



# The View From The **RIDGE**

Lorain County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities  
**Spring Quarterly**

## A Message from the **Superintendent**

- By Amber Fisher,  
Dr. P.H.

### SPRING 2023

2023 promises to be an important year at Murray Ridge Center, and I am excited to share some of what lies ahead.

In recent years we have seen a **steady increase in our youngest service recipients**, and in 2022 Murray Ridge provided Early Intervention (EI) services to 945 infants

and toddlers who have developmental disabilities or delays. In 2023, we plan to add two new Developmental Specialists to our EI staff.

At Murray Ridge School, our talented staff continues to provide high quality educational services to students referred by Lorain County school districts. In the months ahead, many are looking forward to **favorite school events such as dances, the (returning) Murray Ridge 500, prom, commencement, and much more.**

Our Supported Employment Department plans to continue to meet **ambitious benchmarks for assisting eligible adults to become employed by local businesses**, and to remain successful in these settings. At the Murray Ridge Opportunity and Vocational Centers (OVCs), the focus remains not only on vocational training and skills development, but also on **assisting Adult Program participants to be a part of and contribute to community life**. In fact, during the past year, many of our OVC attendees have volunteered with local programs including the Friendship Animal Protective League, Meals on Wheels, the Oberlin Food Pan-



try, the Good Neighbor Thrift Store in Avon Lake, the Lorain County Metro Parks, and Good Knights of Lorain County, just to name a few.

We also remain deeply appreciative of the **ever-expanding pool of private provider agencies that serve hundreds of eligible adults**. These organizations have made many wonderful opportunities available to Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities. Murray Ridge Service & Support Administrators (SSAs) link interested individuals with these providers, assist with development of individualized service plans to be implemented by providers, and monitor services. Murray Ridge also funds day services (and many privately provided residential services), primarily by using local dollars to cover the non-federal

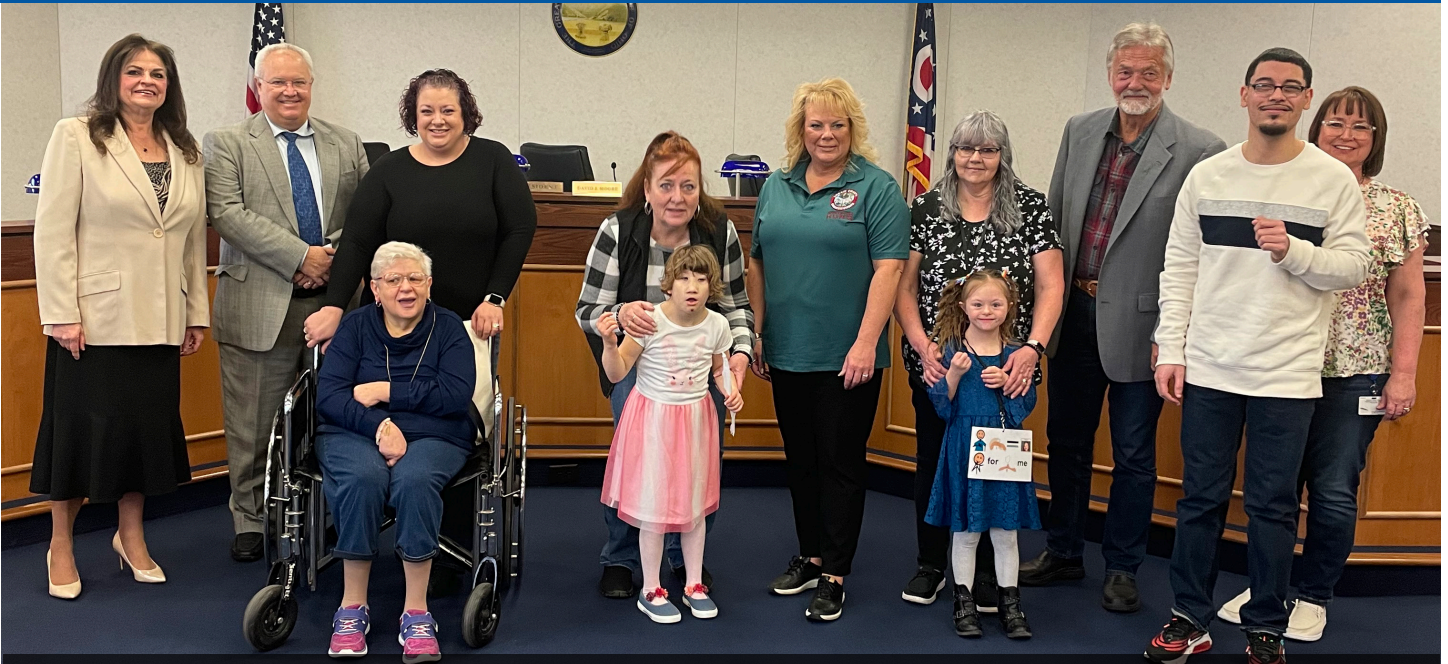
share of Medicaid-funded services. This year, in recognition of the need for private providers of Day Support to serve an increasing number of eligible individuals with health and medical conditions, **Murray Ridge will begin providing subsidies for nursing services at Adult Day Support sites** where Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities are served.

