Ridge Honors Special Olympic Athletes at Annual Ceremony

At Murray Ridge Center's annual Special Olympics awards banquet on November 3, 186 athletes were honored for their participation throughout the year in more than nine sports.

The evening's keynote speaker was Joel Hammond, media relations and social media specialist with the Cleveland Indians. Joel's speech focused on perseverance, and how by working through adversity, all athletes can achieve great things.

Joel brought with him a special surprise for the Murray Ridge athletes: a visit from the Cleveland Indians mascot, Slider! Slider visited each table to congratulate our athletes on their amazing accomplishments.

At the awards banquet, notable achievements throughout the year were recognized, and each athlete was awarded a red stadium blanket with the Special Olympics logo and Murray Ridge Special Olympics imprinted on the front.

At Murray Ridge, we strive to assist all of the individuals we serve to discover and master skills, and we are thankful to the staff members and volunteers who take the time to coach, mentor, and support our athletes in the many competitions throughout the year.

Congratulations to all Special Olympics athletes! Murray Ridge is proud of all you've accomplished and looks forward to celebrating many victories in the years to come!



Above left: Leroy Davis celebrates his nomination into the Hall of Fame for his more than 40 years of Special Olympics. Above right: Kista Atkins smiles with special guest Slider. Below left: Superintendent Amber Fisher welcomes the athletes to the banquet. Below right: Board members Vas-sie Scott, Keith Boey, Dan White, and Michelle Hunt hand out awards.



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**American  
Red Cross**



# **Murray Ridge Road Blood Drive**

**Lorain County Sheriff's Office - 9896 Murray Ridge Road  
Public Lobby Entrance**

**Thursday, December 11, 2014**

**12:00 pm - 5:00 pm**

**To commit to donation or for questions call:  
Capt. Jack Hammond at 440-329-3734**

**[redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) | 1-800-RED CROSS**

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Lorain County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center  
1091 Infirmary Road  
Elyria, OH 44035

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[www.murrayridgecenter.org](http://www.murrayridgecenter.org)



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### 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 Jeff Neal, Director of Service & Support Administration. You may reach him by telephone at 440-324-2366.

—The Editor

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