



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

The Murray Ridge Courier

May 2016

Pen Pal Program Opens Communication Between School and OVC

Murray Ridge School teacher Cheryl Swierz and Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center (EOVC) Activities Aide Penni Shuster are bridging the gap between students and adults at Murray Ridge Center through a "pen pal" program.

The program, which began at the start of the 2015-2016 school year and was completed in April, was developed by the women to allow for a mentor-type relationship that would be educational and enlightening for both groups.

Murray Ridge School students are taught functional life skills, preparing them for life and work after graduation. Cheryl wanted students to hear first-hand experiences from Adult Program participants so that they might get a better understanding of future options. Penni found that adults from the OVCs were interested in what was going on at the school. So, what better way to bring these groups together than to build the relationship between OVC and school?

"I thought the consumers could kind of serve as mentors to my students," Cheryl said. "Our kids and the consumers see the same people all the time; this is a way to meet new people."

The students and adults began writing letters to each other in September, and continued to write and receive letters on a monthly basis. The letters discussed upcoming holidays, events at the school or OVC, family events, likes and dislikes, etc. Cheryl found that, in addition to her students enjoying the task, they were also working towards Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals. Penni worked with the



Students from MRS and adults from the EOVC enjoy lunch.

adults to answer the letters, which also helped those in the Opportunity/Vocational Center with typing skills.

The highlight of the program was a series of three luncheons held at Murray Ridge School with the student and adult pen pals. "We had pizza, pop, chips, and desserts," said Cheryl. "Each adult brought a gift for each of my students; they were

personalized based on the information my students told them in their letters. My kids loved their gifts!" MRS students bought their adult pen pals bracelets and pins. The adults from the OVC also attended the MRS students' talent show in March.

Both Penni and Cheryl watched as the adults and students flourished in this program.

"My students got to see the EOVC. The adults enjoyed helping the students and the students liked having someone new to interact with and look up to," Cheryl remarked.

Penni agreed. "I feel that this collaboration of students and consumers was brilliant! It gave the adults the responsibility of writing letters and also opened up their minds on the topics they wanted to share and talk about. I am looking forward to next year and continuing this project with new consumers eager to use their typing and writing skills."

Kyre Beathea (MRS) and Janice DiDomenico (EOVC) share a laugh at the April luncheon.



Annual Spaghetti Dinner a Huge Success!

On April 9, the Murray Ridge Support Group (MRSRG) held its annual Spaghetti Dinner at the AmVets Post 55 in Sheffield Lake.

In total, the MRSRG raised more than \$5,000 through the event, and all proceeds will benefit Lorain County citizens impacted by developmental disabilities.

Thank you to all who came out for great food, great company, and a worthy cause!



Adult program participants enjoy their spaghetti dinners (above, left). Above, volunteers serve spaghetti to hungry attendees. Lauren Judkins and Rhyan Bodnar (bottom, left) dig in!

Exceptional Service at Murray Ridge Center

On April 26, the Lorain County Board of DD honored Peggy Smith, Receptionist at Murray Ridge School, with the Exceptional Service Award for the first quarter of 2016.

In the nomination letter sent in by parent Ray Beeman, he states, "She does an excellent job, she's always smiling, greets the kids. She says hi to everyone and she's never in a bad mood. She doesn't get the recognition she deserves. She is a wonderful person and very caring towards the kids and everyone appreciates her."

Thank you Peggy, for your exceptional service! And congratulations on receiving this prestigious award.



Board member Dan White, Peggy Smith, and Superintendent Amber Fisher.

Mega Championship Wrestling Presents "Breaking Down Barriers 6!"

Mega Championship Wrestling, a local entertainment company, will be presenting an event called "Breaking Down Barriers 6."

As in the past, proceeds from this event will go to the Friends of Murray Ridge, a non-profit charitable organization which supports the mission, community education and informational outreach of the Murray Ridge Center.

Although wrestling may not be for everyone, many of our consumers enjoy watching WWE wrestling and would be interested in attending this event.



Date: Saturday, May 21st, 2016
Time: Doors open at 5:00 pm
Showtime 6:30-8:30 pm
Where: St. John's Lutheran Church Gymnasium, 1140 W. River Rd N, Elyria
Cost: \$8/ticket in advance and \$15 at the door

T-Shirts will be available at the door for \$15.00 (2XX plus sizes will cost more). There will be a concession stand open for you to purchase snacks.

