



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

The View From The **RIDGE**

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities
Summer Quarterly

Special Olympics Summer Games!

SUMMER 2023



Members of the Murray Ridge Special Olympics Track and Field Team with Ohio Governor **Mike DeWine**! From left to right: **Alicia Lawrence**, **Elizha Suggs**, Coach **Tonya Guitar**, Governor DeWine, **Sarah Ward**, and **Ajonie' Glinsey**

Missy Skidmore competing
in the Mini Javelin throw



Sally Gordon (right) competing in the 50 Meter Dash

Congratulations to all the Murray Ridge athletes who competed in the State Special Olympics Games in Columbus on June 23-25! In total, individual athletes brought back 32 gold medals, eight silver medals, 13 bronze medals, and one 4th place ribbon.

Murray Ridge Center invites all adults with developmental disabilities in Lorain County to participate in our Special Olympics Program. If

you would like to learn more about our upcoming Special Olympics Ohio activities and events and/or how to participate in them, please contact Shawn Hatcher at 440-284-2720 or shatcher@murrayridgecenter.org.

For more pictures, visit
our Murray Ridge Center
Facebook Page!

Murray Ridge School Graduation!

On May 24th, Murray Ridge School held its annual transition ceremony, at which a group of guests – including the key note speaker, **Chase Farris**, Executive Director of “Save Our Children” – celebrated the accomplishments of some very impressive young people. While each graduate will be deeply missed by school staff, all are excited

about what lies ahead. Beyond the walls of Murray Ridge School, there will be many opportunities for the graduates to explore their interests, have new experiences, work at various jobs, give back within their communities, and live lives of increasing independence. Congratulations, **Murray Ridge School Class of 2023!**

Front, left to right: Teacher **Elizabeth Conroy**, **Sierra Long**, LCBDD President **Beverly Gedid**, LCBDD Member **Rebecca Cornman**, and MRS Principal **Dann Swift**. Back, seated, left to right: Keynote speaker **Chase Farris**, Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, and MRS Supervisor **Stacie Starr**



Paulina Lilly waiting to receive her diploma, with Collette Jones (Mason Crouch's Personal Aide) seated behind her

For more pictures, visit our Murray Ridge School Facebook Page!

PRESCHOOL graduation



Merrick Pickett with Classroom Aide **Vanessa Moye**



Emery Thomas was excited to graduate!



Left to right: Brodie Reynolds, Teacher **Lisa Kyer**, **Claire Demyan**, **Xavier Quinones**, **Alianna Meads**, **Owen Skinner**, **Chakrika Bommisetty**, Classroom Aide **Kammy Jones**, **Eli Seminatore**, Classroom Aide **Vanessa Moye**, and **Sebastian Serrano**

Congratulations to all of our wonderful preschool grads!

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS



A triumphant looking **Michael Hawley**

Saturday, April 29th was **Mega Championship Wrestling's** (MCW) 11th annual **"Breaking Down Barriers"** professional wrestling fundraiser event! Over the course of these exciting, family-friendly shows, MCW has raised more than \$15,000 for Friends of Murray Ridge.

Dozens of wrestlers came to the Lorain County Community College Field House to perform, showing their support for people with developmental disabilities in our Lorain County community. Fans cheered and jeered as the wrestlers put on an incredible display for everyone.

What really made this event special was the spirit of inclusivity that was present throughout the night. People from different backgrounds came together to see the spectacle, sharing a rowdy night of thrills together. Thank you to everyone at Mega Championship Wrestling for putting together such a fun and exciting evening for a great cause!



Wrestler **"Maddog" Manson**, who looks conspicuously like EOVC Adult Program Instructor **Jim Nagy**, uses a piece of cutlery to fend off two assailants.

Be sure to visit us on Facebook for more photos of the exciting event!

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED

The most recent recipient of our Exceptional Service Award was **Josh Mercado**, a Service and Support Administrator at Murray Ridge Center. Josh's nominators told us that "Josh has gone far and beyond what we ever expected or hoped for. He always promptly returns our calls, has helped us immensely with the needs of our grandson, and has provided us with many other resources." They went on to say, "Josh takes time to explain everything thoroughly and obviously takes his position very seriously," concluding, "We are very grateful for all that he has done." Thank you, Josh, for your dedication to those whose services you coordinate at Murray Ridge Center.



Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, Service and Support Administrator **Josh Mercado**, and Board Member **Rebecca Cornman**

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.



Josh has gone far and beyond what we ever expected or hoped for.

