

Teacher Finds Musical Alphabet

"Where words fail, music speaks."

-Hans Christian Andersen

There may be no more apt description of **Nevan Eilbeck's** teaching philosophy than that statement. "**Mr. E.**," as he is called by his students, came to Murray Ridge School 22 years ago, and has since "spoken" to many children through music.

A trumpet player and music education major at Baldwin Wallace, Eilbeck had planned to play in an orchestra. He even played in a brass band at West Point for three years in pursuit of this dream. However, after his West Point experience, Eilbeck had some difficulty finding a job in

music. When a friend told him about a position teaching music at Murray Ridge School, he was thrilled at the prospect of playing and composing music again.

However, having had no significant teaching experience, he said "those early weeks and months were pretty tough. There were no mentoring

programs for teachers then. You just had to jump in and see what you could do."

Well, apparently this trial by fire method worked for Eilbeck because his method has had a tremendous response from students, families and teachers, alike.

Eilbeck knew that he wanted to use songs to teach, but it was composing individualized songs for students based on their unique needs that really made the difference. Incorporating their names with the skills they are working on, and setting it all to music, reaches the children in ways that language sometimes is unable.

It is clear that the children are inspired as they clap, sway and dance to the music. But Mr. E. often gets *his* inspiration from things far more subtle. "Sometimes it's when a less-abled person looks at you a certain way, with that little spark of recognition. Or when someone moves when they didn't before. That's when you know you've reached them. That's what's inspiring," says Eilbeck.

His work with Murray Ridge inspires him so much that he's composed a sort of theme song for it. The lyrics reveal his genuine concern for the children he teaches:



"At Murray Ridge, the dream is still alive in us today"

"To reach someone, to teach someone, to guide them on their way."

"Where people, helping people make a pathway clear for all."

"A gift of kindness may we be and humble in our call."

Music to live by, wouldn't you say?

Back to School

Thanks to the support of caring citizens of Lorain County, Murray Ridge School has provided exceptional educational services to eligible young persons with mental retardation and developmental disabilities for nearly 40 years. Education enriches everyone's life. Murray Ridge Center hopes that the upcoming school year is full of new ideas, new friends and new opportunities for our students and for all Lorain County students.



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Staffers Succeed With New Approach For Students With Autistic Tendencies



Murray Ridge School Supervisors Lenni Oefering and Joan Petersen

Late in 2006 Murray Ridge School teacher **Joan Lunsford**, speech therapist **Kathy Beatty**, occupational therapist **Pam Denzler** and school supervisor **Lenni Oefering** began training in a new model for assessment and intervention for students with autism, through the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI). Now, less than a year later, their mastery of this innovative approach has resulted in an invitation to demonstrate its principles to other schools in the state.

This new approach, formally referred to as "The Ziggurat Model," is designed to provide educators and therapists with a framework that focuses on positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). Developed in Texas by two licensed psychologists, Ruth Aspy, PhD and Barry Grossman PhD, the model attracted the attention of OCALI. As an organization, OCALI is focused on improving outcomes and state-wide capacity "through leadership, training, professional development, technical assistance and collaboration," according to its mission statement.

Murray Ridge School supervisors **Joan Petersen** and Oefering have consistently monitored developments in special needs schooling and both advocated examining the benefits of this new model. It was their enthusiasm that encouraged others to pursue this relatively new approach to familiar challenges.

The path to successful implementation began in the summer of 2006, when 15 Ohio school teams were given the opportunity to attend a special training in the Ziggurat model, the first such training in Ohio. Each team was required to collect a specific set of information variables concerning one student diagnosed with autistic tendencies. This information was then amplified by input provided by the student's parents. The collected data was then synthesized to meet the requirements of the model, and a personalized but comprehensive intervention plan for use by the team was produced.

Every month an OCALI representative visited the school to assess the team's effectiveness in implementing the plan—meeting with both the team and the student's parents. "OCALI was impressed with Murray Ridge on their visits and they said so. They commented favorably on our overall knowledge base, our attitude towards teamwork, and most of all, on the progress the student was making. Finally, at the end of the school year, OCALI told us that we were 'at the

top' of the original 15 teams," said program supervisor Oefering.

The details of how the MRS experience with the Ziggurat model will be made available to others are still being worked on by OCALI. But everyone involved in this implementation process believes the seeds of success

Continued on page 4...

