

# MURRAY RIDGE COURIER



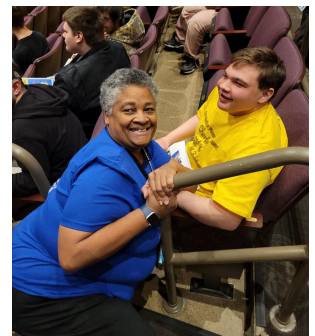
## MRS Students Shine in Theater Debut!

Pictured above (l-r): Patrick Boey, Nicholas Green, Cameron Conn, Jonas Bennett, Evey Rodgers, Brady Bella, Jenny Sislowski, Ja'Laysia Brown, Tyrese Whitfield, and Ja'quan Warren.

On March 19, students from Kristin Dickerhoff and Taylor Blascak's classes at Murray Ridge School (MRS) made their theatrical debut in Elyria City Schools' 10th Annual Readers Theater.

As part of the "Amazing Race" themed show, MRS students performed a Peter Pan skit, with each student embracing roles like Peter Pan, Captain Hook, and the Lost Boys and Girls. The event, celebrating a decade of inclusive performances, was free for families and friends, and ended with a cast party with pizza and cookies.

A heartfelt thank-you to Elyria Schools' middle school Intervention Specialist Kathy Pero and Special Education Paraprofessional Carla Valles for their guidance during this memorable theater experience. We look forward to partnering with Elyria City Schools again next year!



Pictured top, left (l-r): Ja'quan Warren, Carla Valles (playwright), and Brayden Altobelli. Bottom, left (l-r): Tyrese Whitfield and Ja'quan Warren. Top, right: Jonas Bennett. Bottom, right: Stephanie King (personal aide), and Cameron Conn.

# April is Autism Acceptance Month

Join Murray Ridge Center (MRC) as we join others around the globe to celebrate April **Autism Acceptance Month**—a time to recognize, honor, and uplift the voices and experiences of people with autism.

At MRC, this month means more to us than general awareness; it's about fostering real inclusion and advocating for a world where people with autism are fully supported, respected, and empowered to thrive.

Show your support for individuals with autism by:

- Listening to and amplifying the voices of those with autism
- Challenging harmful stereotypes and misinformation
- Creating inclusivity in schools, workplaces, and public spaces
- Recognizing the unique strengths, talents, and perspectives that individuals with autism bring to the world!

Help MRC build a more understanding, compassionate, and equitable society for everyone! Learn more about Autism Acceptance Month by visiting [autismsociety.org](https://autismsociety.org).



## A Farewell Ride

Jasmine Zan wrapped up her time at the Lorain Opportunity & Vocational Center (LOVC) in the best way possible—by checking off a bucket list wish with her LOVC friends! On March 28, 2025, Jasmine's dream of riding the RTA standing up and holding on came true during a special Community Connection trip. The group cruised to Little Italy, topping their day off with a delicious Italian lunch at Guarino's Restaurant. What a fun and unforgettable send-off!

Pictured top right (l-r): Penni Shuster (staff) and Jasmine Zan. Pictured bottom right (l-r): Michael Elliot, Marci Coen, Penni Shuster (staff), and Jasmine Zan.



## Lucky APL!

Last month, OOV Adult Program participant Jesse Frisch made rounds through MRC buildings! Jesse, dressed as a "Lucky Leprechaun," collected donations for the Friendship Animal Protective League (FAPL), raising nearly \$200 for our furry friends!



Pictured (l-r): FAPL Executive Director Greg Willey, Jesse Frisch, and staff volunteer.



## A Celebration of Talent at MRS!

The Murray Ridge School (MRS) talent show was an unforgettable event, showcasing students' incredible skills in singing, dancing, piano playing, and more! A standout moment was the fashion show, where students confidently strutted the stage in outfits they chose themselves. With a packed gym full of cheering families, the MRS 2025 Talent Show was a fun celebration of the amazing talent in our school!



Pictured l-r: Stomp on the Ground performers Josiah Smith, Dean Wisniewski, Raelyn Ensign, TJ Nagy, Micah Samms.



Fashion Show: pictured left: Katalina Carter and right: Kristin Carmen-Collins (PT Assistant), and Anellys Ortiz Lebron strike a pose for the camera.



Kindness Club members (l-r): Tyrese Whitfield, Katalina Carter, Bentley Spooner, Adalyn Fridenstine, Diane Davis, Ja'Laysia Brown, Kenny Kingsley, Raelyn Ensign, Eli Seminatore, Jacob Gladding, Gabriella Saavedra, TJ Nagy, Brady Johnson, Jacoby Arnold, Jayden Steible performed Fight Song.



