

## Teaching Students Practical Job Skills

As an educator, it is the job of Murray Ridge School teacher **Nick Kish** to help prepare his students for lives beyond the walls of academia. But for Kish's students, who have developmental disabilities, options for higher education are limited, placing a premium on helping students to prepare for employment. So, to better prepare these students for the competitive job market, Kish prepared an informal vocational training curriculum that addresses the job process from start to finish. "The program has been very well-received by students, staff and families. Not only has it been great job-seeking preparation for the students, it has also given them a lot of confidence and a stronger sense of teamwork, which is also very important," said **Dann Swift**, Director of Educational Services at Murray Ridge.

Kish considered the things that job-seekers typically experience, and designed a process, complete with learning materials, to make the experience as real-world as possible. For students who choose to participate in this program, the first step begins with viewing "job postings" on a "Job Board" in the hallway of the School. Laminated cards with various job titles are placed on the Job Board and students may choose from the posted jobs. Jobs range from positions assisting with recycling to delivering pizza to School staff through the "Pizza House" (another venture initiated by Kish) to helping in the office. Students who obtain jobs through this program are informally referred to as "The Crew."

Once they decide which job they are interested in, students take the job card to Kish who then provides them with a simple "job application" form. This form asks for basic information, such as the student's name and desired position. The application also asks for three "references" which requires the student to consider who could speak to how well they would likely do in a particular job. And as with all other jobs, the students must then interview for the job they want. The students are encouraged to dress appropriately, exercise good manners and explain to the interviewer why they would be the best person for the position. This gives the students experience with answering basic interview questions and teaches them what to expect so that they might be less nervous during a real interview.

Kish explains that since this is a voluntary learning curriculum, any student that chooses to participate will be placed into some sort of job. "There isn't a chance that they won't



**Volunteer Amy Daniels and teacher Nick Kish show sample interview questions and a job application.**

## Lorain County Commissioners Proclaim March to be Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



The Lorain County Commissioners proclaimed March to be Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month at their March 3, 2010 meeting.

**Pictured left-right: Consumer Tim Christian, Commissioner Lori Kokoski, student Stephanie Jackson, Murray Ridge Center Superintendent Amber Fisher, student Brynne Diedrick and Commissioner Ted Kalo.**

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# March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



## Share *Your* Awareness Everyday

Since 1979, agencies across the country have formally recognized the abilities of persons with Developmental Disabilities every March during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Once again, Murray Ridge Center joins these agencies, and encourages everyone to learn more about developmental disabilities. There are nearly four million Americans with developmental disabilities making vital contributions to our culture and our economy everyday.

This month reminds each of us that individuals with developmental disabilities are many things: they are friends, co-workers, neighbors, volunteers, students and family members. Through the educational, vocational, residential, family support and Special Olympics programs offered through Murray Ridge, more than 2,000 Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities are able to be the best they can be in all of these areas. As part of the campaign to expand awareness of the potential of people with developmental disabilities, we are asking you to help us spread the word with others in your workplace, your neighborhood, your place of worship and your schools. Things you can do include: provide email addresses of those who might enjoy our newsletter to editor Racheal Seibert at [rseibert@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:rseibert@murrayridgecenter.org); download, print and distribute the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month flier from the Murray Ridge Center website; become a Murray Ridge volunteer; join the Murray Ridge Support Group or the Family Support Parent Group; or write to your legislators to provide your story and to encourage financial support of developmental disabilities programs.

## EWAC Seniors Warm Hearts, Souls and Stomachs



Throughout the cold winter months, many Ohioans can appreciate the comfort of a warm muffin or a steaming bowl of chili. During one of our recent cold-weather blasts, some seniors in our Young-At-Heart program at the Elyria Work/Activity Center decided to warm the hearts, souls and stomachs of fellow consumers and staff by hosting a crock pot chili cook-off. Competition was fierce as contestants donned their aprons and sliced, diced and stewed onions, chili peppers and beans. The winners in such categories as "best original" and "spiciest" chili were awarded "silver spoons."

For those with a sweeter tooth, the seniors also hosted a muffin sale to raise money for senior activities. Scarcely a stray crumb was found as diners gobbled banana-nut, blueberry and chocolate-chip muffins!