It is also key to the Murray Ridge mission to partner with and support families of Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities. We salute the family members of those eligible for our services for the cherished and seemingly endless support, care and love that they provide to Lorain County children and adults with developmental disabilities. Effective in January, 2023, **required co-pays for goods and services accessed through our Family Support Program were reduced for families with eligible members who are not enrolled on Medicaid waivers.**

In other news, **a Renewal Levy for Murray Ridge Center – Issue 6 - will appear on the May 02, 2023 ballot**. This levy currently generates more than 35% of the agency's revenue, and some of the funds generated by the levy are used to pull down additional federal dollars. If passed, the levy will not increase taxes.

We look forward to continued progress and success through work with our committed staff, our provider partners, the many local businesses and organizations with which we collaborate, and the amazing individuals we serve and their families.

# A VISIT WITH OUR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Thank you, Lorain County Board of Commissioners! Pictured, left to right: Murray Ridge Center Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, Lorain County Board of Commissioners' President **David J. Moore**, Our Lady of the Wayside Day/Residential Program Participant **Ana** (seated), Our Lady of the Wayside Administrator of Program Services **Alexis Szudarek**, Murray Ridge Material Resources Clerk **Barb Reynolds**, Murray Ridge School student **Icele**, Commissioner **Michelle Hung**, Murray Ridge Classroom Aide **Sharlene Wharton**, Murray Ridge School student **Katalina**, Lorain County Board of Commissioners' Vice President **Jeff Riddell**, Murray Ridge Adult Program participant **Robert**, and Murray Ridge Adult Program Instructor **Beth Wissinger**.

On Friday, March 24, 2023, representatives from Murray Ridge Center made a Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month presentation at the meeting of the Lorain County Board of Commissioners, where services of the Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities (a.k.a. Murray Ridge Center) were highlighted through the stories of

four service recipients. Murray Ridge Superintendent Amber Fisher opened by stating that Murray Ridge Center is proud to support more than 3,000 Lorain County children and adults with developmental disabilities annually.

First up were Icelee and Katalina, seven year-old students and classmates at Murray Ridge School. Dr. Fisher noted that both girls had been a part of the Murray Ridge Early Intervention Program for children ages birth to three years, through which Murray Ridge served 945 infants and toddlers last year. Icelee also attended the Murray Ridge Preschool, and both girls were subsequently referred to Murray Ridge School by their respective school districts. Icelee and Katalina personally thanked the members of the Lorain County Board of Commissioners for their support!

Next up was Robert, a man who resides with his family, and attends Murray Ridge Center's Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) five days per week. Robert told the commissioners that he very much enjoys attending the Murray Ridge Day Program, where he does activities and assembly work, excelling at a job working on rods

utilized by a local company. Through LOVC, Robert also volunteers at Meals on Wheels!

