

JULY 2026

MURRAY RIDGE COURIER



LOVC Celebrates world ENVIRONMENT DAY



In honor of World Environment Day on June 5, Adult Program participants from the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) rolled up their sleeves to help clean up the grounds around the LOVC building. Their hard work showed that when everyone pitches in, even small acts can have a big impact on keeping our community clean and beautiful. Way to go, LOVC!



Pictured (l-r): The MRC clean-up crew of Michael Telloni, Kenny Martin, Justin Tucker, Dennis Johnson, Austin Carpenter, Hector Ortiz, Kara Zudell (seated, front), Nicolas Perez, Kenneth Nelson, and VJ Mills.



Crushers Give MRHC A Home Run Evening!



On July 9, nearly 200 Murray Ridge Housing Corporation (MRHC) tenants, provider staff, MRHC Board Members, and Murray Ridge Center staff came together at ForeFront Field in Avon for a night of baseball, community, and fun.

Our own Sarah Ward threw out the first pitch, while bright tie-dyed event shirts and everyone's favorite stadium hot dogs helped make it a perfect night at the ballpark.

The night ended on a high note as the Lake Erie Crushers rallied to a 5-4 victory over the Sussex County Miners, giving everyone one more reason to cheer!

Thank you to our sponsors who helped make another memorable year possible: Midwest Siding, Jamie's Carpet Shop, Schlather Insurance, Good Neighbor Thrift Shop with Avon Lake United Church of Christ, Eco Tree Services, Restorz/Dane Construction, Coates Brothers Roofing, White Pines Wealth Management, All Weather Heating and Cooling and Defender Auto Glass.



Pictured top, left: Sarah Ward proudly displays her first pitch ball signed by the Crusher's catcher (also shown throwing, top right). Pictured middle, right (l-r): Nicholas Hoffman, Craig Friedel, Paul Salva Jr, Nick Feher, Tracey Surace, Jeffrey Boop, and Brittany Pratt (Triad staff). Pictured bottom, right (l-r, front row): Jerry Vessalo (MRHC Board President), Lynne Barth (MRHC Board Member), Nancy Hollins (MRHC Liaison), Joan Hoover (MRHC Bookkeeper), Lindsey Smith (MRC staff), Charles Johnson Jr., Jennifer Ryan (MRHC Program Assistant), Amber Fisher (MRC Superintendent); (back row, l-r): Chuck Heisler (MRHC Maintenance Technician), Dave Biggs (MRC staff), Tim McLaughlin (MRHC Vice President), Ken Oswald (MRHC Treasurer).

Mental Health Awareness Draws Strong Attendance

On an ongoing basis, the Murray Ridge Service and Support Administration Department arranges 'self-advocacy' activities for local adults with developmental disabilities. Self-advocacy activities are designed, in part, to help people understand their strengths and limitations, and the support they need.

On June 5, 70 Murray Ridge-eligible adults attended an engaging Mental Health Awareness event led by Shannon Perry from Riveon Mental Health and Recovery. Participants explored healthy coping strategies, recognizing emotions, supporting others, and how to access the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Upcoming self-advocacy activities include:

- August 24: Banking & Finance
- October 9: Healthy Boundaries

Space is limited, and RSVP is required. To register, contact Provider Support at 440-324-2366 or providersupport@murrayridgecenter.org.

These activities are made possible through The Myrtle's Endowment Fund of the Community Foundation of Lorain County!



Pictured above (l-r): Quincy Boulton, Steven Gonzales, Julianna Mason, Michelle Woodham (MRC staff), Ivaliss Ortiz, Diana Clement, and seated is Hector Ortiz and Kim Phillips (MRC staff).

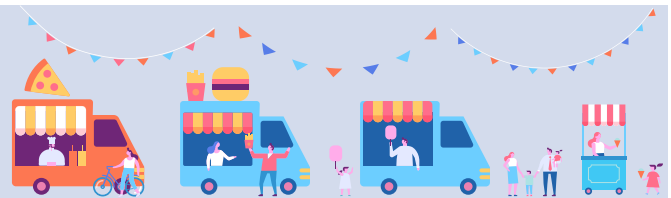


Food Truck Fun Rolls into LOVC!

Lunch came with a side of excitement when Frankie B's Food Truck pulled into the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC)! Participants enjoyed ordering their favorite menu items, and judging by the smiles (and empty plates), the visit was a delicious success.

The day was even more special because Frankie B's owner, Frank Butcher, is the brother of our very own Dennis Johnson (pictured, right), making the visit extra memorable for everyone.

A big thank you to Frankie B's Food Truck for the fantastic food, friendly service, and a fun lunchtime experience that everyone enjoyed!





Kenneth Martin learned how to be a fisherman!



Brian Dexter visited the Butterfly House at Miller Nature Preserve in Avon!



Shawn McCaffery and Andrea Stewart in line for a sweet treat.



Taylor Tanner and Kevin Plata geared up to board a paddleboat!

