

Murray Ridge Becomes "Gold Standard" for Innovative Autism Teaching Tool

For the third year in a row, educators at the Murray Ridge School have been invited by the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) to discuss their success in implementing a newer model for autism education at the annual OCALI Conference and Exposition. This national conference, attended each year by thousands, is the United States' premier event in autism, assistive technology and low incidence.

In the last three years, this team has also been asked to present by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and the Network of Autism Training & Technical Assistance Programs (NATTAP), which hosts the largest international conference on autism. OCALI has also requested that the Murray Ridge team lead the way in training other school systems throughout Ohio. Their success certainly has been impressive and the accolades many.

Some may wonder how the Ziggurat model differs from other educational techniques, and how Murray Ridge School gained such prominence in a field where effective innovations for special needs students are often introduced and championed by notable institutions such as The Cleveland Clinic.

Here's the story. Three years ago, **Kathy Beatty, Joan Lunsford, Lenora Oeftering** and **Joan Peterson** had never heard of "The Ziggurat Model" for autism education. In fact, at the time there was not even a book about it. However, they had been invited to attend an OCALI training session and there was a concentrated focus on this new approach in working with individuals with autism spectrum disorder. "They were pushing this new method pretty hard. At first I felt like I was going to an infomercial presentation," said School Supervisor Lenora Oeftering. "But by the end of the three day session, I could not wait to integrate it into our school," she added.

The new approach, named "Ziggurat" because of its pyramidal shape of progressively smaller tiers, is a system for designing comprehensive behavior interventions for students with autism spectrum disorders. Traditional interventions treat the visible behaviors of a student, but do little to address the underlying cause of the behavior. "What this



*Murray Ridge School educators **Joan Peterson, Kathy Beatty, Joan Lunsford** and **Lenora Oeftering** discuss their implementation of and success with the "Ziggurat Model."*

means is that, previously, teachers were addressing a specific behavior as it happened, but there was no real analysis as to why the child was having the behavior to begin with. The *cause* was never factored in, so the treatment of the behavior was temporary," said teacher Joan Lunsford.

The Ziggurat Model, on the other hand, incorporates a five-tier pyramid, each level identifying areas required for the development of an effective treatment plan. For example, the base tier addresses sensory and biological needs. "So if it can be determined through a rigorous evaluation process that the cause of a child's behavior is a result of overstimulation by noise, for instance, then addressing that issue can be instrumental in effectively addressing that child's behaviors. Very simply, if we know the child is having a behavior because the radio is too loud, then we can turn the radio down and, in turn, likely reduce the number of behaviors caused by noise," said School Supervisor Joan Peterson.

Following an evaluation of why behaviors may be occurring, a comprehensive plan can be prepared for ensuring the student has the proper reinforcements and supports, and appropriate task demands and skill acquisition can be set. "It's a holistic

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October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Sixty-three years ago Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October of each year to be 'National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week' in an effort to educate the American public about issues related to disability and employment. The word 'physically' was removed in 1962 in order to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. Then, in 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Whether working in a grocery store, a school or a factory, more than 150 million American workers contribute to the economy. And more than 50 million of these workers have disabilities. Murray Ridge Center is proud to recognize workers with developmental disabilities during National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Through our three work/activity centers, enclave sites and community-based work experiences, we are privileged to help nearly 1,000 Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities to be part of the American workforce.

During the month of October, Murray Ridge Center encourages *all* Lorain County citizens to join us in celebrating the talents of workers with developmental disabilities.



Mascot's Visit Was a Home-Run



Lorain Work/Activity consumer **Brett Thomas** excitedly greets "Stomper" during a recent visit by the cuddly, seven-foot Lake Erie Crushers mascot. Soon after this visit, the Crushers, in their inaugural season, went on to take first place in the Frontier League following a 13-10 victory over the River City Rascals. We look forward to many future victories, as well as visits, by the Crushers!

Ohio Legislature Removes "Mental Retardation" from Agency Names

On July 7, 2009, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland signed into law Senate Bill 79, legally changing the name of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. The signing of this bill also drops the words "mental retardation" from the names of all 88 County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. This law went into effect on October 5, 2009.

Accordingly, the formal name of the agency is now *The Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities*. As the agency is more commonly known as Murray Ridge Center, this change will be less apparent than at some other Boards across the state, but we will be making changes wherever appropriate to reflect passage of this law.

