

Barriers No Match for His Work Ethic

We all want to live full, independent lives, but getting there can be a challenge. Employment is often the first hurdle to building a fulfilled life. This can be especially true for persons with disabilities.

Historically, the attitude toward persons with disabilities in the workplace has been one of doubt and apprehension. We've come a long way since Congress declared the first "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week" in 1945. Today, individuals with various disabilities are making significant contributions in the workplace. To recognize these contributions, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to "National Disability Employment Awareness Month," or NDEAM.

When it comes to employing persons with disabilities, some challenges still exist. But dedicated workers like **Chris Rivenbark** are breaking down those barriers all over Lorain County. When Chris came to Murray Ridge Center in 2004, he already had a job at a local Target Department Store. He also already had a strong work ethic. In fact, he was one of only a few temporary employees hired for the holiday season who was asked

to stay on permanently to stock merchandise.



Rivenbark at work, beaming after stating "I like my job!"

Chris did not need help in cultivating the right attitude about work. However, because of his disability, he has difficulty with changes in routine and with socialization. To ensure his continued success on the job, Chris receives help in these areas from **Essie Fedikovich**, Job Coach at Murray Ridge Center. "Chris is a great worker, especially when he understands the task and can focus on it. But he gets a little anxious when there's a change in his routine or duties," said Fedikovich.

Essie helps to train Chris with new job tasks in order to minimize any frustration he may feel doing something new. She also helps to facilitate communication between Chris and his employer so that the employer better understands Chris, and Chris is better able to improve his social skills. "Chris was shy at first about

asking questions because there was a lot to learn and he didn't really know anyone," said Chris' Team Leader, **Joan**. "But with Essie's help, Chris knows the tasks, talks more. He has become one of the best team members we have. He's energetic and enthusiastic...he's a real team player."

This cooperation between Chris, Essie and the employer is what the spirit of NDEAM is all about, which is celebrating the talent and potential of all citizens with disabilities and opening the doors of opportunity. And Chris is a stellar example of just what people with disabilities can do in the workplace.

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If you wish to receive future newsletters by e-mail, please contact Racheal Seibert at (440) 329-3734 or rseibert@loraincountymrdd.org.



Annual Transportation Safety Instruction

Murray Ridge Center wants your ride into our program sites to be a safe one. **Jeff Miller**, Director of Vocational Services for Murray Ridge Center, suggests the following guidelines for both adults and children when utilizing transportation services provided by Murray Ridge Center.

WAITING FOR THE BUS

1. Be five minutes early. Wait for the bus at least ten feet from the road.
2. Dress properly-winter clothing, hats, mittens and boots will help to keep you warm in the winter.
3. Watch for the bus red lights.
4. Wait until the bus has stopped and the door opens before stepping into the roadway.
5. Wait for the driver to signal to cross. Cross at least ten feet in front of the bus.
6. Use the handrail when stepping onto the bus.
7. If you use a wheelchair, it must be equipped with a functioning seat belt. The wheels should lock, as well.

BUS SEAT SAFETY RULES

1. Follow all of the driver's instructions.
2. Speak softly so the driver will not be distracted. At railroad crossings, be quiet.
3. Stay seated until your stop.
4. Never put head, arms or hands out of the window.
5. Keep aisles clear and free of tripping hazards.
6. Tell the driver or monitor if you are being bullied.
7. Do not eat on the bus as this could present a choking hazard.

GETTING OFF THE BUS AT HOME

1. If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least ten feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road, until you can turn around and see the driver.
2. Make sure that the driver can see you.
3. Wait for the signal from the driver before beginning to cross.
4. When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
5. Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver has signaled that it is safe for you to begin walking.
6. Stay away from the bus' rear wheels at all times. If you drop something near the bus, leave it.

Many of our consumers are also able to travel about the community through the use of public transportation. We want your trips to be safe ones!