-Ralph and Terena Russo

“Once Upon a Time”

at the 2023 Murray Ridge School Prom

Board Member **Rebecca Cornman** crowns **Paulina Lilly**, one of the Prom Queens. **Mason Crouch** was crowned Prom King by Board Member **Keith Boey**, and **Sierra Long** was crowned Prom Queen by Murray Ridge Center Superintendent **Amber Fisher**



Once upon a time, in a kingdom of learning, a royal decree was sent forth announcing the much-anticipated school prom. The students, dressed in their finest gowns and suits, arrived for dinner and dancing at the grand ballroom, which was adorned with shimmering lights and magnificent decorations. As the night went on, the sweet melodies of the music filled the air, and the students danced the night away in a magical realm of their own. As the night came to an end, and as the last notes of the music faded away, the students bid each other goodbye, promising to remember the night as a fairy tale come true.

A special thanks goes out to Murray Ridge School staff members **Lilly Tapia** and **Barbara Reynolds** for putting together such a special evening. Also, thank you to **Jocelyn Noble-Spraggins**, who was the evening's DJ, and **Dominic Price**, who photographed the prom; both of these individuals graciously donated their time and talents.

Elyria's 2023 Memorial Day Parade

This past May, Murray Ridge Center participated in Elyria's annual Memorial Day Parade. Decked out in red, white, and blue, our representatives proudly displayed our Murray Ridge Center banner as they marched through the main thoroughfares of downtown Elyria. Parades provide an inclusive platform for individuals with developmental disabilities to be recognized as integral parts of the community.



Above: **Mark Botnik** and **Juliette Casey** looking patriotic

Left, left to right: **Alec Jones**, **Joseph Linden**, **Dennis Johnson**, **Charles Johnson**, Flat Rock House Supervisor **Mary Yosa**, **Stephen Locurto**, **Charles Pasta**, Flat Rock DSP **Ida Stanislawski**, and **Tim Farkas**.

in memoriam...

REMEMBERING HELEN JONES (WOODSON)



Founder of Murray Ridge Choraleers

While Helen's tenure at Murray Ridge ended more than three decades ago, she left a lasting legacy as the founder of our celebrated Murray Ridge Choraleers. Helen began her Murray Ridge career at our school, but later transferred into our Adult Services Program, where she helped teach basic academics and living skills. Known for her ability to come up with new ideas and creative ways to teach, Helen soon organized a choral group of Adult Program participants. As many of her singers didn't read, Helen worked with them on ways to memorize songs; while they sang, she accompanied them on the piano. The Choraleers, who have been called "the original Murray Ridge ambassa-

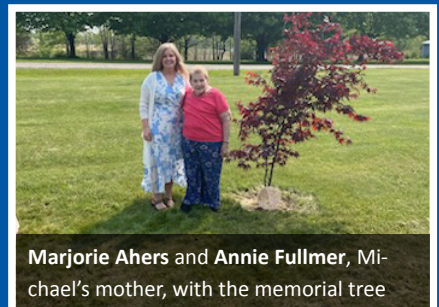
dors," played in venues across Northeast Ohio, reportedly performing up to 50 times per year! After Helen departed Murray Ridge for other adventures, the Choraleers continued to practice and perform regularly at community events. Although the COVID epidemic put the Choraleers on pause, we are looking forward to getting the group 'up and singing' soon. With the news of Helen's recent passing, those who knew her are taking time to cherish her memory, and the Murray Ridge Family wishes to recognize and pay tribute to this remarkable woman, who was a pioneer in showcasing the talents and contributions of people with developmental disabilities.

MICHAEL LEE FULLMER'S TREE DEDICATION

Friends, family, and loved ones of Michael Fullmer gathered for his tree dedication outside Murray Ridge School



On May 20th, friends, family and loved ones gathered outside Murray Ridge School to remember and dedicate a tree planted on school property in honor of **Michael Fulmer**, who was a student at the school upon its opening in 1968. Michael, who passed away on February 23rd of this year, went on to participate in the Murray Ridge Adult Service and Supported Living Programs. Michael's mother, **Annie Fulmer**, asked to have the memorial tree planted at Murray Ridge School because this was a place where Michael thrived in his youth, and that he loved. Just as we care for and nurture every student at our school, we will do the same for the tree planted in Michael's memory.

