

MURRAY RIDGE COURIER



Murray Ridge representatives receive toy donation from **Andrew Alvarez (of Storage Legends)** in the Murray Ridge School lobby. See 'sister picture' on last page for listing of individuals pictured.

The 'season of giving' continued into the new year at Murray Ridge Center, as popular You-Tuber and 'Friend of Murray Ridge' Andrew Alvarez donated more than 150 brand new toys for children of all ages. Murray Ridge plans to put these gifts to good use through our Early Intervention (EI) Program for children ages 0-3, Murray Ridge School, Service and Support Administration, and our Family Support Program.

Within our Children's Service Department, we will use the toys for two different purposes. First, we are excited that we will be able to place some of the toys in our Early Intervention Lending Library. This lending library provides no-cost, short term loans of therapy equipment and adaptive toys to families of the infants and toddlers in our EI Program (which in 2025 served 955 local children with developmental delays); this 'library' is important because it enables families of eligible kids to try out development-supporting items before purchasing similar items, and to borrow items that may be needed for only a short time. Additionally, the Murray Ridge Developmental Specialists (whose job it is to work together with families of those in our EI Program to help their children reach developmental milestones) and Murray Ridge School staff will be able to provide age-appropriate toys for families in need to give to their eligible children who become seriously ill, or for a special event (such as a birthday).

Likewise, our Service and Support Administrators (who did service/support planning, linkage and monitoring for 2,245 eligible individuals in 2025) and the Coordinator of our Family Support Program (which in 2025 supported families of 717 eligible children and adults who live in the family home) will be able to access age-appropriate items from the donated supply, to be given to program participants, as needed.

HATS OFF TO ANDREW ALVAREZ FOR HIS INCREDIBLY THOUGHTFUL AND GENEROUS DONATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF LORAIN COUNTY CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES!

Spreading Holiday Cheer



Caroling!



Adult Program participants from the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) brought holiday joy to Lake Pointe Health Center with festive Christmas caroling.

Pictured, left back row (l-r): Michael Telloni, Dennis Johnson, Thomas Wohlever, Alicia Lawrence, Haley Philman; front row (l-r): Emilie Grosel, Annie Cirilo, Gabriel Maldonado, Jeffrey Ringlein (in wheelchair), Penni Shuster (staff) and Dennis Bills seated at table with resident and staff at Lake Pointe.

Nails!



A fabulous group of ladies from the LOVC got glammed up for the holidays with dazzling manicures at Mild2Wild Nail Salon. The morning was full of sparkle, laughter, and a little well-deserved pampering!



Pictured, above (l-r): Abby Kisner and Julie Knight show off their festive manicures!

Shopping!



Our Adult Program participants from LOVC enjoyed a festive day Christmas shopping at nearby malls, soaking in the joy, excitement, and warmth of the holiday season!



Pictured, above (l-r): Julian Mingus, Hector Ortiz, Robert Serrano, James Wilson, Juliaunna Mason, and Ashley Tarrant.



Celebrating National Bubble Bath Day

National Bubble Bath Day is celebrated each year on January 8th and serves as a perfect reminder to slow down, relax, and enjoy a little self-care.

At the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC), Adult Program participants marked the day with a fun and creative activity.

With guidance from Adult Program Instructor Sarrah Pierce, they learned how to make their own soap using liquid dye and essential oils.

The hands-on experience encouraged relaxation, stress relief, and creativity – making it a meaningful and enjoyable way to celebrate the day!



Pictured, above left (l-r): Jalitza Rodriguez and Sarrah Pierce, (Adult Program Instructor); above right (l-r): Jalitza Rodriguez and Krystal Genoff.

Ring in the New Year – LOVC Style!

The LOVC kicked off 2026 in style on January 5th with festive hats, noise makers, and lots of laughter. Our Adult Program participants had a blast celebrating together and welcoming the New Year with smiles and excitement.

We're so grateful for this amazing community and thrilled to begin another year of connection, fun, and shared moments together!



Top, left (l-r): Dennis Johnson, Helena Hurt, Justin Tucker; top, right: Michael Hawley. Bottom, left (l-r): Fred Biller and Julian Mingus; bottom, middle: Jean Morosky and Amanda Spreng; bottom, right: Steven Lender.

Special Visitor Alert!



The Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) had a very special guest today – Sparky, D'Ronda Fleming's service dog! His friendly personality and happy spirit brought smiles to everyone and filled the center with joy. Thank you, Sparky, for making our day extra special!

Pictured left: Sparky and Nick Perez; right (l-r): Julian Mingus, Joseph Linden, and Sparky.



Winter Fun at Majestic Meadows!

Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC) Adult Program participants enjoyed a visit to Majestic Meadows in Medina, filled with cuddles from friendly animals and some seasonal winter fun!

Pictured top left: Alex Shearer and bottom left: Harold Kiilpatrick

Spreading Joy at the Friendship APL

LOVC Adult Program participants enjoyed a day of pet therapy and volunteering at the Friendship APL, sharing smiles, love, and a little extra kindness with furry friends!

Pictured left: Devin Bryner and right: Billy Prahst





Weather-Related Announcements Reminder

Murray Ridge program closing information will be available on TV station Fox 8, on the Fox 8 website (fox8.com), and on radio stations WOBL 1320 AM and WDLW 1380 AM, as it has been in the past.