Finally, the commissioners heard from Ana, a woman who lives in a group home operated by Our Lady of the Wayside (OLW) and attends Pathways, a Day Program operated by OLW. In attendance to root her on was Maria Santana, Ana's Murray Ridge Service & Support Administrator (SSA). Dr. Fisher explained that those who receive residential and/or Adult Day Services from private providers (i.e. providers other than Murray Ridge) have Murray Ridge SSAs who assist them with developing Individual Service Plans, help them access resources, and monitor their services that are funded by Murray Ridge (Murray Ridge uses local levy dollars to pay the non-federal share of the cost of Residential and Adult Day services provided by private organizations, such as OLW). Ana shared that she had also participated in the Murray Ridge Special Olympics Program!

Many thanks to the Lorain County Commissioners for helping us celebrate the wonderful presence and contributions of people with developmental disabilities in our community!



Students **Katalina** and **Icele** with **Dann Swift**, Murray Ridge Center's Director of Education, on their way to the meeting with the Lorain County Board of Commissioners



## A Special Visit from Lorain Mayor Jack Bradley

On Friday, March 24th, **Lorain Mayor Jack Bradley** paid a special visit to the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC), which he called one of the “hidden treasures” of Lorain. “I was really impressed with the good work that you guys do here,” Mayor Bradley observed in the video he posted on his Facebook page. In the video, LOVC Director **Cindy White** and Murray Ridge Center Superintendent **Amber Fisher** answered his questions about the facility and Murray Ridge Center in general.

“He literally walked through the whole building meeting everybody,” White recalled of the Mayor’s visit. “He shook everyone’s hands and the consumers were hugging him.” LOVC Habilitation Manager **Gregg Heiden** added, “They talked about it all day afterwards, saying ‘I met the mayor!’”

“It’s such a nice group of people that work here,” Mayor Bradley beamed. “You’re not only a hidden treasure of Lorain, but you guys are angels.”



Superintendent **Amber Fisher** and LOVC Director **Cindy White** chatting with Lorain’s Mayor, **Jack Bradley**

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS UPDATE

On March 3rd through 5th, Murray Ridge Center athletes participated in the Ohio Special Olympics State Winter Games at Bowling Green University! Sixteen of our athletes competed in Basketball Skills and Aquatics events: the four basketball skills athletes earned two gold, one silver, and one bronze medal, and every one of our twelve swimmers achieved at least one medal. Special Olympics Coordinator **Shawn Hatcher** joked that he would need an extra vehicle for all the hardware!



Special Olympics Coordinator **Shawn Hatcher** leading the athletes to the vans as EOVC Adult Program participants and staff cheer them on.



Group photo of the Aquatics (swimming) Team having some fun for the camera. Pictured, left to right, in front are Coaches **Laura Roby**, **Aaron Simmons**, and **Starr Price**. Standing are Special Olympics Coordinator **Shawn Hatcher**, **Kayla Stearns**, **Dylan Stearns**, **Richard Smith**, **Martha Lombeida**, **Shari Reitenbach**, **Pamela McClain**, Coach **Joe Croftcheck**, **Kenny Martin**, **Ryan Elia-son**, **Lutz Fazekas** (hiding behind Justin), and **Justin Tucker**.





Your Turn Consignment Sale proprietor **Bridget Boardman** and Murray Ridge Center Superintendent **Amber Fisher**

Murray Ridge Center would like to give a big thank you to **Bridget Boardman** at **Your Turn Consignment Sale** for donating the proceeds of her business' recent pop-up sale! In addition to the generous donation, Bridget invited some of our adult program participants to volunteer at the sale. We're looking forward to future opportunities to collaborate!

## GENEROUS DONATIONS

**Commander Clark Bruner** of the **Amherst American Legion Post 118**, along with his Post Officers and a contingent of about a dozen Post members (who arrived on motorcycles), presented Murray Ridge Center Superintendent **Amber Fisher** with a \$4,100 check as a donation to our Special Olympics Program. Also present for the donation were Murray Ridge's Scarlet & Grey basketball teams, who were having their first practice of the season. The funds for the donation came from the proceeds of a golf outing held by the Amherst American Legion. We are incredibly grateful for this generous donation!



Members of Murray Ridge Center's Scarlet and Grey Basketball Teams with members of the Amherst American Legion

Donations and community partnerships like these are part of what makes our work at Murray Ridge Center possible. Thank you, Lorain County, for your continued support of our mission!

## EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARDS PRESENTED

The Fall Quarter's recipient of our Exceptional Service Award was **Anita Graham**, the Director of Nursing at Murray Ridge Center. Anita's nominator told us that "Anita inspires her nursing team by utilizing compassionate leadership techniques, with the essence of resident care being the top priority!" Murray Ridge Center Superintendent Amber Fisher stated that "having Anita in her position has been an absolute godsend," and remarked that she often thinks about how very difficult it would have been to get through the epidemic without someone like Anita, who is "one in a million." Thank you, Anita, for your dedication to the health and welfare of everyone at Murray Ridge Center.



Board Member **Rebecca Cornman**, Director of Nursing **Anita Graham**, and Superintendent **Amber Fisher**

Do you know a Murray Ridge staff member who has gone "above and beyond"? If so, please submit your nomination to Kevin Naughton, Director of Communications, at (440) 329-3734 or at [kevin@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:kevin@murrayridgecenter.org).



I appreciate the strong leadership foundation Anita provides.

– Anita's Nominator



# EMPOWERING THROUGH SPORTS

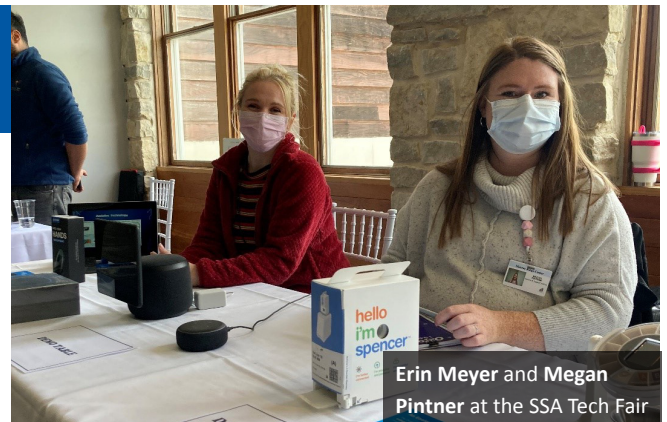


Murray Ridge Special Olympics athletes with the Open Door Varsity Boys players

Seventeen of our Special Olympics athletes visited Open Door Christian Academy for an inclusive basketball clinic with members of its varsity team. Facilitated by an organization called **Empower Sports**, the clinic had neurotypical athletes and athletes with developmental disabilities practicing basketball drills and participating in skills competitions together. Part of Empower Sports' values statement reads, "Sports can foster greater empathy between people of diverse abilities and backgrounds." A special thank you goes out to ODCA Head Coach Alan Januzzi, Empower Sports Executive Director Tom Heines, and Murray Ridge Center's Special Olympics Coordinator Shawn Hatcher for organizing this wonderfully inclusive event.

## SSA HOLDS TECH FAIR

Late last year, The SSA Department hosted a Technology Fair to showcase assistive and remote technology options that are available for individuals with developmental disabilities. Eleven vendors provided information about their products, and attendees were given the opportunity to test out both low and high-tech devices in order to learn how technology can help a person to live a more independent life.



Erin Meyer and Megan Pintner at the SSA Tech Fair



The SSA Department would like to thank **Valley of the Eagles** for allowing it to host this event at its venue. Also, a special thank you to all the vendors who participated:

- SafeinHome
- Total Homecare Solutions
- Ohio At Home
- AngelSense - Protecting Children
- Lorain Public Library System
- The Arc of Ohio
- Project Lifesaver Lorain County
- Rest Assured
- Magnifiers More
- Dose Health
- OCALI



# Murray Ridge School News

Students at Murray Ridge School have been busy! On Thursday, March 9th, the Brew It Smooth Cafe had its first pop-up location outside of the school, and the students were thrilled to bring their vocational skills and delicious treats to the Murray Ridge Center staff and Adult Program participants at the Elyria Opportunity and Vocational Center (EOVC). If you're a Murray Ridge staff member and missed us at the most recent pop-up cafe at the EOVC, be sure to come to the cafe when it returns on April 6th and May 25th. For more pictures of the pop-up cafe at the EOVC, be sure to visit our Facebook page!