To purchase tickets in advance for \$8.00 each:

1. Fill in the section below and cut on the dotted line.
2. Return the completed form below with your money or check in an envelope addressed to one of the buildings below:

Loretta Binder at the Oberlin Opportunity/Vocational Center	(440) 774-7400
Amber Fitzgerald at the Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center	(440) 284-2720
Christine Mazze at the Lorain Opportunity/Vocational Center	(440) 282-2131
Beverly Monteleone at the Administration Building	(440) 329-3734
Peggy Smith at Murray Ridge School	(440) 329-3760

3. If you are sending a check make it out to: Mega Championship Wrestling OR You can stop in at one of the sites listed to purchase tickets.

If you have any questions call the numbers above.

Breaking Down Barriers 5 Ticket Order Form:

NAME OF PERSON ORDERING TICKETS: _____

NUMBER OF TICKETS (at \$8.00 each): _____

TOTAL AMOUNT MONEY/CHECK ENCLOSED: _____

Great Things are Happening at Murray Ridge Center!



Students at Murray Ridge School received many visitors in April! Naya Scribner and teacher Vickie Nagy (top, left) feel a turtle shell during the Lorain County Metro Parks' "Let's Hear it for Herps!" presentation on April 14! Students were able to interact with amphibians and reptiles, and learned all about herpatology.

Greg Willey (left, middle), from the Elyria Friendship Animal Protective League, visited Murray Ridge School Thursday, April 28, to accept donations of \$225 and pet supplies. Greg brought Lola, a dog who is available for adoption at the APL. Staff and students donated the supplies and money, which were collected by teacher Megan Klein and Speech Pathologist Patty Clickner. The students in Megan's classroom also helped to collect.



Thursday, April 28, was National Superhero Day! To commemorate, the Oberlin Opportunity/Vocational Center welcomed Superheros to Kids in Ohio (below). Pictured are Mr. & Mrs. Incredible with adult program participants Jeanie Gonzalez and James Tallhamer!



On Saturday, April 30, Murray Ridge Raiders and the Geauga County Special Olympics Volleyball teams (left) came together for a morning of fun and instruction by the inspiring ladies of the Oberlin College Volleyball team. Thank you Lady Yeowomen for your help and support of Murray Ridge Special Olympics!! Our athletes had a GREAT time!



May 2016

Activities & Events

- 5/6 - Murray Ridge School Senior Prom; 6:30—9:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 5/10 - Murray Ridge Support Group meeting, 4:15 p.m., Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center, 1095 Infirmiry Road in Elyria
- 5/18 - LCBDD Finance Committee meeting , 12:00 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmiry Road, Elyria
- 5/20 - Murray Ridge Support Group Dance, 7:00 p.m., Murray Ridge School, 9750 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria
- 5/21 - Breaking Down Barriers IV at St. John's Lutheran Church, 6:00 p.m.
- 5/26 - Murray Ridge School Commencement Ceremony, 11:00 a.m.
- 5/26 - Regular Meeting of the Board and Ethics Council, 1:15 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmiry Road, Elyria
- 5/30 - **Agency Closed in Observance of Memorial Day**
- TBD - Family Support Parent Committee meeting , 6:30 p.m., Administration Bldg., 1091 Infirmiry Road in Elyria

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2016-2017 Agency Calendars

The 2016-2017 agency calendars are now available at www.murrayridgecenter.org under Agency Calendar. Visit the website to see the schedules of our programs for the coming year!



BOARD ROOM BRIEFING

The Lorain County Board of DD convened at 12:30 p.m. on April 29, 2016:

Superintendent Fisher provided an update on the Residential Program transition and Self Waiver Enrollment criteria. The 2016-2017 Agency calendars were discussed and approved. The Murray Ridge Support Group will hold its next meeting on 5/10 and its next dance on 5/20. Superintendent Fisher ended the meeting with a letter from a family member thanking the Board for the care of her now-deceased loved one.

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

Murray Ridge Center
1091 Infirmary Road
Elyria, OH 44035

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Inclusive Playground FREE Admission!

Visit the Lorain County Metro Parks Inclusive Playground! Free at this time, the unique playground incorporates water play (shut down for season), structured play, and natural play environments. People of all ages and abilities will be able to use the area and enjoy the play features. Stop in and visit today!

47160 Hollstein Drive,
Amherst, Ohio
(440) 984-3470



Exceptional Service Award

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 Jennifer Judkins, Public Relations/Volunteer Director. 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 at regular scheduled meetings, usually held on the last Friday of each month at 12:30 p.m. in the Board Room. If you have any questions, contact Jenn Judkins at 440-329-3734 or jjudkins@murrayridgecenter.org.