Meet the New Editor:

As the new editor of The Murray Ridge Courier, I would like to introduce myself. After graduating from law school, I began my work in the nonprofit sector at the Cleveland Museum of Art. There I was responsible for facilitating strategic philanthropic partnerships between the Museum and individuals, foundations and corporations in an effort to address community funding gaps. From there I went on to work as the Program Manager for the Mandel Foundation, which focuses on funding for leadership development, nonprofit management and education. Most recently, I served as the Director of Development for the AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland where I directed the organization's fundraising efforts. However, it was my work at the Wood County Board of MR/DD while in college that has been the most significant and rewarding to me, so I am thrilled to join Murray Ridge Center as Community Education and Volunteer Manager.



I welcome any comments, suggestions or questions you may have for me regarding this newsletter.

Sincerely,
Rachael Seibert

Row, Row, Row Your Raft



On July 21, thirty-five staff, family and friends of Murray Ridge Center converged on Fayetteville, WV for the annual

Rafting event. The group paid their own way and used vacation time to learn team building while navigating the rapids of the New River in "Wild and Wonderful" West Virginia.

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!



Janet Winterstein has been hired as the Director of Nursing for Murray Ridge Center. Janet earned her B.S. in Nursing from The Ohio State University and her Executive M.P.A. from Ohio University. She previously worked at Hocking County Board of MRDD and Children's Hospital in Columbus. She enjoys reading, exercise and being a Buckeye fan.



Barbara Hicks was recently hired as an agency Nurse. She graduated from Lorain County Community College and previously worked for Elyria Memorial Hospital and Neurology Center, Inc. She has three children and enjoys sports.



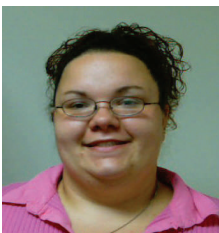
Tess Harder was recently hired as an Early Intervention Specialist for Murray Ridge School. She graduated from Bowling Green State University with a B.S. in Social Work, and from Case Western Reserve University with an M.S.S.A. She previously worked in the emergency department at MetroHealth Medical Center.



Nilsa Sanchez joins the Meister Road Group Home as an aide. Nilsa has studied sports nutrition at Lorain County Community College. She resides in Lorain and enjoys singing, cooking and going to church.



Kimberly Antush joins Murray Ridge School as a Speech Language Pathologist. She received her B.A. and her M. Ed. From the University of Toledo. Most recently she worked for Lucas County Educational Service Center. She enjoys reading, jogging and rollerblading.



Crystal McCartney was recently hired as a Teacher Aide for Murray Ridge School. A resident of Lorain, she enjoys spending time with her family, fishing, swimming and taking care of her two turtles.

New Positions Assumed



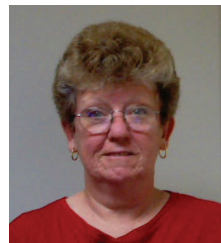
Kelly Moe, previously a secretary at Lorain Work Activity Center, has been hired as a Receptionist at Murray Ridge School. Kelly earned her B.S. from Ashland University. She resides in Oberlin with her husband and two children and enjoys reading, crafts and gardening.



Having previously worked as a Substitute Teacher for Murray Ridge School, **Erin Bajornas** now joins the School as a Teacher. She graduated from Ohio University and previously worked for the New York Center for Autism. Her interests are running and painting.



Steffani Chmura was recently hired as a Teacher at the Murray Ridge School. She previously worked at the School as a Camp Counselor and subsequently Director. Steffani graduated from Xavier University. She resides in Oberlin and enjoys sand volleyball, dance, water skiing and scrapbooking.



Previously a sub at the Lorain Workshop, **Laverne Pelton** has been hired as a Teacher Aide at Murray Ridge School. Laverne enjoys gardening and the outdoors, and is a member of the Lake Erie Lanes special bowling league.



Julie Peterson, previously a Substitute Teacher for Murray Ridge School, has been hired as a Teacher Aide. Julie graduated from Bowling Green State University. She enjoys camping, and spending time with her family.

Board Room Briefing



At the August 20 meeting of the Lorain County Board

Superintendent Fisher informed the Board that the agency was notified that it was less than one percentage point away from being granted the highest (four-year) certification status as a result of the recently concluded Accreditation Review by the Ohio Department of MR/DD. Dr. Fisher explained that the agency had utilized a challenge remedy made available by the department to re-examine some findings. The Superintendent added that the agency would, at a minimum, be guaranteed a highly favorable three-year continuous certification status due to its successful review. Computer consultant Steve Decatur updated the Board on the agency's strategic goals to ensure the speed, connectivity and reliability of the agency's information technology infrastructure. Mr. Decatur presented an initial three-phase upgrade plan to be concluded by the end of October. The changes he outlined were designed to eliminate some immediate inconsistencies while enabling the agency to gain some long-term efficiencies. Tom Mangan of the Lorain County Prosecutor's Office and counsel to the agency reviewed past discussions and decisions on DNR orders. Mr. Mangan confirmed that there have been no changes in the law that might require a change in agency policy. In other developments the Board was informed that construction on the SSA building was proceeding on schedule, and a new Public Records policy reflecting changes in legislative requirements was presented by Dr. Fisher and unanimously approved by the Board.