Ja'Quan Warren helping Adult Program Instructor **Mary Lakner** with her order at the Brew It Smooth pop-up cafe. Behind him are **Brady Bella**, Personal Aide **Emily Lip-pencott**, and Personal Aide **Amy Marrero**.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

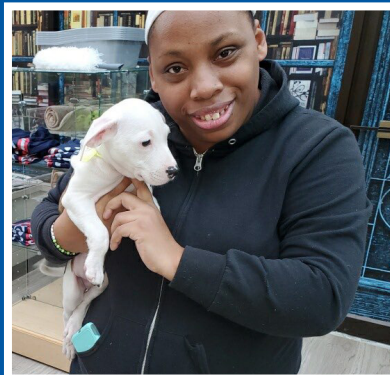


This past December, some of our Adult Program participants at LOVC volunteered at Good Neighbor Thrift Shop in Avon lake! Pictured above are **Chelsie Jenkins** and **Michelle Miller** organizing a clothing rack.

An important part of Murray Ridge Center's mission is helping people with developmental disabilities to be active members of their community. Here are some examples!



Every Thursday, LOVC Adult Program participants volunteer to deliver hot meals to seniors in Amherst. They volunteer through the Amherst Office on Aging, and the seniors love meeting and interacting with the volunteers from Murray Ridge. Pictured above are **Clayton Rhodehamel** and staff member **Trevor Doty**.



In February, **Angelissa Pardo** (left) and **Ashley Tarrant** (right) volunteered at the Friendship Animal Protective League, and got to enjoy some 'puppy time'!



# 30 YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS

## Jim Nagy

**Jim Nagy** was hired on July 7th, 1992, and began working at the HSC building, which is now the Administration Building. He started out as an Aide, but has been a Program Specialist for 28 years now.

Jim says that what he has enjoyed the most about working at Murray Ridge is the fact that he has had the opportunity to make a difference in the consumers' lives in a positive way. He says, "Working at the Murray Ridge Center has taught me one invaluable fact: none of us will retire as millionaires working in this field, but we make our millions in so many other ways in the service of our consumers."



Jill Camp, Jim Nagy, and Amber Fisher at the Agency In-Service Program

Thank you for **3 Decades!**



## Keith Rawlinson

**Keith Rawlinson** joined Murray Ridge in July of 1992. Since that time, he served as a Habilitation Specialist who also worked on adaptive equipment, and then moved into a position working on adaptive equipment full time.

Keith says that what he enjoys most about working at Murray Ridge is never being quite sure what to expect. He says, "I never know what devices I will be asked to design and build, or what problems I will be asked to solve". Many can attest to Keith's amazing skill and ingenuity when it comes to modifying and fashioning devices that enhance experiences and enable those we serve to participate more fully in a wide range of activities.

## Mo Silvis

**Mo Silvis** started her Murray Ridge career in the Residential Program, back when we operated six homes. She began as a part-time group home aide at the East 9th St. Home in Elyria, and she eventually moved to a full-time position at what is now called EOVC, and was subsequently promoted to a Workshop Specialist position there. Although the title of the position has been changed to Adult Program Instructor, what has not changed is Mo's assignment to Area B-2.

Mo considers herself very fortunate to have been able to stay in one area for so many years, reminiscing that she was even called the FOSECO Queen, a label she was given because of the production done by consumers in Area B-2 for the FOSECO company.



Lorain County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center  
1091 Infirmary Road  
Elyria, OH 44035

Standard Presort  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 146  
Elyria, OH 44035

**Photo of the Month:** On March 3, LOVC Adult Program participants and staff dropped off a donation of 100 stuffed animals to the **Akron Children's Pediatrics (ACP)** in Amherst. Pictured are **Hector Ortiz, Tony Daniels, Emilie Grosel, and Jalitza Rodriguez** with ACP staff members.

## Contact Us

Phone :  
440.3293734

Address :  
1091 Infirmary Road  
Elyria, OH 44035

Web & Email :  
[www.murrayridgecenter.org](http://www.murrayridgecenter.org)  
[kevin@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:kevin@murrayridgecenter.org)

Be sure to follow us on Facebook!

