

MURRAY RIDGE COURIER



MRC Gives Back to Lorain County Students



Adult Program participants from the Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC) are making a difference in the community – one notebook, pencil, and box of crayons at a time!

The OOVC supported this year's United Way school supply drive, collecting much-needed supplies for Lorain County students heading back to school. The donations help ensure students have the tools they need to walk into the classroom prepared.

This effort was an opportunity for Murray Ridge Center (MRC) to support our neighbors and experience firsthand how even a simple act of generosity can make a meaningful difference. Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped make the drive a success and to our OOVC Adult Program participants for showing what it means to care for others in our community.



Pictured (left): Jesse Frisch and Gus McKee (right) drop off collected school supplies.



Double the Generosity, Double the Impact!



Murray Ridge Center recently received an incredible show of support from two longtime community partners!

Westfield Insurance generously donated \$7,500 to Murray Ridge – and then longtime broker, supporter, and friend Dave Schlather of Schlather Insurance stepped up to match the gift – for a combined total of \$15,000 to support Murray Ridge and the people we serve!



Pictured (l-r) Stacey Bruce (Westfield), Jen Ryan (MRC program assistant) Amber Fisher (MRC Superintendent), and Dave Schlather, Schlather Insurance.

We are incredibly grateful to Westfield Insurance and Mr. Schlather for their generosity and support of our mission. It's a wonderful reminder of what's possible when community partners come together to make a difference.

Remembering Yokita "Kita" Thomas

For 33 years, Yokita "Kita" Thomas brought compassion, dedication, and laughter to Murray Ridge Center (MRC). After her passing on July 23, many members of the 'Murray Ridge family' have been fondly remembering a devoted employee, caregiver, and friend, whose enormous heart touched countless lives. As an Adult Program Instructor, Kita had a special ability to connect with MRC Adult Program participants, often going above and beyond and giving her own time to help individuals with limited resources or support.

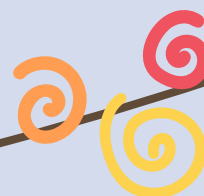
Kita brought an infectious smile and wonderful sense of humor to work. In addition, Kita brought dedication and a genuine commitment to the people we serve. She took great pride in working with local employers to ensure their needs were met, while also making sure Supported Employment Program participants received the training, encouragement, and support they needed to do their very best to succeed.

Kita will be remembered for her generosity, compassion, and love for Murray Ridge. Her presence will be deeply missed, but the difference she made will continue to be felt by those fortunate enough to have known her.





Making the Most of SUMMER



Christina Siwinski at Sundae's In The Park.



Girls Day Out (l-r): Beckysue Burianek, Ashley Tarrant, Kim Nadolski, Juliaanna Mason, Chelsie Jenkins.



Bud Opel tie dyeing his OOVV summer picnic t-shirt.



Harold Kilpatrick at Sweeties putt-putt course



Clayton Rhodehamel at Ely Square Music in the Park



MRS Girl Scouts at the Crushers game (l-r) Megan Martin (teacher), Lana Ayala, Julie Kraker (teacher), Jordan Oray, Stomper, Jazlynn Smith, and Jayden Steible.

Pictured (left photo strip, top - bottom): Joanne Gall and Cassie Kilgore play putt-putt at Sundae's In The Park; Matt Caldwell tie-dyeing his shirt for the OOVV summer picnic; Jackie Allen enjoying lunch and BINGO at the North Ridgeville Seniors Center. Pictured, right photo strip (top-bottom): Tim Quisenberry (photo #1), and Tom Fagan and Jeremy Risner (photo #2) volunteering at LaGrange Methodist making bags for its cancer center; Amber Cummings, Cassie Kilgore and Maria Pincura celebrate Cassie's birthday at Olive Garden!



Christmas Magic in July!

Who says you have to wait until December to celebrate Christmas?

The Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) brought a little holiday magic to the middle of summer with Christmas in July Spirit Week, July 20–24! The week was packed with festive fun, from dressing up as favorite holiday characters to singing Christmas carols and showing off our best moves at a holiday-themed dance.

A special thank-you goes to Barb Conrad, who joined in the festivities and accompanied our Christmas carol sing-along on the piano. Her music helped make the celebration extra merry! Christmas in July gave everyone a chance to laugh, have fun, and share a little holiday cheer – no snow required!

Pictured (l-r): Kenny Martin at the Christmas dance; Austin Carpenter as the Grinch; Elf on the Shelf Dennis Bills; Up on the House Top with Staff Katie Woods (LOVC staff); Christmas carolers Dennis Bills, Abby Kisner, Iveliss Ortiz, and Barb Conrad on piano.



Murray Ridge School receives IDEA Part B grant funds. If you would like to review, or provide suggestions concerning our use of these funds, please contact Director of Educational Services Dann Swift at 440-329-3760.

Music and Joy at the LOVC!

The Lorain Opportunity & Vocational Center (LOVC) recently welcomed young musicians from Oberlin-based Credo Music for a special classical music performance that brought plenty of smiles and something a little different to the day!

Thank you, Credo Music, for sharing your talents with us. We loved having you and hope you'll come back for an encore!

Pictured (top): musicians from Credo Music; bottom, left: Erin Fogarty enjoys the music; bottom, right (front row, l-r): Michael Hawley, Tre'Sean Fitch, Brione Monk, Judy Armstrong, Iveliss Ortiz, VJ Mills, Robert McFadden, Eric Hodge; (back row, l-r): Robinson Villafane and Marci Coen.





Taking Early Intervention Out Into the Community!



The Murray Ridge Center Early Intervention (EI) team took its work on the road on July 23, for a morning of community connections, family fun, and a little friendly competition!

Staff from MRC EI and Neighborhood Alliance split up across four regions, visiting parks, libraries, splash pads, a trampoline park, and the YMCA to connect with young children and their families.



Pictured left (front row, l-r): Kim Gabel, Heather Knoble, Kim Ohl, Megan Arnold, Melanie Liddy, (middle row, l-r) Lizamy Martinez, Kerrie Steidl, Elizabeth Vodraska, Sarah Bishop, Isaac Young, Kyra Smith, Angie Rogozinski, Bonnie Minnich, Lauryalis Diaz, (back row, l-r) Dena Pfenninger, Sudus Deif, Shawna Livingston, Sarah Kopp, Isabel Valega, Ashley O'Malley, Ashley Balasko, Jennifer Keller, Cindy Castora, Keri Goad, Amber Bowers; middle (l-r): Angie Rogozinski and Kim Ohl; right (l-r): Amber Bowers, Lauryalis Diaz, and Keri Goad.

Along the way, teams handed out more than 160 bags filled with information about child development and the EI program – plus plenty of kid-approved goodies, including balls, bubbles, chalk, and stuffed teddy bears!

EI staff also participated in a scavenger hunt that had them completing challenges throughout the community. Teams snapped photos on playground equipment and next to park signs, captured “EI in action,” participated in children’s activities, and, most importantly, shared resources with families. The afternoon ended with a cookout and potluck lunch.

Thank you to all who connected Lorain County families with resources to help young children learn, grow, and thrive!



Pictured (above, l-r): Dena Pfenninger, Keri Goad, Lauryalis Diaz, Amber Bowers. Pictured, below (l-r): Lizamy Martina Vega and Sarah Kopp.

Three Weeks, Three Adventures, One Unforgettable MRS Summer Camp!

Murray Ridge School Summer Camp packed three weeks with creativity, friendship, and plenty of fun!

Camp kicked off Week One with Castaway Christmas Camping, where campers practiced their kayaking skills, designed custom hats, decorated tents for Santa's arrival, crafted messages in bottles, raced in beach relays, hunted for ocean treasure, and danced the day away at a Christmas music party.

