



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

The View From The **RIDGE**

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities
Summer Quarterly

SUMMER 2024



Summertime at Murray Ridge

Left to right: **David Helton, John Armstrong, Dorion Lowe, Juliaunna Mason, Adult Program Instructor Penni Schuster, and David Gerhart**



James Fink, Dennis Johnson, and Alec Jones enjoyed some frozen delights at K Cream Korner, an iconic ice cream shop in Lorain.



LOVC Adult Program Participant **DaeJon Hamlin** gets his feet wet at Lakeview Beach in Lorain.

Breaking Down Barriers!



On Saturday, May 4th, **Mega Championship Wrestling (MCW)** held its 12th annual “**Breaking Down Barriers**” professional wrestling fundraiser event! Over the course of these exciting, family-friendly shows, MCW has raised more than \$15,000 for Friends of Murray Ridge.

Dozens of wrestlers came to the Lorain County Community College Field House to perform, showing their support for people with developmental disabilities in our Lorain County community. Fans cheered and jeered as the wrestlers put on an incredible display for everyone.

What really made this event special was the spirit of inclusivity that was present throughout the night. People from different backgrounds came together to see the spectacle, sharing a rowdy night of thrills together. Thank you to everyone at Mega Championship Wrestling for putting together such a fun and exciting evening for a great cause!



At our June Board meeting, Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) Program Specialist **Jim Nagy** presented a check for \$1,150 to Friends of Murray Ridge on behalf of Mega Championship Wrestling (MCW). The family-friendly wrestling show was started in 2011 by Nagy and his co-promoters **Jeff Traxler** and **Brandon Xavier** for the benefit of Lorain County residents with developmental disabilities.

THANKS!

LOVC Program Specialist **Jim Nagy** presenting MCW’s donation to Board President **Beverly Gedid** and Murray Ridge Superintendent **Amber Fisher**

MURRAY RIDGE VOLUNTEERS



OOVC Volunteers at Lorain County Safe Harbor

In late April, a group of Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC) Adult Program participants volunteered at the Lorain County Safe Harbor and helped them paint rocks for their rock garden. Safe Harbor's mission statement says they "provide a comprehensive range of family-focused services for Lorain County victims of domestic violence."

Pictured: Jacob Pantalone and Tom Smith (seated at right, left to right) with staff members from Lorain County Safe Harbor

OOVC Adult Program Participants Volunteer at the Elyria Arts Council



In late April, some OOVC Adult Program participants volunteered at the Elyria Arts Council and helped assemble art packets for an upcoming student art project.

Pictured: Rozalynne Everett (left and above, front left) and Dustin Mitchell (above, front right) with two staff members from the Elyria Arts Council

Steve Slutzker Cheer Zone!



Front Row, left to right: **Ryan Brown**, **Jeffrey Torres**, **Robert Assanakis**, Family Support Coordinator **Diane Lawson**, Adult Program Aide **Sheila Amerla**, **Zuleka Perez**, **Joe Bellottie**, Secretary **Rebecca Cain**, Director of Vocational and Transportation Services **Jeff Miller**, **Cathy Pence**, Coach **Russ Moye**. Middle row: IT Assistant **Missi Obeshaw**, Coach **Joe Croftcheck**. Back row: Director of Adult Programs **Gary Lyons**, **Tony Harris Jr.**, Coach **Leroy Keen**, **Shari Reitenbach**, **Lutz Fazekas**, Recreation Specialist **Tyler Robinson**, **James Peters**



On Wednesday, June 12, we held a hotly contested Staff vs Modified Volleyball Team match at Murray Ridge School. The Staff narrowly won the match, two sets to three! Also at the match, the "Steve Slutzker Cheer Zone" was dedicated. As a child, Steve attended Murray Ridge School, and he was a lifetime Special Olympian. Sadly, last year Steve passed away, and his sister made a donation on his behalf. To show our appreciation, we named a section of the gym seating area after him. You will be missed, Steve!