Performing 'Cheeseburger in Paradise:" Brady Bella, Marybeth Peters (personal aide), Jansen Plumb, Nicholas Green, Taylor Blascak (staff), Ja'Laysia Brown, Joe Croftcheck (staff), Tyrese Whitfield, Tiffany Demyan, Ja'quan Warren, Amy Marrero (Personal Aide), Mary Huff (staff), Jennifer Sislowski, Stephanie King (personal aide), Kristin Dickerhoff (staff), and Cameron Conn.

## Sweet Treats!

In March, a group of Adult Program participants from the Lorain Opportunity & Vocational Center (LOVC) had a sweet time visiting Krispy Kreme Doughnuts in Middleburg Heights!



Pictured (l-r, front): Penni Shuster (staff) and D'Arionna Dowdell, (l-r, back) James Wilson, Robert Serrano, and Helena Hurt.

## April is Occupational Therapist Month!

Join MRC in celebrating its incredible Occupational Therapy (OT) Team at Murray Ridge School (MRS)! OTs help people do everyday activities—like getting dressed, cooking, or going to work or school—more easily and independently, so they can live life to the fullest. From fostering fine motor skills to promoting sensory integration, the MRS OTs are helping to make life-changing impacts for our students! Thank you for all you do! Meet the MRS OT team below!



### TRICSH MYERS

Tricsh has been at Murray Ridge for 10 years. She works with MRS students in the lower and upper elementary classes. This year, Tricsh implemented "Toy of the Week" with her students. What Tricsh loves most about working at Murray Ridge is spending time with the kids and making therapy fun through play.



### NICOLE GEEN

Nicole has been at Murray Ridge for five years. She works with a variety of age groups including Early Intervention, preschool, middle school, and high school students. What Nicole loves most about working at MRS is the opportunity to be creative—making the school day engaging and fun for students, helping them achieve their goals, and collaborating with the amazing OT team.



### JAMIE NOVAK

Jamie has been at Murray Ridge for three years. She works with students in the high school classrooms and is an integral part of the Brew it Smooth Cafe. What Jamie loves most about working at Murray Ridge is the positive environment, seeing students grow and learn new skills, and collaborating with the incredible OT team.

## Fat Tuesday = Kiedrowski's!

A group of Adult Program participants from the Lorain Opportunity & Vocational Center (LOVC) celebrated Fat Tuesday in style with paczkis at Kiedrowski's Simply Delicious Bakery in Amherst—plus enjoyed a surprise appearance by Mrs. Lorain County!

Pictured left (l-r): Jalitza Rodriguez, Jamie Velez, Matthew Cieszynski, Vencient Mills, and Fred Biller. Pictured right (l-r): Mrs. Lorain County and Matthew Cieszynski.



## Volunteering for DD Awareness



A group of volunteers from the Lorain Opportunity Vocational Center (LOVC) distributed flyers for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. These amazing Adult Program participants visited local businesses, spreading awareness on MRC and developmental disabilities.

Pictured (l-r): Jalitza Rodriquez, Abby Kisner (back), Brian Boyd, Elyria Northwest Branch Manager Charles DeAngelis, DaeJon Hamlin, and Katherine Schneider.

live pro wrestling

# BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

**MEGA WRESTLING**

when? **SATURDAY 3rd MAY**

Doors open at **4PM**  
Bell time **5PM**

tickets at the door or available online: [www.megachampionshipwrestling.com](http://www.megachampionshipwrestling.com) **13**

**LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE FIELD HOUSE**  
1005 ABBE RD N. ELYRIA OH 44035

**GENERAL ADMISSION**  
PRESALE: \$15 | DAY OF SHOW: \$20  
**FRONT ROW**  
PRESALE: \$20 | DAY OF SHOW: \$25  
**KIDS 10 & UNDER: FREE**  
card subject to change

## Special Pricing for MRC Affiliates

Please note that the Breaking Down Barriers flyer includes public ticket pricing/purchasing options only. Tickets are also available for purchase at both Murray Ridge Opportunity & Vocational Centers (OVCs). The ticket price is \$10 for individuals eligible for services from Murray Ridge Center and their caregivers/affiliates, if purchased in advance at one of the OVCs (tickets purchased on the day of the show will be \$20.00 for everyone). MRC affiliates may visit the front desk of either OVC between 8:00am and 4:00pm (Monday-Friday) to purchase tickets:

