NOVEMBER 2026

MURRAY RIDGE

COURIER

FALL

MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

2026 Murray Ridge Center In-Service: Celebrating Our People and Purpose

Murray Ridge Center employees came together on October 23 for the agency's annual In-Service Day at the Emerald Event Center in Avon.





The annual event provided an opportunity to celebrate staff dedication, recognize outstanding achievements and years of service, and reflect on the agency's work over the past year. The program included an annual address from Superintendent Dr. Amber Fisher (pictured, top right), employee awards and recognition, and a keynote presentation by motivational speaker Steve Gilliland (pictured, bottom right) titled *Enjoy the Ride: Developing a Positive, Purpose-Driven Approach to Personal and Professional Excellence*.

The 2026 In-Service was a reminder of the shared purpose that makes Murray Ridge Center a truly special place to work.







Celebrating 30 Years of Service!

Dr. Amber Fisher was proud to recognize the following employees who have dedicated 30 years to MRC! Their milestones reflect an extraordinary commitment to MRC's mission and the individuals and families we serve.

Pictured (l-r): Penni Shuster (center) with supervisor Judy Hartung; Bev Monteleone (center) with supervisor Heather Gurchik; and Diania Landin (right) with supervisor John Syrowski. Not pictured: 30-year award recipient Cheryl Glatz.

More MRC Years of Service Milestones

Honoring 30 more Murray Ridge Center employees for their dedication and service.

5 YEARS

Kimberly Fuller
Kelly Jama
Melanie Liddy
Britney Perkins
Lori Ragazinskas
Ewa Rozewicz Blaz

10 YEARS

Amber Bowers
Mikki McCann
Jessica Smith
Lauren Stills
William Taylor

15 YEARS

Florence Ayivor
Amy Daniels
Jim Fallon
Sherry Lacko Chutes
Russ Moye
Laura Roby
Angie Rogozinski
Mandy Ryan
Ronnie Vanover

20 YEARS

Sonia Colvin
Angela Toich

25 YEARS

Trena Albrecht
John Bender
Trevor Doty
Heather Knoble
Bob Pando
Rick Rovere
Jeff Squires
Tina Tucker

AMERICAN LEGION Amherst Post 118 Receives 2026 C.A.R.E.S. Award

Murray Ridge Center (MRC) proudly recognized American Legion Post 118 of Amherst and their Auxiliary Units with the 2026 C.A.R.E.S. Award during the agency's annual In-Service. The award, which stands for **C**ommunity, **A**wareness, **R**ecognition, **E**ducation and **S**ervice, honors individuals or organizations that provide extraordinary support to Murray Ridge Center and those it serves.



Pictured (l-r): Superintendent Amber Fisher, Brandy Bangas (Post Commander), Leanne Sands, Loretta Kishman, Frank Martinez. Back row (l-r): Jerome Howard (Director of Legion Riders) and Todd Wargo.

Under the leadership of Post Commander Brandy Bangus, American Legion Post 118 and its Auxiliary Units have generously supported MRC for years.

The American Legion has contributed more than $28,000 to support Special Olympics athletes and Murray Ridge School students. Donations have funded sports equipment, athlete T-shirts, and the school's annual prom, allowing students and their families to enjoy a memorable evening at no cost.

Congratulations to the American Legion Post 118 and Auxiliary Units and thank you to all its members for their continued generosity and commitment to those we serve.

A Bright Idea for School Safety

Ryanne Gelp, a grade 3 and 4 teacher at Murray Ridge School (MRS), received the R.I.C.H.E.S. Diamond Award for recommending NIGHTLOCK, a door barricade system designed to provide additional protection during emergency lockdowns.



Each year at the Murray Ridge Center (MRC) Agency In-Service, the R.I.C.H.E.S. (**R**ecognizing **I**ndividuals' **C**reative **H**elpful **E**xcellent **S**uggestions) Committee honors an employee whose idea has improved agency operations or services.