Legislators were sensitive to the fiscal responsibility of county boards by including an amendment that allows the board to use to depletion all existing brochures, letterhead, envelopes and other printed materials that are already in stock. Beginning in October you may notice some changes to our signs, letterhead, website and other communication tools as we phase out the name Lorain County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and phase in Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Special Olympics Softball Tournament



The Murray Ridge Raiders Softball Team 1 recently competed at the Special Olympics State Softball Championship in Oregon, Ohio. The team placed fourth in this grueling competition, and is looking forward to next year.

- Neuromuscular disorders (including muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis)
- Weakened immune systems (including people with AIDS)

If you (or your child) are in one of the groups above and develop flu-like symptoms, consult a health care provider to get advice about seeking medical care. Also, it's possible for otherwise healthy people to develop severe illness so any one concerned about their illness should consult their doctor.

There are "emergency warning signs" that should signal anyone to seek medical care urgently.

Emergency Warning Signs

In Children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In Adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Are there medicines to treat infection with this new virus?

Yes. There are prescriptions drugs called "antivirals" that can treat influenza illness, including 2009 H1N1. These drugs can make illness milder and may also prevent serious complications. The priority use for influenza antiviral drugs this flu season is to treat people who are severely ill (hospitalized) and sick people who are at increased risk

of serious influenza-related complications. CDC recommends the use of the antiviral drugs oseltamivir or zanamivir this season.

How long should I stay home if I'm sick?

CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

Staying at home means that you should not leave your home except to seek medical care. This means avoiding normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings. If you must leave the house (for example to see your doctor), wear a facemask, if you have one and it is tolerable, or cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and wash your hands often to keep from spreading flu to others.

Flu symptoms can include

fever*
cough
sore throat
runny or stuffy nose
body aches
headache
chills
fatigue
sometimes diarrhea
and vomiting

*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

For more information visit

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu or

www.flu.gov or call 800-CDC-INFO



2009 H1N1

2009 H1N1 flu (sometimes called "swine flu") is a new influenza virus that is spreading worldwide among people. Because this virus is very different from current seasonal influenza viruses, many people will not have protective immunity against it and the seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against it either.

Influenza is unpredictable, but this flu season could be worse than recent years because of the 2009 H1N1 virus. CDC is preparing for an early flu season and expects both 2009 H1N1 flu and seasonal flu to cause illness, hospital stays and deaths this season.

How does 2009 H1N1 flu spread?

Both 2009 H1N1 flu and seasonal influenza are thought to spread mostly from person to person through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with influenza. People also may get sick by touching something with flu viruses on it, and then touching their mouth or nose.

How long can a sick person spread

2009 H1N1 flu to others?

People infected with 2009 H1N1 flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to about 7 days after getting sick. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems.

How severe is illness associated with this 2009 H1N1 flu virus?

2009 H1N1 flu illness has ranged from mild to severe. Most healthy people who have been sick with 2009 H1N1 have recovered without needing medical treatment, however, hospitalizations and deaths from 2009 H1N1 have occurred. Most people who have been hospitalized with 2009 H1N1 have had a medical condition that places them at higher risk of serious flu-related complications. However, some people who have become very ill have been previously healthy. Severe infections have been reported among people of all ages. While few people over the age of 65 have been infected with this new virus, if people in this age group become ill, they are at higher risk of developing flu-related complications.

Who is at greatest risk of infection with this new virus?

So far, younger people have been more likely to be infected with 2009 H1N1 flu than older people. Most cases of 2009 H1N1 have occurred in people younger than 25 years of age. At this time, there are relatively few cases of 2009 H1N1 in people 65 or older, which is unusual when compared with seasonal flu.

Prevention

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick from 2009 H1N1 flu?

CDC recommends a three-step approach to fighting the flu: vaccination, everyday preventive actions including frequent hand washing and staying home when sick, and the correct use of antiviral drugs if your doctor recommends them.

A vaccine against 2009 H1N1 flu is being produced.

To protect those at greatest risk of 2009 H1N1, CDC recommends that certain people get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine first when it becomes available. These key groups include people who are at higher risk of getting sick or having serious flu complications, those who are likely to come in contact with 2009 H1N1, and those who could infect young infants who cannot be vaccinated themselves.

This includes:

- Pregnant women,
- People who live with or provide care for children younger than 6 months of age,
- Health care and emergency medical service personnel,
- People 6 months to 24 years of age, and
- People 25 to 64 years of age who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications because of an underlying health condition or compromised immune systems.

