

MURRAY RIDGE COURIER



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME



Special Olympics Awards Banquet 2025

The 2024 Murray Ridge Raiders Soccer Team was recognized for the third consecutive year as the 2024 Summer Games State Champions! Pictured, front row (l-r): Nicol Lazu-Acosta, Megan Craig, Jeremy Foster, Sean Ware, George Giganti and Andrew Prihoda. Back row (l-r) Andrew Westover, Jeffrey O'Brien, Ryan Eliason, Nathan Gezzer, Dorian Chaffin and Volunteer Coach Scott Gezzer. Not pictured: Head Coach Russell Moye.

On April 7, 2025, the Spitzer Conference Center at Lorain County Community College lit up with pride, joy, and community spirit as the annual Murray Ridge Center (MRC) Special Olympics Awards Banquet honored the achievements of the 2024-2025 athletes, volunteers, and supporters.

Hosted by Shawn Hatcher with an invocation by Charles Johnson Jr., the event featured dinner, dessert, and a powerful keynote speech by Bryan Thomas—former NFL and USFL player, Elyria Sports Hall of Famer, and devoted mentor. Thomas inspired attendees with stories of perseverance from both his football career and decades of service in law enforcement and youth mentorship.

Special Olympics athletes were recognized for their accomplishments and commitment, alongside the volunteers, coaches, and community partners who support them. Highlights included state champion recognitions and Hall of Fame inductions!

Congratulations to all of MRC's incredibly talented and dedicated athletes who compete within the Murray Ridge Special Olympics program!



Pictured, top (l-r): Starr Price (coach) and the gold medal mixed 100 meter relay swim team members Ryan Eliason, Kenny Martin, Amy Trigilio, and Justin Tucker. Pictured, bottom: Basketball Hall of Fame Inductee Isiah Wicks with Special Olympics Coordinator Shawn Hatcher.



MRC Staff Members Receive Heroes for Children Award

Amy Daniels and Shawna Livingston were center stage at the Blessing House 4th Annual Heroes for Children Luncheon on April 11.

This event welcomed 275 guests to celebrate the dedicated honorees who come from all walks of life—educators, social workers, foster parents, and leaders of impactful organizations—all united by a shared commitment to the well-being of children.

Congratulations to Amy and Shawna! Their tireless work and unwavering compassion serve as an inspiration, and MRC is grateful for the chance to shine a spotlight on their efforts and acknowledge the vital role they play in building a brighter future for children with developmental disabilities.



Amy Daniels receiving her award from Blessing House Executive Director and Co-Founder Sister Mary Berigan.



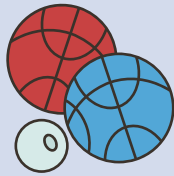
Shawna Livingston receiving her award from Sister Mary.

On the Air and Behind the Scenes!

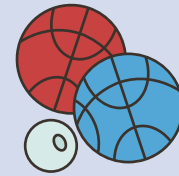
A group of Adult Program participants from the Oberlin Opportunity & Vocational Center (OOVC) had an exciting behind-the-scenes tour of radio station WOBL/WDLW, getting a firsthand look at how shows are produced and broadcast. From exploring the control room to meeting on-air personalities, participants enjoyed learning how the magic of radio comes to life. It was a fun and inspiring peek into the world of broadcasting!



Pictured at WOBL (l-r): Ester Schnable, Brenden Stull, Jacob Pantalone, Cathy Pence, and Will Foster.



Bocce Stars Shine at Medina Regionals!



MRC Special Olympics athletes rolled their way to victory at the Bocce Regionals in Medina on May 4! Congratulations to our 1st place gold medal winners pictured (l-r) Chelsea Jenkins and Helena Hurt and Tim Quisenberry and Kenny Martin, and to our 2nd place silver medal winners Jenna Jones and Wendy Smitskowski and John Ahart and Annie Cirilo. Way to represent MRC!