Ryanne's idea led to the installation of NIGHTLOCK on every MRS door, along with staff training on the new system. NIGHTLOCK has strengthened MRS security and provided greater peace of mind for students and staff.

Congratulations, Ryanne (pictured, above right, with Penni Shuster, MRC Adult Program Instructor and R.I.C.H.E.S. Coordinator), on helping to make MRS a safer place for everyone!

A Fun-Filled Visit to Wild Hooves Farm

Mrs. Julie Maurer's class from Murray Ridge School (MRS) recently enjoyed a fun-filled field trip to Wild Hooves Farm Animal Rescue & Petting Zoo. Students got up close with friendly horses and goats, feeding and petting the animals while enjoying time outdoors. Thank you to the team at Wild Hooves for providing such a memorable, hands-on experience for our students!







Pictured, left: Destiny Hall; middle (l-r): Julie Maurer, Marvelous Seymore, Terrence Nagy, Dean Wisniewski, Wyatt Bathurst, Laura Manning, Jazlynn Smith, Kayla Williams, and Destiny Hall; right (l-r): Wyatt Bathurst (MRS student) and Bill Schneider (MRS classroom aide).

Halloween Fun at LOVC!

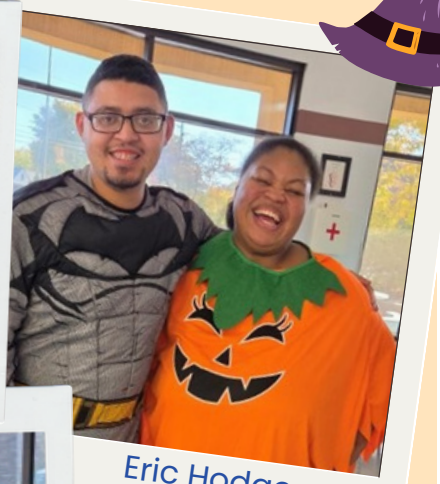
The Halloween spirit was in full swing at Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) during its annual Halloween Dance! Adult Program participants and staff dressed up in creative costumes, including hippies, witches, pumpkins, a werewolf, a pony, and even Michael Myers! The afternoon was filled with music, dancing, laughter, and plenty of Halloween fun as everyone came together to celebrate!



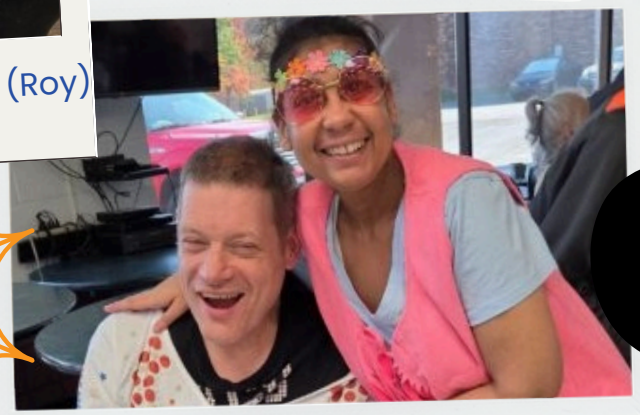
Ray Kelley and cellmate (Roy)



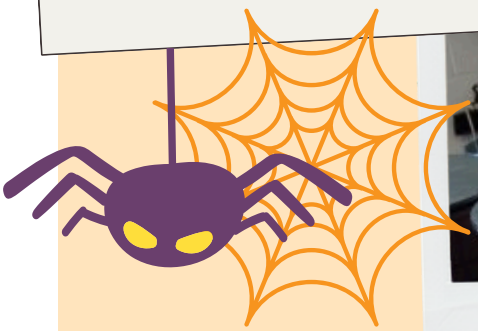
Jericho Bailey, Michelle Miller, Leslie Cirilo, and Brione Monk



Eric Hodge and Helena Hurt



Jeffrey Ringlein and Brione Monk





Do a Job That Matters: Work for MRC!