- **Oberlin OVC:**  
285 Artino Street, Oberlin
- **Lorain OVC:**  
4360 Oberlin Ave., Lorain

## Sweet Moments

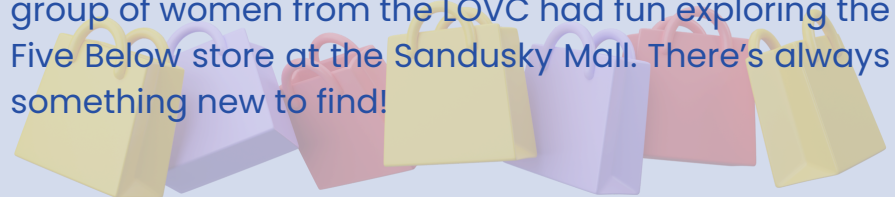
Why wait for summer to enjoy a sweet treat? On March 13, Adult Program participants from the Lorain Opportunity & Vocational Center (LOVC) headed to George's Tin Roof in Amherst for an afternoon of ice cream and laughter. It was the perfect way to brighten up a chilly day!

Pictured (l-r): Emilie Grosel, Gabriel Maldonado, Eronne Chambers, Kenneth Nelson, DaeJon Hamlin, and Gregory Perkins.



## Retail Therapy

April showers won't stop these shopping flowers! A group of women from the LOVC had fun exploring the Five Below store at the Sandusky Mall. There's always something new to find!



Pictured (l-r): Kimberly Nadolski, Diana Clement, Michelle Miller, Alicia Lawrence, and Ashley Tarrant.



## MRC Connects at Resource Fair

MRC's Early Intervention and Service and Support Administration Departments were front and center at the Lorain County Resource Fair on March 18; 367 individuals (125 families) also participated in this annual event!

The Fair was open to anyone in Lorain County and surrounding communities concerned about a youth's mental health, academics, or disabilities and developmental delays.

If you missed the Resource Fair this year, don't worry! This annual event will be here again before you know it!



Pictured: (l-r): Service & Support Administrators Sarah Arndt and Lisa Neely.

## Raiders Shine at 2025 Friendship Games

On March 29th, the Raiders represented proudly at the 2025 Friendship Games in Tuscarawas County. This unique event, similar to an All-Star Game, mixes athletes and coaches from different teams for a fun, inclusive experience. The Raiders were led by Coach Russ Moyer, Coach Scott Gezzer, Yolanda Ramos (dubbed the Raiders' official support mom), Victor Elder, Megan Craig, Kevin Long, and Dorian Chaffin, who played in the D1 Unified game alongside peers without disabilities.

The Friendship Games celebrate the love of the game, fostering new friendships and teamwork. The day ended with well-deserved awards: Coach Moyer and Coach Gezzer received Coaches Awards; Yolanda Ramos earned the "Help Us Shine" Award; and Nathan Gezzer was honored with the "Heart of a Champion" Award. Great job, Raiders! You continue to shine both on and off the court!



Pictured left, top: Dorian Chaffin takes on a competitor; left, bottom (l-r): Yolanda Ramos and Nathan Gezzer. Pictured, above right (l-r): Tuscarawas County Director, Rochelle Lefler, Coach Russ Moyer, Nathan Gezzer, Coach Scott Gezzer.

## A Royal Day Out

Princesses from the Meister Road Home had a magical time at the Svetle Signers' first Princess Luncheon on March 15! They enjoyed lunch, photos with Disney royalty, and a sign language performance of classic Disney songs!

Pictured (l-r) Sara Lempeck, Diane Pasa, Kara Zudell, and Sheila Amerla (staff).



## Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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Elyria, OH 44035



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## CONTACT US



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[www.murrayridgecenter.org](http://www.murrayridgecenter.org)



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Elyria, OH 44035



## Nominations Sought for Exceptional Service Awards

Do you know a Murray Ridge employee whose work efforts reflect remarkable dedication and have significantly contributed to the well-being of people with developmental disabilities? Nominate that employee for an Exceptional Service Award! If you are a community member; consumer; or parent, guardian, sibling, or other relative of a Murray Ridge program participant, submit your nomination to [awards@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:awards@murrayridgecenter.org) or call Jen Ryan at 440-329-3734. Please include a brief paragraph outlining your reasons for nominating the employee. All nominations will be forwarded to the Board for consideration. The Board presents Exceptional Service Awards on a quarterly basis.