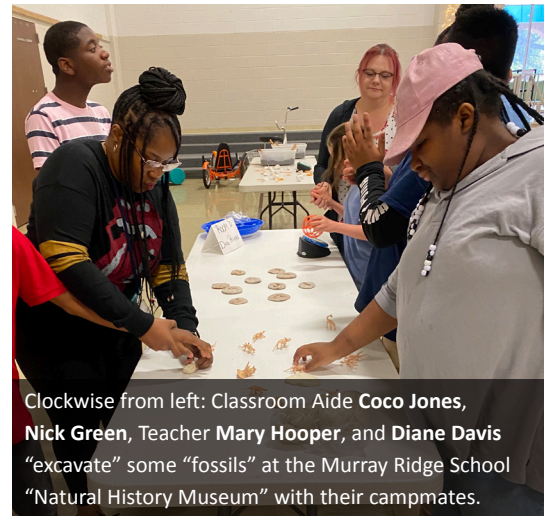


Marjorie Ahers and Annie Fullmer, Michael's mother, with the memorial tree

SUMMER CAMP



One of the exhibits from the "Murray Ridge School Art Museum"



Clockwise from left: Classroom Aide **Coco Jones**, **Nick Green**, Teacher **Mary Hooper**, and **Diane Davis** "excavate" some "fossils" at the Murray Ridge School "Natural History Museum" with their campmates.

Every year, Murray Ridge School holds a day camp program for our students during summer break. The program is divided into three themed weeks, and this year the themes were "museums," "indoor play spaces," and "Cleveland sports."

The camp activities were therapy-driven, with our Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Pathologists having developed activities based on each week's theme. On Fridays, families had the opportunity to schedule individualized therapy sessions, so their children could receive specialized care.

Thank you to everyone involved for making this year's summer camp program a resounding success!

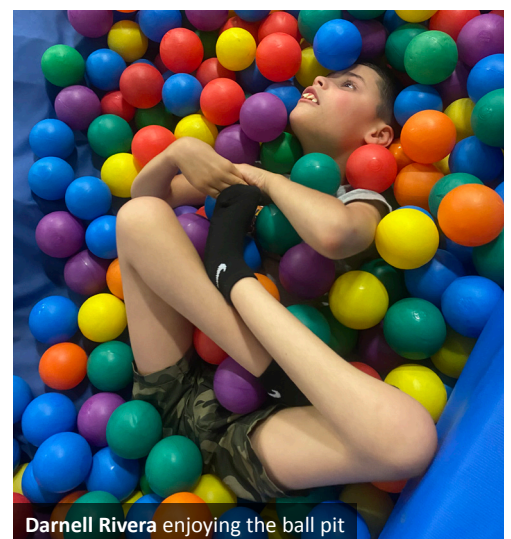
For more great photos, visit our Murray Ridge School Facebook page!



Jordan Wicker enjoying some aquatic physical therapy with Occupational Therapists **Jamie Novak** and **Trish Myers**



School Aide **Shelly Stipe** with **Anellys Ortiz-Lebron**



Darnell Rivera enjoying the ball pit

FOOTBALL SKILLS CAMP



Personal Aide **Cathy Wright** with **Scarlett Wallace** at Reaser Stadium

Thanks to the **Elyria Mini Pioneers** for collaborating with us in a youth Football and Cheerleading Skills Camp! On June 19th, coaches and student volunteers from the Mini Pioneers came to help our students with skills and drills at our school. A special thanks goes to **Stacie Starr** and Elyria Mini Pioneers President **Vaughn Sprinkle** for organizing the event.

Then, as the culminating activity of our Summer Camp program, students visited Reaser Stadium for a fun "Tailgate Party"! On June 22nd, 29 student volunteers from Elyria Catholic High School worked with our Therapy Team to participate in some football drills and activities with our students. Thanks to **Stacie Starr** and Elyria Catholic Panthers head football coach **Chase Ferris** for setting up this great event!



Left to right: Mini Pioneers Coach **Brandon Tolliver**, Intermittent School Aide **Theresa Myers**, Personal Aide **Brittany Harness**, **Anthony Hodgeman**, **Jacksuell Albarran**, **Tyrese Whitfield**, and **Kyle Offenberger** cheering on **Terrence Nagy**



Jordan Wicker high fiving members of Elyria Catholic High School's football team



Brayden Altobelli with Mini Pioneers Assistant Coach **Ricky Earl**



Mini Pioneers volunteer **Trent Kilgore-Hill** with **Emanuel Campos**

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
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Elyria, OH 44035

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Photo of the Month: Some individuals from our Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center had the opportunity to meet the Mayor of Elyria at Ely Square's Summer Concert series! Pictured from left to right in the back row are **Kyle Young**, **Mark Barton**, **Calvyn Bohnert**, Elyria Mayor **Frank Whitfield**, and **John Hall**, with **Gus McGee** in the front row.

Contact Us

Phone :
440.3293734

Address :
1091 Infirmary Road
Elyria, OH 44035

Web & Email :
www.murrayridgecenter.org
kevin@murrayridgecenter.org

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