

MURRAY RIDGE COURIER



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

Murray Ridge Center: Making a Difference, Every Day

The Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities, more commonly known as Murray Ridge Center, provides and/or funds essential services for more than 3,000 children and adults.

We start with the provision of Early Intervention to local infants and toddlers with developmental delays, by each year assisting families of hundreds of these children, ages 0-3, to maximize their learning and progress during the most critical stage of development. Research shows that this intervention yields dividends throughout the lifetime of service recipients, multiplying also the return on investment of those who fund the service.

Continuing through the lifespan, we provide Murray Ridge School, Adult Day Support, Vocational Services, Residential Care, Special Olympics, and a Family Support Program. We also provide Service and Support Administration for thousands of eligible individuals, emergency intervention, and protection of eligible individuals from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Through its programs and services, Murray Ridge helps build a stronger, more compassionate community - one where everyone has the opportunity to contribute and to belong.

Murray Ridge Center. Helping People...For a Lifetime.



Out in the Community!



LUNCH OUT

Connie Rogers (above), from the Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC), enjoyed lunch at Smitty's; she is pictured here with her server.



STRIKE!

OOVC Adult Program participant Michael Jarrett (getting a hand from staff member William Taylor) at Lake Erie Lanes!



Staying Active

Johna Mendosa (left) and Judy Armstrong (right) from the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) participated in a Chair Aerobics class hosted by the Amherst Office on Aging – a fun and engaging session filled with movement, stretching, and relaxation.

Facts About Issue 11

Issue 11 will appear on the May 5th ballot. The issue is for a 0.85 mills levy for Murray Ridge that, if passed, will cost the owner of a \$100,000 home \$30 per year (8 cents a day). If passed, Issue 11 is expected to provide the minimum amount of funding needed to preserve the existing services provided and/or funded by Murray Ridge, and to address emergencies affecting eligible individuals (such as loss of aged family caregivers). Without the funding, Murray Ridge School will not operate after the 2026/2027 School Year, and across-the-board cuts to the other programs of Murray Ridge will be necessary; particularly vulnerable are programs that are funded almost entirely with local levy dollars, like Early Intervention. Murray Ridge has not requested an increase in taxpayer support for 13 years, despite significant inflation during that time period. The amount paid by local taxpayers has not changed since 2014, despite increases in property values, because Murray Ridge does not receive inside millage.



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(440)329-3734 • murrayridgecenter.org



April is...

NATIONAL AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH



Did you know that 1 in 31 children in the United States has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

Murray Ridge Center serves more than 3000 people each year, including children and adults with ASD, through the following services:

- Early Intervention
- Murray Ridge School
- Adult Day Services
- Vocational Assistance
- Residential Supports
- Special Olympics
- Family Support
- Service and Support Administration
- Emergency Intervention



Murray Ridge School Students Bring Dinosaurs to Life Through Hands-On Research Project



Pictured above, left: Mathew McKinney; and right, Amy Muriello (teacher), Jayden Steible, Micah Samms, Bentley Spooner, Jonas Bennett, Charlotte Bush, Shelly Marrero (personal aide), Anellys Ortiz Lebron, and Brooke Dales (school aide)

Middle School students at Murray Ridge School recently completed a hands-on Dinosaur Research Project that reflects the school's distinctive approach to special education. Murray Ridge School is adept in integrating academic standards, therapeutic services, and functional skill development into unified, meaningful learning experiences tailored to each student's abilities.

Guided by dedicated teachers and classroom aides, Middle School classrooms collaborated to research a selected dinosaur, exploring habitat, diet, and physical features. Students were assisted to organize their findings into reports, use communication devices to share information, and create detailed dioramas and models—activities designed not only to teach science content but also to strengthen fine-motor, communication, and problem-solving skills.

A hallmark of Murray Ridge's specialized programming is the seamless involvement of therapeutic staff. Occupational Therapists supported students with writing, cutting, gluing, and other motor tasks essential to building their models. Speech-Language Pathologists helped students prepare and deliver their presentations, ensuring every learner could participate meaningfully using their individual communication methods. A retired Elyria Schools Art Teacher provided additional creative expertise.

The project culminated in student presentations to peers and staff, giving learners the opportunity to practice expressive language and confidence-building skills in a supportive environment. This exemplifies the unique, collaborative, and highly individualized special education model at Murray Ridge School—one that empowers students with significant disabilities to engage deeply with academic content through hands-on, therapeutic learning experiences.