Seniors in the Murray Ridge Center Young-At-Heart program always have their hands into something...and their culinary skills are enjoyed by all!

***Pictured left: Murray Ridge staffer Michelle Miller smiles during the judging of her crock pot chili.***



## A Taste of Italy

The Annual Spaghetti Dinner, sponsored by the Murray Ridge Support Group, will be held this year on Saturday, March 20 from 3:00-6:30 p.m. at the AmVets Post 55, 530 Abbe Road in Sheffield Lake.

This Italian feast, which includes spaghetti with meatballs, fresh bread, salad, desserts and beverages, is being generously donated by the AmVets Post 55. Activities will include a Chinese auction and a 50/50 raffle. Proceeds will go toward programs and services for Lorain County citizens impacted by developmental disabilities.

Tickets are \$8 for persons 6 years of age and up, and free for kids 5 and under. Sponsorships are available. Call Andrea Elek for more information, 440-323-2741.

Buon Appetito!



be hired for a job if they want to participate," explains Kish. "But they must go through the process to learn what to expect when they try to get their first job." Once "hired," the students spend about an hour a week performing their job duties. They even receive uniforms that Kish ordered by using money earned through the Pizza House fund. "The students love the uniforms," said Kish. "It makes the job seem more official to them and they take a lot of pride in wearing them." The students do not receive traditional compensation since the program is educational/voluntary in nature, but they do have an opportunity through the interviewing process to "negotiate" a "salary" to be received at the end of each week. "Students are motivated by different rewards," says Kish. "Some students might want an extra hour of music time, while some may just want verbal praise. They identify the "compensation" and if it is reasonable, we accommodate that."

In it's first year of implementation, 31 students have enthusiastically participated in the vocational curriculum. "The response has been tremendous and a bonus is that it has brought the senior-level classes together so that there is more interaction between students and teachers in different classes," said Kish. "It's been a lot of fun! Given the positive response overall, I am anticipating that the program will continue to expand, and hopefully these students will be better equipped to compete in the competitive job market."

While no vocational program can guarantee that an individual will secure a job, the new program at Murray Ridge School can certainly better prepare students for what to expect when going through the process.



If you would like to receive The Murray Ridge Courier via email, contact Racheal Seibert at 329-3734 or email her at [rseibert@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:rseibert@murrayridgecenter.org).

### Editor's Note

From time to time, we feature guest columns by a variety of staff members. This gives everyone an opportunity to know a little bit more about how different departments work to serve the mission of Murray Ridge.

In April 2010, we will begin a series of articles on "Medication Awareness," that should provide helpful information regarding consumer medications to consumers, families and guardians.

## BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

### The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on February 26, 2010:

Dr. Fisher requested that the Board approve four additions to the draft of the 2010 Annual Action Plan Programs and Expenditures. Dr. Fisher further requested a resolution by the Board to accept the 2010 Plan barring any substantive changes as a result of the public hearing. The Board unanimously approved the requested additions as well as the resolution. Director of Educational Services, Dann Swift, then reported to the Board that the changes made to the Summer Camp program from 2008 to 2009 resulted in a savings of approximately \$21,000 and did not result in a loss of campers. Superintendent Fisher recommended that the Board once again approve a three-week Summer Camp program. The Board approved unanimously. In other business, the Board unanimously adopted the Governing Rules and Regulations, that are reviewed annually. Following this, Superintendent Fisher reminded the Board that 2011 would begin a new Strategic Plan and that there would be much to consider with respect to strategic issues. Issues that will need to be addressed include trends related to emergency residential placements. Dr. Fisher suggested to the Board members that, in preparation for a new five-year Strategic Plan, they give consideration to additional topics they feel should be addressed during the upcoming Strategic Planning process. Finally, Dr. Fisher reported to the Board that the meeting between Lorain County Administrator James Cordez and the Murray Ridge Housing Corporation (MRHC) regarding the new MRHC home to be constructed went well and that the Commissioners would be preparing a lease with MRHC, paving the way for the Housing Board to take advantage of state funding currently available for the construction of housing for people with developmental disabilities..



