



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

The View From The **RIDGE**

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities
Spring Quarterly

SPRING 2024



Mike Telloni, Dennis Johnson, Jasmine Zan, and Katie Schneider delivering a Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month flier to **Teresa Gilles** (second from right), Director of the non-profit Main Street Amherst.

Every March, Murray Ridge Center joins local, state, and national agencies to recognize **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month** — a time for all of us to celebrate the unique and vital contributions that individuals with developmental disabilities make in our communities. It's also a perfect time to amplify the message about the important role individuals with developmental disabilities play throughout our community as volunteers, co-workers, citizens, neighbors, and friends.

Murray Ridge is a provider of services; and plans, funds, and monitors services provided by other agencies and independent providers to people with developmental disabilities. Through the services and support offered by Murray Ridge Center, every year thousands of children and adults with developmental disabilities have the opportunity to develop critical skills, expand their vocational horizons, and receive necessary care.

**March was
National
Developmental
Disabilities
Awareness
Month!**



**Murray Ridge
Preschool Receives
5-Star Rating!**

Murray Ridge Preschool recently received a 5-Star Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rating from the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

SUTQ recognizes and promotes learning and development programs that meet quality program standards that exceed preschool licensing and school-age child care licensing health and safety regulations. Step Up To Quality program standards are based on national research identifying standards that lead to improved outcomes for children.

GENEROUS DONATIONS

CLEVELAND CLINIC'S 8TH ANNUAL 5K RUN & 1 MILE WALK DONATION

In November, Cleveland Clinic held its 8th Annual 5K Run and 1 Mile Walk at Avon Hospital and Richard E. Jacobs Health Center. Thanks to everyone's efforts, the event raised substantial funds for Friends of Murray Ridge, a not-for-profit organization that collects donations that support the mission of Murray Ridge Center. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the race's organizers and sponsors, and the more than 150 Lorain County community members for their support of and participation in the event.

Pictured at right, left to right: LCBDD Director of Vocational and Transportation Services **Jeff Miller**, Cleveland Clinic Community Relations Program Manager **Marcus Madison**, LCBDD Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, and Cleveland Clinic Avon Hospital President **Dr. Rebecca Starck**.



Members of Amherst American Legion Post 118 presenting their portion of the donation to Superintendent **Amber Fisher** (center, holding the donation check)

THANKS, AMHERST AMERICAN LEGION POST 118 & NORDSON ELECTRONIC SOLUTIONS!

Last year, Amherst American Legion Post 118 held two fundraisers, a golf outing and a Poker Run, at which a total of \$6,000 was raised for our Special Olympics Program. Then, **Terry Harper**, an American Legion member who is a retiree

from Nordson Electronic Solutions in Amherst, approached his former employer about matching the donation, and Nordson Electronic Solutions offered to double-match the donation, bringing it to a combined total of \$18,000! Shawn

Hatcher, our Special Olympics Coordinator, said he was "blown away by this generosity." We at Murray Ridge would like to extend our heart-felt gratitude to the Amherst American Legion Post 118 and Nordson Electronic Solutions!

MURRAY RIDGE Loves FAPL!



Greg Willey, the Director of the Friendship Animal Protection League, with Personal Aide **Heather Horne** and **Scarlett Wallace**



School FAPL Donation

This year, for its community service project, the Murray Ridge School Scout Troop held a change drive and managed to collect nearly \$700 for Elyria's Friendship Animal Protective League! The money was presented to Greg Willey, the Director of the FAPL, at a special gathering in the Murray Ridge School gymnasium. Great job, everyone!



Jesse Frisch (right) with **Greg Willey**, the Director of the Friendship Animal Protection League

Jesse Frisch loves FAPL too!

Earlier this year, as part of their Service Club program, Adult Program participants from our former Elyria Opportunity and Vocational Center voted to donate a portion of the proceeds from their holiday Santa Shop to the Friendship Animal Protective League! **Jesse Frisch** happily volunteered to present the \$500 check and visit the animals. Then, in March, Jesse presented Elyria's Friendship Animal Protection League (FAPL) with his annual St. Patrick's Day donation. According to Jesse, in 2011, he began visiting several Murray Ridge sites dressed as a Leprechaun and would collect donations for his "bag of gold."



Jesse Frisch with a happy recipient of the \$500 donation to Friendship Animal Protection League

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AWARD BANQUET



Siblings and Special Olympics athletes **Dylan and Kayla Stearns**

**Congrats to
all Special
Olympians!**
Enjoy these
highlights!

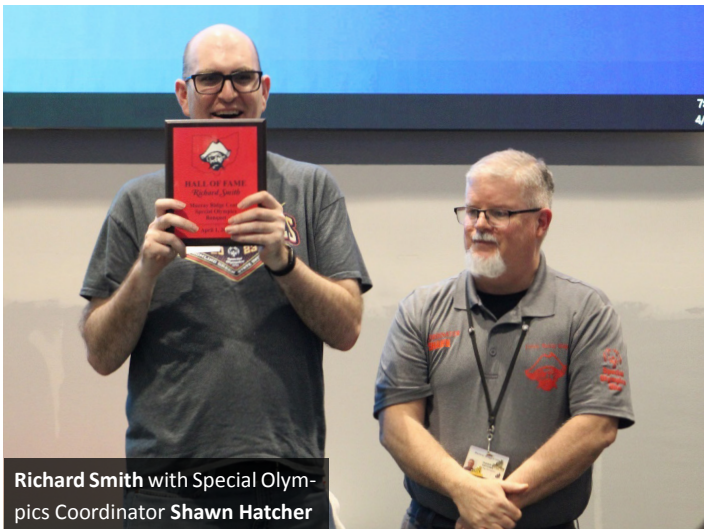
Honoring Our 2023-2024 Special Olympics Athletes

The 2024 Special Olympics Awards Banquet was held this past April 1st! Nearly 100 athletes were in attendance with their loved ones at the Spitzer Conference Center at Lorain County Community College; the event included a dinner prepared by the college's culinary arts program, a plethora of awards presentations, and more.