Staffers,

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were planted long before even the training, and each believes those seeds will bloom long after the team passes on their experience and encouragement to others.

"We were very lucky to be ahead of the curve even before this opportunity with the Ziggurat model arose. We had already been successfully implementing instruction specific to students with autism and team teaching was established and running smoothly. Most significantly, the individuals involved in the project are really motivated and hard working, and when they work in collaboration, they are truly greater than the sum of their parts," said **Dann Swift**, Director of Educational Services.

Murray Ridge Center Events

- 9/3—Labor Day, Agency Closed
- 9/10—Cooking Up A Successful Transition, MRS, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
- 9/13—Early Intervention Evening Playgroup, MRS, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m.
- 9/18—Family Support Parent Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Admin. Bldg.
- 9/27—Early Intervention Evening Playgroup, MRS, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m.








Community Events

- 9/8—Lorain County Community College Family Fest, 12-6 p.m.
- 9/17—Murray Ridge Golf Classic, Avon Oaks Country Club, Registration begins at 9:30 a.m.
- 9/23—Vermilion Woollybear Festival Parade, 2:30 p.m.

Upcoming Workshops

Triumph Through the Challenges of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Lorain County General Health District. The three-hour sessions are offered for four consecutive Tuesdays beginning 9/18/07. Class times are 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m. For more information call: The Lorain County General Health District at (440) 322-6367 or 236-8722.

September 2007

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Your Need to Know is as Great as Their Need to Grow

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates, roughly 17% of children in the United States have some form of a developmental disability. The CDC defines developmental disabilities as a "diverse group of physical, cognitive, psychological, sensory, and speech impairments that begin anytime during development up to 18 years of age."



If children do not develop properly they may be unable to reach their full potential. However, with early, intensive and comprehensive intervention, a child may overcome a wide range of developmental problems. Ages birth through three years is a critical time in a child's development, so early detection is essential.

There is a wide spectrum of what is considered to be 'typical' development. For those children whose development lies outside of this "typical" range, their differences may indicate merely a slight delay, or they may be a cause for greater concern. "For example," says **Val Deptula**, Early Intervention Supervisor at Murray Ridge Center, "if a child does not begin walking until 14 months, that may simply be a delay; but if a child begins walking at 12 months, but walks with a limp, that would be considered atypical development."

A child's development can be measured through social, physical and cognitive developmental milestones, or fixed markers of individual progress. These milestones, such as taking first steps, smiling for the first time, waving good bye and following commands are more than memorable family moments; they are significant developmental indicators. For more information on developmental milestones, visit www.ohiohelpmegrow.org or www.zerotothree.org.

Birthday Fun



Academy Court residents and staff celebrate **Donna Baker's** birthday on August 12.

The "Incidental" Column



Greetings Courier readers! I am **John Syrowski**, previously a Service and Support Administrator. I joined the "Debs" as the third Investigative Agent (IA) in January of this year. The first thing I learned as an IA is that people tend to run when I walk into a room. In reflecting on this, I realized that IA's and MUI's (Major Unusual Incidents) are often perceived negatively. By hosting this column for the next several months, I am going to do my best to change the perception of both.

Maybe the problem begins with definitions. What *really* is an MUI? A Major Unusual Incident is an *alleged, suspected or actual occurrence* of an incident that can reasonably be expected to result in harm to an individual. Identification of MUIs is integral to a system for ensuring the health and safety of individuals with MRDD.

Maybe it is the role of an investigator that disturbs comfort levels? Again, it's probably not what you think. The Ohio Department of MRDD defines an Investigative Agent as an employee of a county board, or a person under contract with a county board who is certified by ODMRDD to conduct investigations of major unusual incidents. This seems appropriate to me, I hope you will feel the same!

Not every Unusual Incident is major, and not every call you get from me or the "Debs" is cause for alarm. However, some occurrences are potentially serious, and require immediate exploration. Next month, we'll explore how something really minor can turn into something really major.

Upon reflection, I think you will agree the process that an MUI investigation represents is good for the staff, the consumers and our mission.



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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www.loraincountymrdd.org



Lunch Menus for Murray Ridge Center

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

Week of September 3-7 and September 24-28

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 September 10-14 and October 1-5

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 September 17-21 and October 8-12

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