Exploring at DISCOVERYWORKS

On April 2nd, MRC's Early Intervention (EI) families and staff visited the newly remodeled DiscoveryWorks at the Avon Lake Public Library. This hands-on space was perfect for fun, exploration, and learning beyond the classroom—a day full of smiles and discovery!

Pictured (l-r): Julia Schneider; Lincoln Tomlin and Benjamin Seybert.



Hooked on Fishing (and a Few Worms)

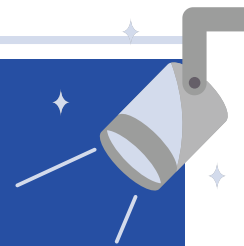
Adult Program participants from the Lorain Opportunity & Vocational Center (LOVC) took advantage of some beautiful Ohio weather and went fishing in New Russia Township. Megan Craig had not been fishing since she was a young girl camping—and that day she caught six fish! Thank you to the Polish Fisherman's Club volunteers who joined in on the fun!



Pictured (l-r): Megan Craig, with one of her many catches. Jericho Bailey and Robert McFadden fishing with the Polish Fisherman's Club volunteers. Kenny Martin snags a fish! Jericho Bailey proudly displays what he reeled in!



Murray Ridge School Prom: Welcome to the Emerald City!



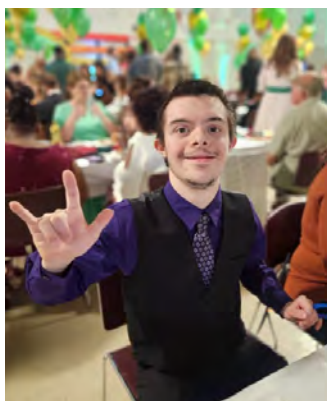
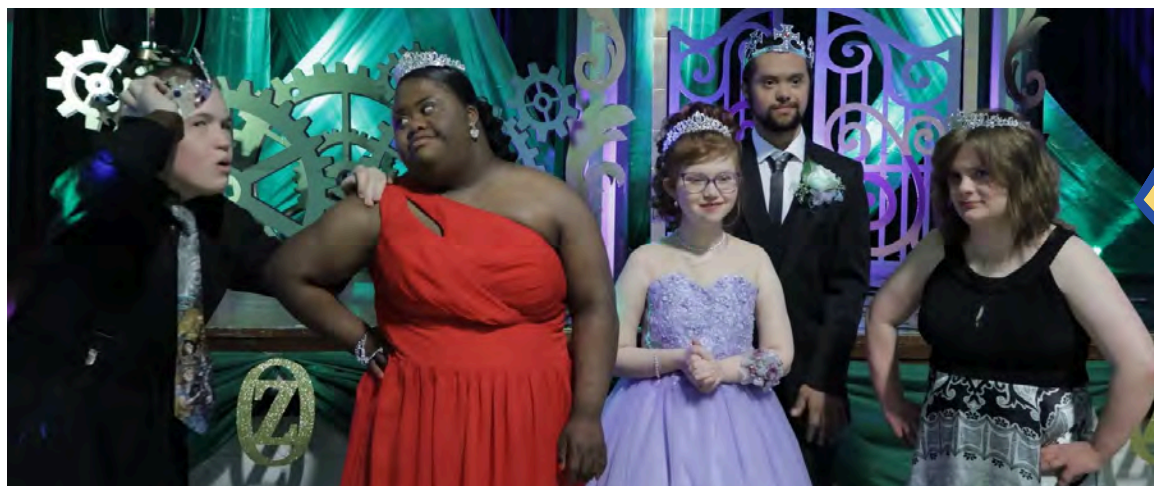
Students at Murray Ridge School followed the yellow brick road to an enchanting evening inspired by The Emerald City at its annual prom on May 2.

With twinkling lights, emerald green decor, and whimsical touches straight from the Land of Oz, the event transported more than 200 attendees to a world of magic and celebration.

From ruby slippers to Tin Man top hats, students dressed to impress and danced the night away, creating unforgettable memories!

Included in the festivities was the celebration of MRS' five (5) graduating seniors (pictured below, l-r) Jansen Plumb, Ja'Laysia Brown, Evey Rodgers, Patrick Boey, and Jenny Sislowski, all crowned King or Queen!