Superintendent **Amber Fisher** with **Charles Johnson**

In addition to congratulatory addresses from Special Olympics Coordinator **Shawn Hatcher** and Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, **Jeremy Foster** delivered a moving invocation. Next, after a keynote address by **Tim Murray**, special recognition was given to the most recent Hall of Fame inductee, **Richard Smith**; and the 2023's State Champions, the 4x100 Relay Team, the Modified Volleyball Team, and the Soccer Team. The ceremony also acknowledged and celebrated all of our amazing athletes and volunteers, as well as our community supporters, including **Casey Wolfe** at **Amherst City Schools**; **Amherst American Legion Post 118**; **Nordson Corporation**; **Amherst Athletic Association**; **Rebman Recreation, Inc.**; and **Shoreway Sports & Graphics**.



Richard Smith with Special Olympics Coordinator **Shawn Hatcher**

Hall of Fame Inductee

Richard Smith was inducted into the Murray Ridge Special Olympics Hall of Fame for his swimming, from which he "retired" this past February at the 2024 Winter Games. He was a swimmer with Murray Ridge for nearly 20 years!



Katie Weaver with **Ryan Brown**



Best Dressed!

Although not an official Special Olympics category, Shawn Hatcher declared **Dustin Mitchell** "Best Dressed" at the banquet. We can see why!



Keynote Speaker Tim Murray

Tim Murray is the reigning and 2-time Fittest Man on Earth for the short stature division of the CrossFit Games and he is currently working towards winning number 3! Tim spoke about his training regimen, his competitive career, and how his grandfather helped bring Special Olympics to Northern Kentucky over the course of the 1970s and 80s.



Shawn Hatcher behind three of the four members of the Gold Medal winning 4X100M relay team: **Ajonie' Glinsey**, **Alicia Lawrence**, and **Sarah Ward**. Not pictured: **Elizha Suggs**.

State Champions!

In 2023, the 4X100M Relay Team, the Modified Volleyball Team, and the Soccer Team all won State Championships. Congratulations, everyone!



Modified Volleyball Team, left to right: Coach **Leroy Keen**, **Ryan Brown**, **Robert Assanakis**, **Shari Reitenbach**, **Tony Harris Jr.**, **Ryan Busher**, and **Hector Lozano**



Shawn Hatcher and Coach **Scott Gezzer** behind the 2024 State Championship winning Soccer Team, left to right: **Tim Dammeyer**, **Ryan Eliason**, **Sean Ware**, **Megan Craig**, **Diana Clement**, **Andrew Westover**, **Katie Weaver**, **Jeremy Foster**, **Dorian Chaffin**, **Nathan Gezzer**. Not pictured: Coach **Russ Moyer**

MURRAY RIDGE STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

CONNECTING FOR KIDS RESOURCE FAIR

Our mission is to ensure the availability of services and supports that assist eligible individuals in living the life they choose; to promote their health and safety; and to assist and support the families of these individuals in achieving these goals.



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On Tuesday, March 14th, Connecting for Kids sponsored its Lorain County Resource Fair to highlight local providers and supports for families who have concerns about their children ages birth to 22. This year's Resource Fair took place in the Spitzer Conference Center at Lorain County Community College, and Murray Ridge Center's Service and Support Administration Department and Early Intervention Program were among the event participants. For more information, call Connecting for Kids at (440) 570-5908, or go to its website at connectingforkids.org.

Intake Service and Support Administrators **John Bender** and **Lisa Neely** tabling for Murray Ridge Center at the 2024 Connecting for Kids Resource Fair

HEATHER KNOBLE: A "HERO FOR CHILDREN"

A special congratulations goes out to Early Intervention Supervisor **Heather Knoble**, who was selected as this year's recipient of Blessing House's "Heroes for Children" Award! Heather was selected from a pool of 23 nominees who were selected for their work in helping make a difference in the lives of children. The award was presented on Friday, April 12th, with a celebratory luncheon at LCCC's Spitzer Conference Center with friends and families of the nominees. Congratulations, Heather!



A hero with her proud family: **Steve Knoble**, **Heather Knoble**, **Jim Knoble**, and **Diane Knoble**





Breaking Down Barriers!

On Saturday, May 4th, **Mega Championship Wrestling (MCW)** held its 12th 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!



MURRAY RIDGE SCHOOL PROM!

"Welcome to the jungle!" Murray Ridge School students enjoyed a prom like no other. The gymnasium, transformed into a tropical paradise, glowed with colorful lights and decorations.

All in all, about 175 students, loved ones, and staff attended. Three students who are graduating, **Jose Smith**, **Chris Fowler**, and **Bilyan Dimitrievich**, were all crowned Prom King (or "King of the Jungle!") by Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, Supervisor **Stacie Starr**, and Board Member **Keith Boey**.

Special thanks to DJ **Jocelyn Noble-Spraggins** and photographer **Dominic Price**, who donated their time and talents. Be sure to check out our school Facebook page for more pictures and video of the event!



Supervisor Stacie Starr crowns Jose Smith one of this year's Prom Kings with Principal **Dann Swift**, Superintendent **Amber Fisher**, and School Aide **Martha Hoyt** looking on

Lorain County Board of
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Photo of the Spring: Our Elyria Opportunity
And Vocational Center staff got together
for a group photo on the Center's last day!

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