Go to the Murray Ridge website **murrayridgecenter.org** and click "**Join Our Team**" (or scan the QR code, below) to see all current openings, read job postings, and to apply!

All Candidates Must:

- Have valid Ohio drivers license, good driving record, and High School Diploma/GED
- Pass background check, drug test, and physical

Boardroom Briefing

The Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities convened at 6:30 p.m. on November 16, 2026.

Board Member Ryan Egbertson and Superintendent Amber Fisher provided an update on the 2026 Delegate Assembly of the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD. Director of Educational Services Dann Swift gave a report on the Murray Ridge School Wellness Committee. The Board passed a resolution authorizing for public release a draft of its 2027 Strategic Plan, and gave notice of a public forum on this document to be held on December 2, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Board's Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Rd., Elyria, Ohio; a copy of the Draft 2027 Strategic Plan can be accessed at www.murrayridgecenter.org or by calling (440) 329-3734. The Board approved a resolution to request that the County Auditor certify the availability of funds needed by the Lorain County Board of DD to cover the non-federal share of Medicaid services in 2027. An upcoming Board site visit to a Ridge Runners bowling event was discussed.

LOVC Gives Back Through Food Drive



Pictured (l-r): Dennis Bills, Sarrah Pierce (MRC staff), Austin Carpenter, Joseph Linden, and Hector Ortiz.

Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) recently held a food drive benefiting Oberlin Community Services (OCS).

As part of the experience, Adult Program participants toured the OCS food pantry, learned how it operates, and met the dedicated staff who help serve Lorain County residents. The pantry provides food assistance to eligible residents throughout Lorain County and is open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

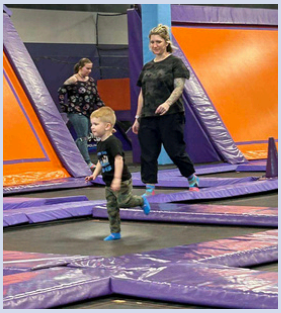
Visit **oberlincommunityservices.org** to learn more!

EI Families Jump Into Fun at Altitude!

Murray Ridge Center's Early Intervention (EI) families enjoyed an afternoon of jumping, climbing, and playing at Altitude Jump Park on November 4!

It was a great opportunity for families to get moving, connect, and enjoy some time together!





Pictured (l-r): Luca Ferrari, Carter Stewart and mom, Andrea Stewart.

MRC in the Community



OOVC Explores Elyria's History

On October 1, Adult Program participants from the Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC) enjoyed a visit to The Hickories Museum in Elyria. During the tour, participants explored the home and learned about its history, as well as the people and events that helped shape Elyria.

Pictured, above (l-r): John Hall, Matt Schoverth, Destiny Kuttler, Cassie Kilgore, Joanne Gall, Ken Lewis (MRC staff), and Harold Kilpatrick.



LOVC Promotes Careers at LCCC

Michael Telloni, Michael Hawley, and Austin Athey (pictured, above, left to right) – Adult Program participants from the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) – recently represented Murray Ridge Center at a job fair hosted by Lorain County Community College (LCCC). The trio helped spread the word about rewarding career opportunities at Murray Ridge Center!



Halloween and a Good Cause!

On October 19, Murray Ridge Center Adult Program participants from the OOVC enjoyed a visit to Healy Woods, an annual Halloween display featuring a variety of spooky props and decorations. While free to attend, any donations raised were given to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Pictured, above: Patrick Boey.

MORE Fall Fun at the LOVC!

Adult Program participants from the LOVC have been making the most of the fall season! From visiting local farm markets and pumpkin patches to enjoying the beautiful autumn scenery and picking out the perfect pumpkins for LOVC's annual Pumpkin Decorating Contest!







Pictured, above left (l-r): Ray Kelley, Patty Kimble, Sara Lempeck, and Erin Fogarty; middle: Michael Hawley; and right (l-r): Michael Hawley and Michael Telloni.