Thank you to all who helped make this another incredible evening for MRS students! See more pictures and videos on Facebook at facebook.com/MurrayRidgeSchool!



Pictured above (l-r): Jansen Plumb and his dad; Christopher (CJ) Ackley; Brady Johnson and his date; Marvelous Seymore and MRS teacher Eva Rozewicz-Blaz.



Pictured above (l-r): Ja'Laysia Brown; Diane Davis; TJ Nagy and Raelyn Ensign; MRS Supervisor Stacie Starr and Director of Education Dann Swift.

A Shout-Out to Those Who Made the MRS Prom Possible!

A HUGE thank you to the talented artists who helped make the MRS prom truly magical: Cynthia Greene (the magical Oz); Glen Mittler (Dorothy's house) Ryanne Gelp (the witch's crystal ball pedestal); and Barb Reynolds (the apple tree). Your hard work and talent brought our vision to life!

A special thank you to Jerome Howard and the American Legion Post 118 - Amherst who donated \$6,000 towards this year's prom.

We couldn't have done it without all of you!



Pictured above (l-r): Glen Mittler; Barb Reynolds; Ryanne Gelp; Jerome Howard and other members from American Legion Post 118 - Amherst present MRS Director of Education Dann Swift with a donation check.

MRC Served Up Fun and Skills at Oberlin College Volleyball Event

On April 12th, the Oberlin College Women's Volleyball Team hosted its annual volleyball event, welcoming athletes from Lorain, Medina, and Geauga counties for a day full of energy, teamwork, and fun.

Participants rotated through a variety of skills stations led by the College's student athletes, who shared their expertise and enthusiasm. After sharpening their techniques, teams hit the court to play friendly games against one another.

The day wrapped up on a high note with a pizza party, generously provided by the Oberlin College Women's Volleyball Team—a perfect ending to a day of learning, competition, and community spirit!



Pictured, front row (l-r): Coach Sarrah Zeiter, Julianna Mason, Zuleka Perez, Brenden Stull, Cathy Pence, and Joe Bellottie. Pictured, back row (l-r): Coach Leroy Keen, Dorian Chaffin, Jeffrey Torres, Andrew Westover, Shari Reitenbach, Noah Griffiths, Tony Harris, Jr., and Robert Assanakis.

OOVC Volunteers Lend a Hand

On a warm, sunny day, Oberlin Opportunity & Vocational Center (OOVC) Adult Program participants came together to make a difference in the community!

The group spent the day cleaning up litter at the Underground Railroad Center

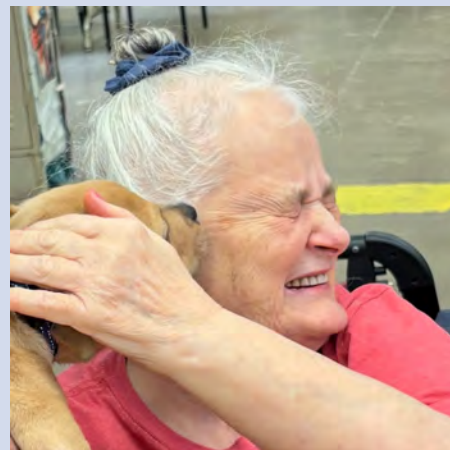
After their hard work, they headed to nearby Tappan Square to enjoy a well-earned packed lunch and relax in the sunshine. It was a day filled with teamwork, community pride, and a shared commitment to keeping local spaces clean and welcoming!

Pictured, top (l-r): Matthew Schoeverth, Cathy Pence, Sandra Kilgore, and Brenden Stull at the Underground Railroad Center. Pictured, bottom (l-r): Cathy, Brenden, and Matthew enjoy the sunshine!



Puppy Love

"Doc" Rick Broz, longtime Friendship Animal Protective League volunteer, brought a furry friend to visit at the LOVC in celebration of National Pet Day on April 11th! Adult Program participants loved receiving puppy kisses and getting in some good pets!