Everyday actions can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. (Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.)

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.
- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for several days: a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues, facemasks and other related items might be useful and help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious.

If You Get Sick

What should I do if I get sick?

If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms this flu season you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to seek medical care. Most people have been able to recover at home from 2009 H1N1 without needing medical care and the same is true of seasonal flu.

However, some people are at high risk of serious flu-related complications. They are:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- People 65 and older
- Pregnant women
- People who have:
 - Cancer
 - Blood disorders (including sickle cell disease)
 - Chronic lung disease (including asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD))
 - Diabetes
 - Heart disease
 - Kidney disorders
 - Liver disorders
 - Neurological disorders (including nervous system, brain or spinal cord)

2009 Flu Season

Since Lorain County had its first reported case of H1N1 flu in April of this year, Murray Ridge Center has been closely following the actions recommended by local health departments. We will continue to keep up on the recommendations of local, state and national health officials and will take action accordingly as this flu situation evolves.

Because many individuals who receive services from Murray Ridge are at greater risk of serious complications from Influenza-like illnesses, we are encouraging consumers, as well as their family members and caregivers, to be aware of the symptoms of the flu, and to follow some basic recommendations of health officials for preventing the spread of Influenza to others. Both the new H1N1 and the seasonal flu are threats, so it is important to protect yourself from all flu strains.

Following are some basic precautions for preventing the spread of flu in your community. For more information, you can visit www.flu.gov, or contact Janet Winterstein, Murray Ridge Center Director of Nursing, at 440-329-3734 or jwinterstein@loraincountymrdd.org.

- **Make prevention the first line of defense.** Everyone needs to make it a routine to wash his or her hands often with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. Remind family members to cough or sneeze into sleeves or tissues, rather than hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth to lessen the spread of germs.
- **Make sure you and your family members get vaccinated.** Vaccines are strong protection against contracting the flu. Vaccines for both H1N1 and the seasonal flu will be available this fall. Contact your personal physician or your local health clinic for information and availability of vaccines.
- **Stay Home if You Are Sick.** H1N1 spreads rapidly, particularly among children and young adults. It is especially risky if you are pregnant. Typical flu symptoms include: fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, achiness, headache, chills and fatigue. H1N1 flu may also include vomiting and diarrhea. Both H1N1 and seasonal flu can be potentially deadly, so it is important that precautions be used for all strains of flu.

We will continue to communicate health recommendations from our local health departments as they are available.

The Apple of Their Eyes



Elyria Work/Activity Center Seniors Group participant **Patty Mitchell** proudly shows an apple she picked on a recent Senior's outing to Apple Hill Orchard in Amherst.

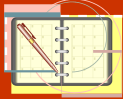
Murray Ridge Teachers...*continued from page 1*

way of educating children with autism spectrum disorders. It first addresses the most basic needs of the child, those needs that tend to cause the behaviors. Once the behavior-inducing issues are resolved, the child is able to focus on other goals," said Speech Therapist Kathy Beatty.

"It isn't so much a program, really, as it is a thought process. Observing a behavior, considering the causes and thinking through solutions to the cause. If a solution doesn't work, you try another one, and continue until you find the one that works. Then you move on to the next level," said Lunsford.

By all accounts, these teachers have mastered an important new and effective educational method at a time when there is a growing focus on meeting the specific needs of children with autism spectrum disorders. And the accolades will no doubt continue to come, as this dedicated group of educators continues to study and perfect this method. But the real measure of success is in the calmer faces of previously anxious students, as well as the more confident teachers who have better tools for reaching students with autism. Awards, conferences and collegial acclaim aside, Murray Ridge School has contributed to a real-world improvement in the lives of children by having the dedication and willingness to try new ideas.

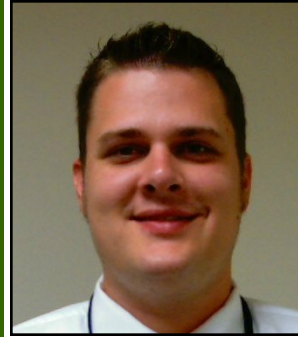
So is Murray Ridge the "gold standard" for implementation of the Ziggurat Model? The question brings a smile to Director of Education Dann Swift's face. "We all like to think we're doing the best we can. I don't know about referring to our efforts as a gold standard, but we have acquired an important new educational tool, and a wealth of experience that it is our privilege to share with others."