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GENERAL SAFETY TIPS

1. When you enter or leave a vehicle, watch for slippery or uneven pavement and other hazards that could cause you to fall.
2. Have your LCT ID, bus fare, ticket, or pass ready to avoid losing your balance while looking for it.
3. Do not carry too many packages-always leave a free hand to grab a railing.
4. Allow extra time to cross streets, especially in bad weather.
5. If it's dark outside, wear light-colored or reflective clothing.
6. Do not talk to strangers. If you are being bothered by someone, tell the driver immediately.
7. If you use a stop assistance card, remember to show it to the driver as you board the bus.
8. Most LCT stops are not sheltered. Dress appropriately for the winter weather, and utilize sunscreen in the summer.
9. Whether you are in a bus, car or van-**ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEATBELT IF THE VEHICLE IS EQUIPPED WITH ONE.**

FIRST STUDENT CHANGES

Murray Ridge Center contracts with First Student, Inc. for most of our transportations services. First Student is in the process of installing a system that will enhance safety. The Zonar System will not only make routine vehicle inspections easier, it will also notify the driver if

the post-trip inspection for remaining passengers has been missed. If the driver fails to go to the back of the bus after the bus is turned off, an alarm will sound. This alarm can only be disabled at the back of the bus.



New Faces in Murray Ridge Places

Please welcome the newest members of the Lorain County Board of MR/DD family. We wish you the best as you begin your career with our organization!



Tina Brletich joins Murray Ridge Center as part-time secretary for the Lorain Work/Activity Center. She most recently worked for Elyria City Schools. In her free time, Tina enjoys motorcycling.



New Positions Assumed



Previously an intermittent employee of Murray Ridge Center, **Shawn Parker** has been hired as a Custodial Worker. Shawn received his M.B.A. from Ashland University and enjoys hunting, fishing and playing outdoors with his six-year-old son.



Terri Camp, previously a Community-Based Specialist for Supportive Home Services, has been hired as a Habilitation Manager at the Lorain Work Activity Center. When not taking her two children to various activities, Terri enjoys watching Cleveland sports.



Previously a sub at Elyria Work Activity Center, **Hillary Tanner** has joined the East Ninth Street Home as a full-time Aid/Housekeeper. She majored in psychology at the University of Nebraska and enjoys reading and spending time with friends.

Recognizing Great Ideas



The R.I.C.H.E.S. Committee would like to congratulate each of the following employees for submitting an eligible R.I.C.H.E.S. solution form during the Summer Promotional Campaign. The efforts of these employees helps to make the services offered by Murray Ridge Center even more effective and practical.

- **Jeff Christopher**—Oberlin Work Activity Center
- **Kevin Chutes**— Oberlin Work Activity Center
- **Timothy Hall**—Oberlin Work Activity Center
- **Terri Osborn**—Service and Support Administration
- **Stephanie Parrack**—Oberlin Work Activity Center



October 22-26 Is National School Bus Safety Week

Now that school is back in session, it is important for all motorists to keep a few general safety guidelines in mind. Remember that yellow flashing lights on a school bus indicate that the bus is preparing to stop so other drivers should also be preparing to stop. Red flashing lights and extended gate arms indicate that the bus is loading or unloading children. In this case, on roadways with fewer than four lanes, drivers approaching from either direction must stop at least 10 feet from the bus until it resumes motion. It's not a recommendation: it's the law.

Murray Ridge Employees: Save the Date!

The annual employee In-service day will be held on Friday, October 12, 2007 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Lorain County Community College. A variety of session topics revolving around MR/DD will be offered.

We look forward to seeing everyone for an informative and fun-filled In-service!



October 2007

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Murray Ridge Center Events

- 10/1—Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, Elyria Work Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Rd., 4:15 p.m.
- 10/3 or 10/4—Early Intervention Outing, Picking Apples at Apple Hill Orchard. Contact your EI Specialist for more information.
- 10/8—Agency closed in observance of Columbus Day.
- 10/15—LCBMR/DD Meeting, Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria, 8:00 p.m.
- 10/16—Family Support Parent Committee meeting, Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria, 6:30 p.m.
- 10/26—Murray Ridge Support Group Halloween Dance, Murray Ridge School, 9750 S. Murray Ridge Rd., 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming Workshops, Conferences and In-services