For Week Two, campers traveled back in time for medieval crime scene investigation (CSI)! Medieval detectives put their creativity and problem-solving skills to work by decorating castles, digging for clues in sensory bins, tackling sword challenges, launching catapults, hunting for dragons, and playing a royal round of medieval bingo.

The theme of the third and final week was Alien Zoo Circus! Campers created their own aliens and UFOs, made cosmic tie-dye masterpieces, played alien bingo, learned about zoo animals, piloted a spaceship simulator, and capped off the adventure with an epic circus parade of alien animals!

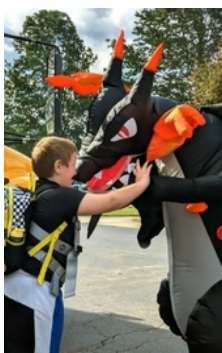
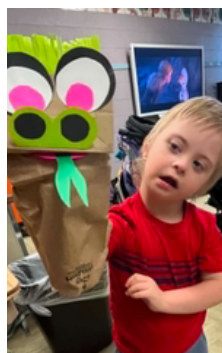
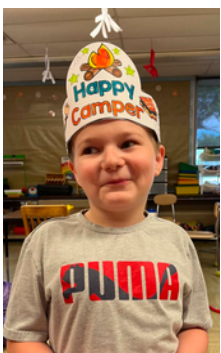


Pictured above (front row, l-r): Leroy Keen (school aide), Diane Davis, Brady Johnson, MacKenzie Dvorscak, Theresa Myers (school aide), Jayden Steible, Calvin Kaminski, (back row, l-r): Ryan Tornabene (speech-language pathologist), Nicholas Green, Jasmine Parker (personal aide), and Jamie Panek (personal aide).



Pictured above, our fantastic Camp Staff (front row, l-r): Stacey Zaborowski, Lilly Tapia, (middle row, l-r) Theresa Myers, Sheri Jones, Deanna Bennett, Kelly Jama, Anita Kruz, Hannah Haslage, Bri Krieg, Crystal McCartney, Brookelyn Kurta, Leroy Keen, Julie Maurer, and (back row, l-r): Glenn Mittler, Amy Muriello, Sharlene Wharton, Jasmine Parker, Jamie Panek, Ronnie Kisner, Michelle Kisner, Ryan Tornabene, Bob Bari.

Thank you to our amazing campers and everyone who helped make this summer camp season such a special one!



Above (l-r): Luca Dillon, Echo Reynolds; Nova Micco; Brayden Altobelli; Micah Samms; and Eli Seminatore with "Dragon" Ronnie Kisner (MRS classroom aide).



Scouting, S'mores, and New Friends!



The Murray Ridge School (MRS) Boy Scouts packed plenty of adventure into two fun-filled days at Firelands Scout Reservation Day Camp on July 11 and 12!



Each MRS scout was paired with a buddy from Troop 427 in Amherst, giving everyone a chance to meet someone new while tackling all kinds of camp adventures together.

By the end of camp, every scout headed home with prizes, great memories, and – best of all – some new friends!

A huge thank-you to Troop 427 and our generous camp sponsors for making this special experience possible. We're grateful for everyone who helped create two days filled with friendship, adventure, and fun for the MRS scouts!



Pictured left (top, l-r): Tyrese Whitfield and Brayden Altobelli hiking with a member of Troop 427. (middle, l-r): Zack Rader (former MRS student) with Troop Leader of 427; (bottom, l-r): Megan Martin (MRS teacher) swimming with Darnell Rivera. Pictured right (top, l-r): Marvelous Seymore swimming with member of Troop 427; (bottom, l-r) Kyle Offenberg fishing with member of Troop 427.



Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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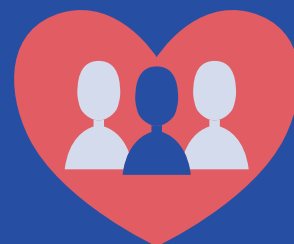


www.murrayridgecenter.org



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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.