Let's go outside



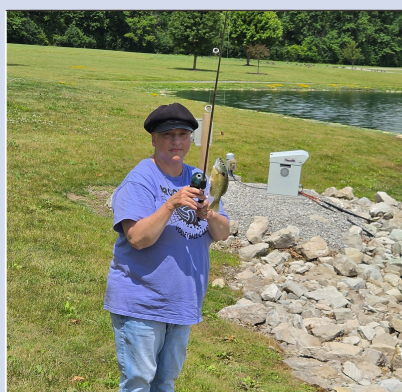
Michael Telloni, Joseph Linden, and Justin Tucker cruised at the car show!



Charles Keller learned the basics of casting and reeling!



Tyler Watkins and Sarah Bremke enjoyed a picnic at the beach!



Annie Cirilo learned how to fish in New Russia Township!

Making Waves at the Cleveland Aquarium!

A group of Adult Program participants from the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) recently dove into an unforgettable adventure at the Greater Cleveland Aquarium! The highlight of the day was walking through the incredible Sea Tube, where sharks, stingrays, and colorful sea life swam overhead and all around them.



Pictured left: Abby Kisner; right (l-r): Abby Kisner, Joseph Linden, Jessica Massey, Hector Lozano, D'Ronda Fleming.



A Sweet Way to Celebrate National Donut Day!

National Donut Day called for a special treat! On Friday, June 5, Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC) Adult Program participants Gus McKee and Jackie Allen (pictured, right, l-r), and staff member Ken Lewis stopped by the Expresso Bakery to pick up fresh donuts. It was the perfect way to celebrate – and a sweet ending to a great day!

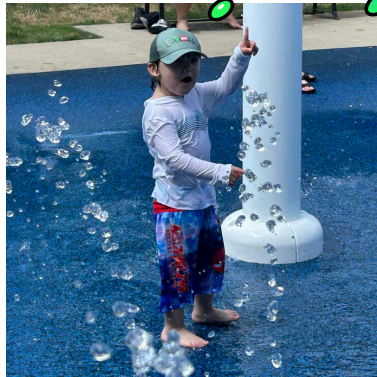


El Makes a **SPLASH!**

Murray Ridge Center's Early Intervention (EI) team and the children and families we serve cooled off with an afternoon of summer fun on July 8 at the Amherst HealthPlex Splash Pad!

The day was filled with laughter and opportunities for children to build confidence, explore their surroundings, and learn through play – all while staying cool!

A big thank you to all the EI families who joined us and helped make the day so memorable. We can't wait for more opportunities to learn, play, and grow together!



Pictured (top, left): Emilio Onate finding a way to beat the heat; (bottom, left): Joseph D'Alessandro; (right): Elizabeth Cremeans.

A Wild Day of Discovery!

Adult Program participants from the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) recently enjoyed an unforgettable trip to the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center in Bay Village!

The group got up close with local wildlife, learned fascinating facts about native animals, and took an incredible journey through the stars during a visit to the planetarium.

The adventure was topped off with a relaxing picnic lunch at the park, making it a perfect summer day of learning, exploration, and fun!

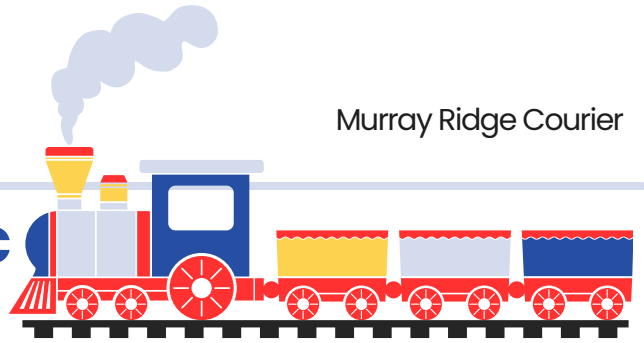


Pictured top: Justin Tucker checks his wing span; bottom (l-r): Justin Tucker, Quincy Boulton, Ken Nelson, Jalitza Rodriguez, and Tim Young enjoy lunch.



Lake Erie Nature & Science Center

All Aboard for a Historic Train Adventure!



Train lovers from the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) recently gathered in Lorain for an unforgettable experience – the arrival of the legendary Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014, the world's largest operating steam locomotive!

Originally built in the 1940s, Big Boy No. 4014 is one of the largest and most powerful steam locomotives ever constructed. Watching this iconic piece of railroad history roll through Lorain on its cross-country tour was an exciting moment, and Murray Ridge Center Adult Program participants were thrilled to see the massive engine up close.



Pictured left (l-r): Thomas Wohlever, John Armstrong, Michael Elliot, and Rovinson Villafane get up close to Big Boy!

Beating the Heat!

When the summer heat turned up, so did the creativity at Murray Ridge Center! On July 1, a group of Adult Program participants from the Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC) opted for a cool day at Great Northern Mall. The group enjoyed lunch in the food court, explored their favorite stores, and, of course, made a must-stop visit to Sweets & Geeks. Sometimes the best adventures are the ones you don't plan!



Pictured top, right: Destiny Kuttler; middle: Patrick Boey; and bottom, right (l-r): Amber Cummings and Cassie Kilgore.

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.