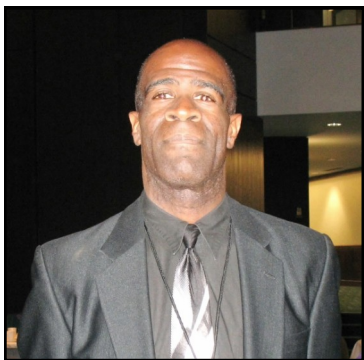


Giving Thanks

Undoubtedly, Thanksgiving is a favorite holiday for most Americans because of the togetherness, the festivities and, of course, the food. The day often looks something like this: the alarm sounds in the morning, quite frequently, much earlier than on a normal day so that the turkey may be prepared and put in the oven in time for dinner. Soon, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade will be on the television screen as the smell of coffee and roasting butter begin to fill the rooms. When guests begin to arrive, there is often a cacophony of children's squeals, footballs fans' roars, and arguments about the best way to carve a turkey or who forgot to bring the green bean casserole. Then, when the timer rings, as if in a Pavlovian experiment, all watering mouths hurriedly find their way to a spot at the table where they eagerly devour hours of culinary labor in 15 minutes.

However, in those exciting moments between dishing out sweet potatoes and laughing at an uncle's jokes, what is often missing from the scene is the actual verbal expression of thanks. Certainly, we are each thankful for something, but for some reason, we don't always express it. Thanksgiving offers us a formal opportunity to do exactly that. So, this author decided to ask consumers and staff at Murray Ridge Center what *they* are thankful for this holiday. The responses were touching and funny, serious and light-hearted. I hope you'll enjoy them as much as I did....



"I am thankful for my health, strength, family... my job. I am thankful for the good people at Murray Ridge."

—Charles Johnson, Jr.,
consumer

"I am thankful for my family. They bring joy to everything." —Gary Lyons, staff

"I am thankful for a husband who likes to cook!"
—Norma Schneider, staff

"That we still have jobs to come to every day and medical benefits when we need them" —Diane Smith, staff

"I'm thankful for the things I've been given, for a good job, a great Mom and for nice vacations!"

—Noah Elek,
consumer



"At Thanksgiving time, I do reflect on all the blessings that I have received. This includes my family, my friends, my faith, my work and the tangible and intangible benefits I have received. Of course, what is the thought of Thanksgiving without thinking about the foods such as turkey with all the trimmings, corn, beans, cranberries and pumpkin pie? Of course, for me, what is all of the good food without at least some gravy!" —Jeff Neal, staff

I am most thankful that we live in a free country that permits us to worship as we choose, vote as we choose, and to travel without boundaries! I am thankful for all the service men and women who have bravely fought, and some who have paid the ultimate price, to ensure those rights.

—Debi Streibel, staff

"I am thankful for being loved by my family and friends and that I have so many people to love. I am thankful for good health. I am thankful for my job because it gives me money for food and shelter. And I am thankful for each day that I wake up. I have much to be thankful for!"

—Caroline Raines, staff



Staff Honored for 30 Years of Service to Murray Ridge Center



Nancy Plas proudly displays her 30 Years of Service Award.

Recently, Murray Ridge Center honoured 565 staff members who commit themselves daily to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. Special recognition was bestowed on 70 employees who, as of November 1st, had dedicated themselves to the mission of Murray Ridge Center for 5, 10, 15, 20 or 30 years.

Among those 70 employees was **Nancy Plas**, Intake Coordinator in the Service and Support Administration Department who has given 30 years of service to the consumers of Murray Ridge Center.

Nancy graduated with a bachelor's degree from Huntington College in Montgomery, Alabama, where she double-majored in psychology and sociology. She went on to earn a master's degree in special education from the University of Georgia. After graduating with her Master's degree, Nancy relocated to Ohio to teach special education for a few years before coming to Murray Ridge in 1978.

In her 30 years with the agency, Nancy has served in various roles, including Vocational Evaluator, Counselor, Habilitation Specialist and Rehabilitation Counselor. When the agency began centralized intake in 1993, Nancy became Murray Ridge Center's first Intake Coordinator in the Service and Support Administration department. She continues in this role today.

As Nancy reflects on her career, she is reminded of how much she has learned from the people she serves. Says Nancy, "I have learned more from the consumers than they ever learned from me. And the Murray Ridge staff are the best!"

Murray Ridge Bell Choir Debut Performance is Music to Our Ears

Eight months ago, two creative staff members, **Kiki Watchorn** and **Nancy Seighman**, were inspired by the sound of music performed exclusively with hand-held bells. They took this inspiration back to our Elyria Work Activity Center. With the encouragement and support of fellow staff members, volunteers, and talented consumers, the Murray Ridge Bell Choir was formed. Led by a conductor who creatively signifies which notes are needed, eleven musicians with developmental disabilities perform complete songs with the use of handbells. The group recently gave its debut stage performance with such songs as "You Are My Sunshine," and "Home On The Range." When they finished, the audience erupted in appreciation, and the group experienced the first of what *surely* will be many standing ovations.

Bell Choir members Scott Smith, Thomas Stumpf and Genevieve Graovac sign the words to "Home on the Range" as other members ring bells.



Oberlin Work Activity Center Full of Activities, Indeed



Children of the staff of the Oberlin Work Activity Center smile for the camera after a busy day at work.

The halls of the Oberlin Work Activity Center have been alive with excitement recently as consumers and staff have received some very special guests.

In late September, Raven Reed took some time from her busy schedule of beauty pageant and national cheerleading competitions to enjoy an afternoon socializing with consumers. And in mid-October, children of staff came to the Center to participate in "Bring Your Child to Work Day."