There will be two separate listings for Murray Ridge Center:

- Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers
- Murray Ridge School

Fox 8 displays information on the status of our School and Adult Activities Centers as described below:

- On fox8.com, the information is listed under the "Closings" tab. These listings are in alphabetical order by the name of the facility, and both facilities appear sequentially in the "M" section as "Murray Ridge School" and "Murray Ridge Adult Activities Centers."
- On TV station Fox 8, information about the status of our School and Adult Activities Centers scrolls from left to right in the Closings information at the very bottom of the television screen. These listings are in alphabetical order by the name of the facility, and both facilities appear sequentially in the "M" section as "Murray Ridge School" and "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers."

NOTE: It appears that Fox 8 no longer has a mechanism for signing up for text alerts on Murray Ridge School/Murray Ridge Adult Activities Centers. If you have signed up for text alerts in the past, we cannot advise you to rely on text alerts this season; please instead access the 'Closings' tab on the Fox 8 website (or one of the radio/television options described above).

Parents and caregivers of school students should disregard the "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers" listing, and follow only the listing for "Murray Ridge School."

Adult consumers who attend our Opportunity and Vocational Centers and their parents/caregivers should disregard the "Murray Ridge School" listing, and follow only the listing for "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers." If "Open - No Transportation" follows the announcement for "Murray Ridge—Adult Activities Centers," parents/caregivers are welcome to transport adult consumers to their day service sites. Regular programming will be provided. Consumers should be dropped off no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and must be picked up by 3:45 p.m.

In the event of bad weather, the decision to transport individuals to Murray Ridge Center will be based on the ability of our buses to travel safely on city and county roads. Regardless of whether or not transportation is available through Murray Ridge Center, if our Opportunity and Vocational Centers are open, but there is an individual concern about the weather, adult consumers should feel free to stay home. Likewise, parents/caregivers of Murray Ridge School students who have individual concerns regarding the weather should feel free to keep their children at home, even if school is in session.

Please be aware that transportation to enclave sites is generally available even if transportation to the Opportunity and Vocational Centers is cancelled. Murray Ridge Center does not broadcast the status of enclave transportation on the television or radio. Consumers should assume that enclave transportation will be available unless they receive a phone call from a member of our Supported Employment Department.

First Student bus company can be reached at 440-288-2222.



Rooted in Family, Driven by Heart!

Alpha Care is more than a service provider – it's a family-owned organization built on compassion, commitment, and care.

Founded in 2008, Alpha Care began with a personal mission after CEO Todd Roby experienced the challenges of finding high-quality Adult Day Care for his mother following a fall and brain injury. That experience shaped the family-first approach that continues today.

As a family-run organization, Alpha Care treats every individual with the same care they would their own. In fact, the very first individual served in 2008 still attends Alpha Care today – an example of the lasting relationships and trust built over nearly two decades.



Pictured (l-r): Margarita Beltran (staff), Angel L. (Direct Support Professional), and Raynell Teague.

The Alpha Care team is guided by the Golden Rule, "Treat others the way you want to be treated," reflecting the organization's commitment to kindness.

What's New at Alpha Care

Alpha Care provides Vocational Habilitation and Adult Day Services for individuals with developmental disabilities, offering structured, paid work opportunities that build responsibility, job skills, and social confidence.

Recent enhancements include the Sandwich Shack with free daily lunches, a Sensory Room for relaxation, Small-Group Clubs for personalized community integration, and Daily Transportation to ensure reliable access.

Community & Connection

Participants enjoy a full calendar of activities, including community outings, volunteer opportunities, exercise classes, money math lessons, and cooking activities, along with favorite trips to the petting zoo, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, and Jamie's Flea Market.



Pictured (l-r): Ralph Brown, Michelle Danielek, Lizbet Negrón, Juliette Casey, Stephanie Budweg, and Paul Kropp.

Stay Connected

Scan the QR code to follow Alpha Care on Facebook and read about the programs and moments that make the Alpha Care community special.





Fun at the Lanes – Adult Program participant Kim McDonald from the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center enjoying an afternoon of bowling, laughter, and fun at Rebman Recreation Center.



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 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.

Boardroom Briefing

The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 6:30 p.m. on January 26, 2026. At its annual Organizational Meeting, held immediately prior to the regular meeting of the Board and Ethics Council, Board President Bev Gedid announced the appointment of Robert Gajdos to the Board by Lorain County Probate Judge James T. Walther, and the appointments of Rebecca Cornman and Ryan Egbertson by the Lorain County Board of Commissioners; these appointments are for the term January 26, 2026 to January 25, 2030. President Gedid made committee appointments, and the Board established meeting dates for the remainder of 2026 before adjourning the Organizational Meeting. At its regular meeting, the Board unanimously approved a resolution to provide educational services to children ages 6-21 in the 2026/2027 school year. Director of Educational Services Dann Swift discussed the design of a summer camp for Murray Ridge School students in 2026. Superintendent Fisher and board members discussed site visits for the year.

Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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Photo of the Month: Front row (l-r): Nana Legends, Andrew's Grandma; President of Murray Ridge Student Council Ja'quan Warren; Andrew Alvarez, Toy Donor; Classroom Supervisor Stacie Starr; Early Intervention Supervisor Heather Knoble; Classroom Supervisor Bre Hedges; Superintendent Amber Fisher. Back row (l-r): Director of Children's Services Dann Swift; Director of Service & Support Administration Heather Gurchik; Tim Legends, employee of Andrew's YouTube program Storage Legends.

CONTACT US



440-329-3734



[Facebook](#)



www.murrayridgecenter.org



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