Murray Ridge Celebrates Special Olympics Athletes



On April 6, Murray Ridge Center proudly hosted its annual Special Olympics banquet at Lorain County Community College, bringing together athletes, families, friends, and supporters to celebrate a year of outstanding accomplishments. More than 60 athletes attended the event, accompanied by loved ones, and enjoyed a shared meal along with a presentation highlighting the dedication, perseverance, and sportsmanship shown throughout the past year.

The evening included several meaningful moments of recognition. A special tribute was made in honor of the late Daniel Montgomery, whose family was recognized for his induction into the Special Olympics Hall of Fame in July 2025. This heartfelt acknowledgment served as a reminder of Daniel’s lasting impact and the inspiration he continues to provide within the Murray Ridge community.

Another highlight of the banquet was the celebration of the Scarlet Basketball Team, which earned recognition after winning the State Championship at the Special Olympics Winter Games in Columbus this past February.

The banquet was a joyful evening that honored not only athletic success, but also the strong sense of community that defines Murray Ridge’s Special Olympics program.



Pictured top to bottom: Kenny Martin, Donna Wolfe, Sani Smith, Kim Herman

Pictured above members of the Scarlet Basketball team (l-r): Volunteer Coach Scott Gezzer, Assistant Coach Tyler Robinson, Rob Messenger, Logan Yatson, Ryan Brown, Ajonie’ Glinsey, Jonathan Torres, Ryan Eliason, Jericho Bailey and Head Coach Russell Moye

Murray Ridge Program Participants Give Back

On March 10, a dedicated group of Adult Program participants from the Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC) spent time giving back at Safe Harbor through a meaningful and creative project. Volunteers (pictured, left, l-r) Cathy Pence, Brenden Stull, and Justin Mitchell worked together to contribute artwork for the organization's Paper Quilt.



Their efforts not only supported Safe Harbor's initiative but also highlighted the power of creativity and teamwork in making a positive impact. We're grateful for their time, talents, and willingness to give back to the community.

EGG-CELLENT TEAMWORK



John Hall (left) and Elise Moore (right) from OOVC teamed up to lend a creative hand to Elyria Parks and Recreation by working together on Easter eggs. Their collaboration was a wonderful example of teamwork in action, showcasing the spirit and dedication of these two incredible individuals.

DONATIONS FOR APL

Jesse Frisch is Murray Ridge Center's very own leprechaun! Jesse spent St. Patrick's Day spreading joy while collecting \$262 in donations for the Friendship APL, helping animals in need. Every donation collected was a small act of love that made a big difference.



Jesse Frisch (left) with a staff member of Friendship APL and 'Lucky' the cat.

Garden

GROWING SOMETHING SPECIAL!

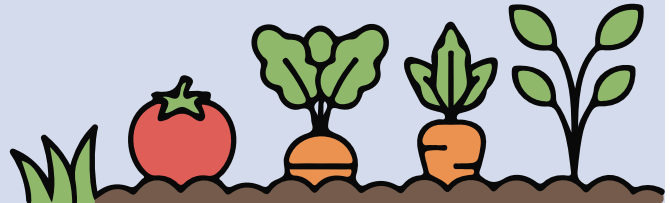
Exciting things are taking root at Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) with the launch of its new Garden Club! Interested Adult Program participants will be meeting weekly to help grow and care for a shared garden space.

At last week's kickoff meeting, the first seeds were planted – marking the beginning of what's sure to be a rewarding journey. Participants got their hands in the soil as they planted colorful flowers like zinnias, sunflowers, and marigolds, along with vegetables including tomatoes and cucumbers.

Moving forward, Adult Program participants will take the lead in caring for the garden as it grows, building responsibility and teamwork along the way. We can't wait to watch their hard work blossom and see the garden come to life throughout the spring and summer!



Members of the Garden Club pictured above, l-r: Emilie Grosel, Max Diedrick (staff), and Austin Carpenter get their plants ready to go!



Pictured above, l-r: Vencient (VJ) Mills, Emilie Grosel, Max Diedrick (staff), Barbara Conrad (staff) and Austin Carpenter.

A BEAUTIFUL TRANSFORMATION: LOVC BUTTERFLY PROJECT



Pictured above, Emilie Grosel examines a butterfly.

LOVC staff member Sarrah Pierce (pictured, right) worked with Adult Program participants to raise butterflies from caterpillars, caring for them with food, water, and a safe habitat. It was smiles all around when the butterflies emerged and took their first flights. Some even paused on the hands of Adult Program participants making the moment extra special!



Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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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.