While there, the youngsters had the opportunity to socialize with consumers, make tasty caramel apples and observe what their parents do while they are at work. It's been an exciting fall and consumers can hardly wait to see who will be visiting next.



Miss Teen Ohio Tourism, Raven Reed (left), with Oberlin Work Activity Center consumer Shasta Knarr.

Giving Thanks....

Continued from page 1

"I am grateful for memories and reminders. Like memories of crisp blue autumn days in the middle of a muggy summer. I am grateful to remember family members who have passed away, but 'return' for a moment, in brief gifts of recollection. I am grateful for old friends who remind me that friendship is something that remains when it is renewed and colleagues who remind me that laughter is always an option---by making me laugh."

—Tim Donohue, staff

"The first thought that pops into my head about thankfulness is this: I read once that there are really only two prayers that we pray---'Help, Help, Help!' and 'Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!'---It's amazing how many times I pray the second prayer...especially here at work, with the incredible people I've met and the privilege I've been given to work with the individuals who seek out our services."

—Nancy Plas, staff

"I'm thankful for a living God and my wonderful family, and, of course, my job!"

—Darrylin Wargo, staff

"I am thankful not only to have a job, but to have a job that is fun, fulfilling and meaningful."

—Sue Kotris, staff

"I am thankful for the people who play sports and make people have a good time."

—Charles Novotny, consumer

"I am thankful for making lots of money...for supervisors I am friends with. I am thankful for quiet time with myself."

—Gladys Besida, consumer

I want to thank those who were kind enough—and brave enough—to share their thoughts and stories with me, and thanks to those who have done so all year. For *all* readers of this newsletter, I hope that life continues to give you much to be thankful for. And I thank you all for continuing to read and contribute to this newsletter. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

—Racheal Seibert,
Editor

New Faces in Murray Ridge Places



Julie Bement joins the East College Home as a Group Home Aid/ Permanent sub. Previously she worked with cancer patients at the Cleveland Clinic and with alzheimers patients at Brethren Care. When not working, this busy mom of three enjoys karaoke, outdoor sports and volunteering with Boy Scouts of America.

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.

Veterans Day

Not to be confused with Memorial Day, which was established to remember and honor military personnel who died in the service of their country, Veterans Day is a day set aside to thank and honor all men and women who have served in the military.

While the official end to World War I was on June 28, 1919 with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, Veterans Day is celebrated on November 11 because the actual fighting between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

Unlike other national holidays, which are celebrated on Mondays due to the Uniform Holiday Act, Veterans Day is always observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week it falls on. This is in order to preserve the historical significance of the date, while keeping the focus of the holiday on honoring those men and women who have bravely served in the U.S. military.

Thanks to all Lorain County veterans!

Don't Forget

Special Olympics Basketball Try-outs will begin soon. Please contact Judy Hartung for more information, (440) 284-2720.



BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of MR/DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on October 24, 2008



Healththcare consultant Glenn Szana addressed the Board on the request for health insurance proposals that was sent out to 10 providers. Mr. Szana stated that seven companies chose to respond to the request. After review and discussion, Mr. Szana recommended the selection of Medical Mutual as the agency's health and pharmaceutical provider for 2009. In addition, the consultant recommended Superior Dental as the agency's dental services provider and Vision Service Plan, Inc. for staff optical needs. The recommended health insurance plan represented the most cost-effective option. After discussion, the Board unanimously approved the health insurance vendor recommendations submitted by Mr. Szana. In other business, Dr. Fisher outlined the Board's responsibility involving the annual payment of the non-federal Medicaid costs. To meet this responsibility, a motion requested that the county auditor certify the availability of \$1,352,931.41 for use by the agency in calendar year 2009 for Medicaid match; the motion was approved unanimously. The Board also reviewed aspects of six resolutions to be presented and voted on at the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD Delegate Assembly in Columbus on October 27. 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 2008

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

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Activities & Events

11/3—Special Olympics Awards Banquet, 6:00 p.m., Spitzer Conference Center, Lorain County Community College

11/3—Murray Ridge Support Group Meeting, 4:15 p.m., Elyria Work Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road, Elyria

11/10—Murray Ridge School Parent/Teacher Conferences

11/11—**Agency Closed in Observance of Veteran's Day**

11/20—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School

11/21—LCBMRDD Meeting, 12:30 p.m. Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria

11/27-28—**Agency Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving**



Lunch Menus

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.65, Adults = \$2.55



—
November 17-21
December 8-12

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 3-7
November 24-28
December 15-19

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

November 10-14
December 1-5
December 22-26

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

Lorain County Board of Mental Retardation
& Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
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Elyria, OH 44035

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www.loraincountymrdd.org



Birthday Card Contest

Consumers from all Work Activity Centers are invited to participate in a Birthday Card Drawing Contest! The winner from each Work Activity Center will have his or her drawing made into a birthday card to be used by Murray Ridge Center. The rules are as follows:

- The drawings must be hand-made by the consumers
- The drawings must be completed at the Work Activity Centers
- Only one entry per person is allowed
- No coloring book pages are allowed
- No words are allowed, only drawings
- The consumers name must be on the back of the drawing
- Any medium is acceptable: crayons, paints, colored pencils, etc.
- The drawing must be on a 5"X8" note card, which will be provided (please use the unruled side)

Drawings must be submitted not later than December 1st. For more information, contact:

OWAC: Dan Kropp (440) 774-7400
EWAC: Rose Beury, Tracey Casada (440) 284-2720
LWAC: Gail Coleman, Beth Meyers (440) 282-2131

Good luck!