# March 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 	9	10	11 	12 	13
14	15	16	17	18 	19	20 
21	22	23	24	25 	26 	27
28	29	30	31			

## Activities & Events

- 3/1—Murray Ridge Support Group meeting, 4:15 p.m., Elyria Work/Activity Center, 1095 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 3/8—Family Support Parent Committee meeting, 6:00 p.m., Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 3/11—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:30—6:30 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 3/12—Murray Ridge Support Group dance, 7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 3/18—LCBDD Finance Committee meeting, 12:00 p.m., Administration Building, 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria
- 3/20—Murray Ridge Support Group Spaghetti Dinner, 3:00-6:30 p.m., AmVet Post 55, 530 Abbe Road, Sheffield Lake, tickets \$8 for ages 6 and up, free for 5 and under
- 3/25—Early Intervention Playgroup, 5:30—6:30 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 3/26—LCBDD Meeting, 12:30 p.m. Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmary Road, Elyria

**NOTE: Agency Closed in Observance of Good Friday on April 2. Spring Break for Murray Ridge School students and Preschool students is April 5-9.**



## Lunch Menus

Cost Per Day: Youth = \$2.75, Adults = \$2.80

**March 1-5**  
**March 22-26**  
**April 12-16**

**Monday-** Salisbury Steak w/Gravy, Scalloped Potatoes, Corn, Peaches, Cookie

**Tuesday-** Ham & Cheese on Wheat Bread, Peas & Carrots, Pears, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Wednesday-** Meat Lasagna, Green Beans, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Wheat Bread, Cookie

**Thursday-** Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Banana, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Friday-** Fish Patty, French Fries, Cole Slaw, Apple Slices, Wheat Bread, Cookie

**March 8-12**

**March 29-April 2**  
**April 19-23**

**Monday-** Ham, Wheat Bread, Rice Pilaf, Diced Carrots w/Herbs, Applesauce

**Tuesday-** Hamburger on a Bun, Potato Wedges, Corn, Crushed Pineapple, Cookie

**Wednesday-** Chicken Patty w/Gravy, Au Gratin Potatoes, Green Beans, Fruit, Wheat Bread, Cookie

**Thursday-** Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Banana, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Friday-** Macaroni & Cheese, Cooked Carrots, Diced Pears, Cookie



**March 15-19**  
**April 5-9**  
**April 26-30**

**Monday-** Chicken Patty on a Bun, Potato Rounds, Corn, Crushed Pineapple, Cookie

**Tuesday-** Meat Lasagna, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Diced Peaches, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Wednesday-** Rigatoni w/Meatballs, Green Beans, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Wheat Bread, Cookie

**Thursday-** Pepperoni & Cheese Pizza, Tossed Salad w/Low fat Dressing, Fresh Fruit, Nutri-Grain Bar

**Friday-** Meat/Cheese Burrito, Spanish Rice, Cole Slaw, Applesauce

Lorain County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities

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[www.murrayridgecenter.org](http://www.murrayridgecenter.org)



**If you have a news item that you would like to include in the Murray Ridge Courier, please email relevant photos, stories or event information to Racheal Seibert at [rseibert@murrayridgecenter.org](mailto:rseibert@murrayridgecenter.org).**

**Submissions are due by the 20th of each month for the following month's newsletter.**



### Further News You Might Use...

We are often in receipt of information from external sources on offerings designed for people with DD. Some examples include summer camps and special interest classes. Many such offerings have an associated cost to the participant. Although we are not in a position to "vouch for" or promote such offerings, we recognize that these opportunities may be of interest to our consumers, their families and/or guardians. If you are interested in learning more about such consumer-oriented events and opportunities, please contact Albert Sprague, Director of Residential Service & Support Administration. You may reach him by telephone at 440-324-2366.

## They've Got Game

The cheers of enthusiastic fans could be heard throughout the Lorain County Community College campus during the recent Special Olympics Ohio North Section Basketball Tournament as the newly-formed Murray Ridge Raiders Team 3 defeated the Geauga Bluestreaks in the final game. Team 3 will now move on to compete in the State Championship games in Columbus March 26-27.

Also competing in the North Section Tournament were Team 1, who placed 2nd in their division, Team 2, who placed 5th in their division, and the Lady Raiders, who placed 3rd in their division.

Congratulations to all Murray Ridge basketball athletes for a well-played season! If you would like more information on the upcoming Special Olympics State Basketball Championship games, contact Judy Hartung at 284-2720.