Pictured, left: Superintendent **Amber Fisher** with Steve's sister and brother-in-law, **Sue and Terry Lang**

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED



LCBDD Board Member **Becky Cornman**, Adult Program Instructor **Penni Shuster**, and Superintendent **Amber Fisher**

The recipient of our Spring Quarter's Exceptional Service Award was **Penni Shuster**, an Adult Program Instructor. For years, Penni organized the Santa Shop at our former Elyria Opportunity and Vocational Center (EOVC). For the last Santa Shop before the EOVC closed in February, the staff agreed that she went above and beyond. Thank you, Penni, for your great work!

Do you know a Murray Ridge staff member who has gone "above and beyond"? If so, please submit your nomination to Kevin Naughton, Director of Communications, at (440) 329-3734 or at kevin@murrayridgecenter.org.

Special Olympics Summer Games



1st Place Soccer Team! Seated, left to right: **George Giganti, Sean Ware.** Standing, middle row, left to right: **Andrew Prihoda, Diana Clement, Megan Craig, Nicol Lazu.** Back row: **Coach Russ Moye, Dorian Chaffin, Victor Elder, Tim Dammeyer, Jeremy Foster, Ryan Eliason, Andrew Westover, Jeffrey O'Brien, Nathan Geezer, Volunteer Coach Scott Geezer**

Congratulations to all the Murray Ridge athletes who competed in the State Special Olympics Games in Columbus on June 28-30!

We are thrilled to report that both the Modified Volleyball and Soccer teams won first place in their matches! In total, individual athletes

brought back five gold medals, 17 silver medals, six bronze medals, two 4th place ribbons, and six 5th place ribbons. Great job, everyone!

Murray Ridge Center invites all adults with developmental disabilities in Lorain County to participate in our Special Olympics Program. If you

would like to learn more about our upcoming Special Olympics Ohio activities and events and/or how to participate in them, please contact Shawn Hatcher at 440-284-2720 or shatcher@murrayridgecenter.org.

Visit our Facebook page for more pictures!



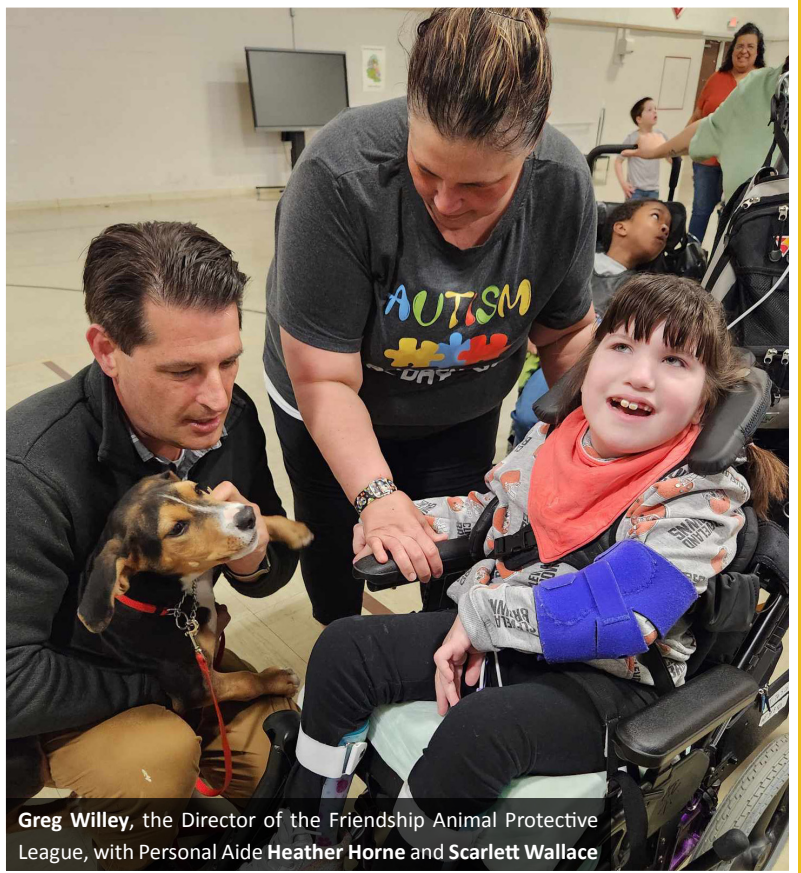
The 1st Place Volleyball Team with Special Olympics Ohio volunteers behind them (in black). Left to right: **Tony Harris Jr., Shari Reitenbach, James Peters, Lutz Fazekas, Coach Leroy Keen, Ryan Brown, Noah Griffiths, Zuleka Perez, Ryan Busher, and Robert Assanakis**