- Vocational Skills In-service Training, October 4, 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Oberlin Work Activity Center. This in-service will focus on time sheets and shipping and receiving paperwork.
- CPR and First Aid Training, October 6, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at Elyria Work Activity Center. These are two separate American Red Cross certified courses. Class size is limited.
- *EDT 399/599—Elements of Applied Behavior Analysis in Educational Settings*, 1 Credit, Cleveland State University. This class is held Tuesdays, 4:30-7:30 p.m., from October 9-November 13. For more information contact Lenora Oeftering, Murray Ridge Center Classroom Supervisor, (440) 329-3760.
- Seventh Annual Adult Sibling Conference, October 12-13 at the Marriott Airport Hotel in Columbus. This annual conference is designed to give adult siblings of people with disabilities an opportunity to meet and share experiences, as well as receive valuable information about services and supports. The registration fee is \$80 and includes meals and materials. Registration can be completed online at www.ohiosibs.com.

Don't Forget!

Sign-up for the Special Olympics Basketball Try-outs will begin in October. Please contact Judy Hartung for more information, (440) 284-2720.



Community Events

- 10/19—"Helen Keller: A Tribute to her Teacher," Stocker Arts Center at Lorain County Community College, 7:30 p.m., (440) 366-4040 for tickets.
- 10/29—Daniel Tammet, Part of the "Meeting Great Minds" series at Stocker Arts Center at Lorain County Community College, 6:30 p.m., free admission, (440) 366-4040 for reservations.

Getting to Know You



Pictured above: Oberlin College student **Margaret Close** and East College Home resident **Michael Urban** enjoy a little conversation over lunch.

A group of students from Oberlin College joined residents and staff from South Professor and East College Group Homes on September 1 for a day of food, fun and friendship. The students chose to spend their day socializing with the residents as part of the school's 11th annual Day of Service.

Balancing Work and Play

Members of the Special Olympics Softball Team 2 for Murray Ridge Center have some fun after defeating Medina at the Area Qualifier on August 18. The team will move on to play a two-game tournament for the State Title.



The "Incidental" Column



John Syrowski

What a busy month this has been! As "the Debs" and I have been providing annual MUI training at many of the facilities, we have had some

excellent comments and questions. Furthermore, I didn't notice anybody running when we approached, so I took this as progress!

Of the questions asked, one recurring question related directly to this month's column. If you are uncertain as to whether or not an incident qualifies as an MUI or UI, and thus, whether or not it should be reported, the best thing to do is to report it.

However, it might be beneficial to share a few concrete examples of what would or would not constitute an MUI:

- ***A consumer is at his special Olympics softball game and breaks his leg.***
This would indeed be considered an MUI, as the consumer was receiving services at the time of the incident.
- ***I am an individual provider and my car wouldn't start, so I did not get the consumer to church on Sunday. He was very upset.***
This would NOT be considered an MUI. Remember, to be considered an MUI, the incident must affect the health and/or safety of a consumer.
- ***A consumer is at home with his family and his mother performs the Heimlich maneuver on him; Is that considered an MUI under the Medical Emergency category?***
This would not be considered an MUI since the consumer was home with his family and not receiving any services at the time of the incident.

As you can see, there are a great many things to consider with respect to MUI's, and the outcome may not be what you might expect.

Incidentally Yours,
John

Editor's Note: Over time we hope to feature a guest columnist on an occasional basis. It will give everyone an opportunity to know a little bit more about how different departments work to serve the mission of Murray Ridge.

Lorain County Board of Mental Retardation
& Developmental Disabilities

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Lunch Menus for Murray Ridge Center

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.45, Adults = \$2.50

Week of November 5-9 and October 15-19

Monday- Ham, 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

Week of October 1-5 and October 22-26

Monday- Chicken Patty on a Bun, Potato Wedges, 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, Jelly, Cookie

Thursday- Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Fresh Fruit, Nutri-Grain Bar

Friday- Meat/Cheese Burrito, Spanish Rice, Cole Slaw, Applesauce

Week of October 8-12 and October 29-November 2

Monday- Salisbury Steak w/Gravy, Scalloped 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