Brian Dexter (left) and Judy Hersha (right) get some puppy time!



Back to Nature!

On April 10, a group of Adult Program participants from the LOVC visited the Rocky River Nature Center. It was a fun opportunity to learn about Ohio wildlife and to relax and enjoy being outdoors!

Pictured (l-r): Eric Hodge, Jonah Griffiore, Joshua Haught, Anthony Tenorio, Melissa Glaze, Fred Biller, and Thomas Gehlmann.

The LOVC Takes on Self-Defense!

Adult Program participants from the LOVC visited Tracy's Karate Studio in Amherst, where Senior Instructor Michael Dancull (9th Degree Black Belt) taught practical self-defense techniques. Participants gained valuable skills, boosted their confidence, and had a great time learning together.

Pictured, top (l-r): Jonah Griffiore, Michael Hawley, Steven Gonzalez, Joshua Haught, Jessica Mager, Kim Nadolski, and Amanda Spreng. Pictured, bottom, Kim Nadolski receives a lesson in self-defense!



Meals on Wheels!

Every Thursday, LOVC volunteers deliver meals for the Amherst Office of Aging's Meals on Wheels program, giving back and connecting with local seniors. On May 8, the Office hosted a volunteer appreciation luncheon with food, games, and great company.

Pictured, (l-r): Aging Director Carrie Adams, Aging staff member Chris, Chelsie Jenkins, Fred Biller, Eric Hodge, D'Arionna Dowdell, Helena Hurt, Jessica Massey, Ken Nelson Abby Kisner, Aging staff member Cathy Bradac, and Hector Lozano (back).



Triumph Through The Challenges Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Who should attend?

This course series is for nurses, social workers, counselors, physicians, educators, parents, and caregivers who work with individuals that may have had prenatal exposure to alcohol/drugs.

Virtual Zoom Meeting!

2025 Virtual Summer Series

Evening Sessions:

June 10, 2025: Section 1, 5-7:30 p.m.

June 12, 2025: Section 2, 5-7:30 p.m.

June 17, 2025: Section 3, 5-7:30 p.m.

June 18, 2025: Section 4, 5-7:30 p.m.

No fee to attend.

Registration Information:

Contact : Kathy Bevaque, M.Ed., D.S. w/LCBDD
Agency mobile # (440) 731-0358
e-mail: kbevaque@murrayridgecenter.org

Facilitators:

Kathleen Bevaque, M.Ed., D.S. w/LCBDD
Angelique Yost, parent/former foster parent



Learn about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and how to best work with those affected in order to help them to reach their fullest potentials.

Gather useful tips and local resources!

Discover ways to succeed!

Series Details

- **Section 1:** FASD Basic Facts; Characteristics; Chronological vs. Developmental Age
- **Section 2:** Neurological Issues & Behaviors of FASD; Coping Skills
- **Section 3:** Developing Effective Strategies for FASD; Advocacy & Finding Resources
- **Section 4:** Advocacy in Schools; Behavioral Strategy; Daily Living & Future Planning for Individuals with FASD



**Mental Health,
Addiction & Recovery
Services Board of
Lorain County**

Contact Hours Available

- 10 Continuing Education Units (CEU's) for Social Workers and Counselors provided by the Mental Health, Addiction and Recovery Services Board of Lorain County #RCS012403.
- Developmental Disability hours provided by Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities, now including EI, Investigative Agent and Superintendent. SSA employees in Lorain County only.
- Certificate of Attendance for contact hours

Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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Boardroom Briefing

The Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities convened at 6:30 p.m. on April 14, 2025.

Superintendent Fisher explained anticipated revenues and variable expenses of the agency's school year 2024/2025 Preschool Program, and gave a historical overview of subsidies and charges for Murray Ridge Preschool Program participants with special needs; the Board established rate structures for parents of typically developing children and school districts that place students in the Murray Ridge Preschool Program for the 2025/2026 school year. Agency calendars were approved for July 01, 2025 – June 30, 2026; these are posted on the Agency website.