WHAT'S NEW AT Murray Ridge School?



School APL Donation

This year, for its community service project, the Murray Ridge School Scout Troop held a change drive and managed to collect nearly \$700 for Elyria's Friendship Animal Protective League! The money was presented to Greg Willey, the Director of the FAPL, at a special gathering in the Murray Ridge School gymnasium. Great job, everyone!



Greg Willey, the Director of the Friendship Animal Protective League, with Personal Aide Heather Horne and Scarlett Wallace

★★★★★ Murray Ridge Preschool Receives 5-Star Rating!

In April, Murray Ridge Preschool received a 5-Star Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rating from the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

SUTQ recognizes and promotes learning and development programs that meet quality program standards that exceed preschool licensing and school-age child care licensing health and safety regulations. Step Up To Quality program standards are based on national research identifying standards that lead to improved outcomes for children.

Congratulations Murray Ridge Preschool staff!

Friends and Family Day Visit

Some students from Eastern Heights Middle School came to visit the student-run Brew it Smooth Cafe for friends and family day! The middle schoolers participate in a similar vocational program at their school, so they came to visit their barista counterparts at Murray Ridge School.



Brady Bella (middle) between two guest baristas from Eastern Heights Middle School

2024 MURRAY RIDGE SCHOOL PROM!



"Welcome to the jungle!" Murray Ridge School students enjoyed a prom like no other. The gymnasium, transformed into a tropical paradise, glowed with colorful lights and decorations.

As the music pulsed through the dense foliage, the dance floor was alive with energy. Amidst the wild festivities, friendships blossomed, and

memories were etched into the students' hearts, creating a prom night they would never forget.

All in all, about 175 students, loved ones, and staff attended. Three students who are graduating, **Jose Smith**, **Chris Fowler**, and **Bilyan Dimitrievich**, were all crowned Prom King (or "King of the Jungle"!) by Superintendent **Amber Fish-**

er, Supervisor **Stacie Starr**, and Board Member **Keith Boey**.

Special thanks to DJ **Jocelyn Noble-Spraggins** and photographer **Dominic Price**, who donated their time and talents. Be sure to check out our school Facebook page for more pictures and video of the event!



Murray Ridge School Graduation!

On May 30th, Murray Ridge School held its annual transition ceremony, at which a group of guests – including key note speaker Kurt Russell, the 2022 National Teacher of the Year for the Council of Chief State School Officers – cel-

ebrated the accomplishments of some very impressive students. While each graduate will be deeply missed by school staff, all are excited about what lies ahead. Outside of Murray Ridge School, there will be many opportunities for the

graduates to explore their interests, have new experiences, work at various jobs, give back within their communities, and live lives of increasing independence. Congratulations, Murray Ridge School Class of 2024!

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

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Photo of the Summer: Lorain Opportunity & Vocational Center Adult Program participants **Diana Clement, Kim Nadolski, Chelsie Jenkins, Alicia Lawrence, Michelle Miller, Catherine Laverty, Annie Cirilo, and Jean Morosky** out on a visit to Marblehead Lighthouse State Park

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