EI Team Builds Communication Skills

The Murray Ridge Center (MRC) Early Intervention (EI) team attended *Conflict Management: Turning Tension into Trust, Clarity,* a presentation by Michael B. Ross (Partner at High Performance and Growth), at the MRC Annual In-Service. The training focused on effective communication styles and practical strategies for addressing conflict, helping team members and leaders strengthen collaboration, and navigating challenging situations.



Pictued (l-r): Heather Knoble, Cindy Castora, Shawna Livingston, Elizabeth Vodraska, Megan Arnold, Keri Goad, Jenna Coughlin, and Kathy Bevaque

RAIDERS BASKETBALL IS BACK!

MURRAY RIDGE
RAIDERS

2026–2027 • BASKETBALL SCHEDULES

RED TEAM

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
DEC 3	Ashland	5:30 PM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria, OH	
DEC 5	Tuscarawas	TBD
AWAY	Dover, OH (2 games; location TBD)	
DEC 12	Strongsville	8:30 AM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria, OH	
DEC 12	Tuscarawas	1:00 PM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria, OH	
DEC 15	Lake County	5:15 PM
AWAY	8090 Broadmor Road, Mentor, OH	
JAN 16	Strongsville	TBD
AWAY	Strongsville Rec. Center (not confirmed)	
JAN 20	Erie County	7:00 PM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria, OH	

COACHES
Russ Moye (440) 315-3041
Melanie Liddy

GREY TEAM

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
DEC 1	Geauga	6:00 PM
AWAY	8200 Cedar Road, Chesterland, OH	
DEC 5	TBD (2 games)	TBD
AWAY	Dover, OH (location TBD)	
DEC 12	Strongsville	10:00 AM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria, OH	
DEC 12	Tuscarawas	2:30 PM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria, OH	
DEC 15	Lake County	6:30 PM
AWAY	9080 Broadmoor, Mentor, OH 44060	
DEC 17	Geauga	6:00 PM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria, OH	
JAN 14	Ashland	6:00 PM
AWAY	St. Edward Church, 501 Cottage St., Ashland, OH	
JAN 16	Strongsville	TBD
AWAY	Strongsville Rec. Center (not confirmed)	
JAN 20	Erie County	5:30 PM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Rd., Elyria, OH	
FEB 6–7	Regionals	TBD
AWAY	Cloverleaf Rec. Center, 8525 Friendsville Rd., Lodi, OH 44254	
FEB 19–21	Winter Games	TBD
OSU	Special Olympics OH State Winter Games, The Ohio State University	

COACHES
Scott Gezzer (440) 787-6259
Kevin Chutes

SCARLET TEAM

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
DEC 1	Geauga	7:00 PM
AWAY	8200 Cedar Road, Chesterland, OH	
DEC 3	Ashland	7:00 PM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Road, Elyria, OH 44035	
DEC 5	Tuscarawas	TBD
AWAY	Dover, OH (2 games; location TBD)	
DEC 12	Tuscarawas	11:30 AM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Road, Elyria, OH 44035	
DEC 17	Geauga	7:00 PM
HOME	9750 Murray Ridge Road, Elyria, OH 44035	
JAN 14	Ashland	7:30 PM
AWAY	St. Ed's Church, 501 Cottage Ave., Ashland, OH	
JAN 23	Stark Public	10:30 AM
AWAY	Gentlebrook Sports Complex, 880 Sunnyside St., Hartville, OH, Door #8	
FEB 6–7	Regional Comp.	TBD
AWAY	Cloverleaf Rec. Center, 8525 Friendsville Rd., Lodi, OH	
FEB 19–21	Winter Games	TBD
OSU	Special Olympics OH State Winter Games, The Ohio State University	

COACHES
Russ Moye (440) 315-3041
Tyler Robinson

Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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Elyria, OH 44035

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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.