Murray Ridge Annual In-service October 30, 2009!

The annual employee In-service promises to be an entertaining and educational day for all. A variety of topics will be offered, and humorous keynote speaker Karen Vandino, back by popular demand, will discuss how laughter is an essential ingredient to healthy living. The volunteer appreciation ceremony will also be part of the day, and will include a very special Marilyn Hupfer Volunteer of the Year Award presentation.

New Faces in Murray Ridge Places



Brad Baker joins the Oberlin Work/Activity Center as a Workshop Specialist 1. Baker is currently attending Lorain County Community College and will graduate in 2010 with a degree in Human Resources. He loves all Cleveland sports, and enjoys mountain biking and playing basketball and tennis.

Upcoming Class

Triumph Through the Challenges of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Lorain County General Health District.

The free three-hour sessions are open to the public and are offered on four consecutive Tuesday evenings beginning in October and will be held at the Murray Ridge Center Service and Support Administration building, 9740 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria. For more information call: 322-6367, 244-2209 or 236-8722.



If you would like to receive The Murray Ridge Courier via email, contact Racheal Seibert at (440) 329-3734 or email her at rseibert@loraincountymrdd.org.

BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of MR/DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on September 25, 2009:



Dr. Fisher presented a revised *Facilities Use* policy that will require parties that are not formally affiliated with Murray Ridge Center to enter into a facilities use agreement with the county board prior to assessing or providing services to consumers on county board premises. The facility use agreements are necessary for liability insurance coverage. The policy was unanimously approved by the Board. Superintendent Fisher also requested and received unanimous approval, in order to comply with SB79, to revise the Board's official name to "*The Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities*" in all board policies. In other business, Dr. Fisher discussed an analysis of the potential cost savings associated with the Early Intervention (EI) Specialists utilizing alternative work sites in between appointments in the community. Privacy protocols to be utilized by EI staff at alternative sites was also discussed. In other business, Dr. Fisher requested that the local allotment for the Family Resource program be adjusted to reflect changes in the state allocation level. The 2009 budget was amended accordingly. Al Sprague, Director of Residential Service and Support Administration, presented a year to date overview of family support spending, and his request for the third quarter budget allocation was unanimously passed. Finally, Superintendent Fisher reported that a challenge to the video terminal betting issue was upheld by the Ohio Supreme Court, which mandated that the issue must be put to a statewide vote. Because this measure was expected to generate nearly \$1 billion in revenue annually, its delay or defeat would be impactful. Additionally, Dr. Fisher reported that a recent conversation she had with some key Ohio lawmakers led her to believe that Senate Bill 111, which would permanently preserve local revenue previously generated through the Tangible Personal Property Tax (TPPT), might not pass in the Ohio House. This would leave the door open for TPPT replacement funding—totaling more than 1.6M/year for Murray Ridge Center—to begin being phased out at the start of the next biennium.



October 2009

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Activities & Events

10/5—Murray Ridge Support Group meeting, 4:15 p.m., Elyria Work/Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road, Elyria

10/8—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:45-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School

10/12—Agency Closed in Observance of Columbus Day

10/15—LCBMRDD Finance Committee meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria

10/22—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:45-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School

10/23—LCBMRDD Meeting, 12:30 p.m. Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria

10/26— Family Support Parent Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road

10/30—Agency Closed due to Agency In-service

10/30—Murray Ridge Support Group Dance, 7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road, Elyria



Lunch Menus

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

October 5-9
October 26--30

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

October 12-16
November 2-6

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



September 28-October 2

October 19-23

November 9-13

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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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.

Ohio SIBS Conference

The 9th Annual Ohio Adult Sibling Conference will be held November 6-7, 2009 at the Marriott Airport Hotel. This annual conference is designed to give adult siblings of brothers and sisters with developmental disabilities an opportunity to share information, ideas and family experiences. This year's topics include Insuring Quality Outcomes Through Family Engagement, The Sibling Relationship, Finding and Promoting Quality Supports in Ohio and Advocating for Health Care and Wellness.

The registration fee is \$85 and includes meals and materials. Registration forms are available online at www.ohiosibs.com, or you may contact Tom Fish at (614) 292-3727 for more information.

Don't Forget!

Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, November 1, 2009, so don't forget to set your clocks back one hour.

