

Connecting Communities

A newsletter from Better Together and the Community Connector Team at ODC

Local Discoveries

Kenny and I have been working together in Community Connections searching for connections in his small town, rural community. While on our journey, we have visited a college campus, multiple parks, a theater/arts center, library, and food pantry, just to name a few. Kenny has reconnected with going to his local library on an almost weekly basis, searching for his favorite movies to watch each week. In addition to connecting at the library, Kenny and I have also

explored events happening in the community such as game nights. After attending the first game night, I asked Kenny if he would want to attend another the following week. With a big grin on his face, he replied "Yes!" and we again had the opportunity to meet new community members at game night.

A week or two later when I met with Kenny, I heard about a birthday party he had attended over the weekend. He had had a great time at the party and was excited to tell me about it. Throughout our time meeting, Kenny is almost always ready to go when I arrive at his house, sometimes even 30 minutes early. The same happened for the party. He initiated preparing and going to the party, something he had not always done. Since having the support of Community Connections, Kenny has had an increase in confidence and motivation to get out of the house and increase his involvement with activities in the community, of which can hopefully continue to grow.



A Place of Hospitality

Is your mental health important to you? Would you like to meet people with the similar interest? NAMI Portage-Wood County offers both peer support groups in Marshfield, Wisconsin Rapids, Stevens Point and virtually. Family support groups are offered in Stevens Point, Wisconsin Rapids and virtually as well. The space provided is welcoming, confidential, and open to the public. In addition to these support groups, on the third Monday of each month, a mental wellness group is held in Stevens Point where area mental health professionals give presentations on various mental health topics, followed by discussion. For additional information, please go to <https://www.namiportagewoodcounties.org/>, or call 715-544-9653.

Community Events and Activities

Marshfield

Sweetheart Dance
Saturday, Feb. 10th
@ 1pm-3pm

Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library
105 S Maple Ave.

Merrill

Knitting and Crochet Circle
Thursday, Feb. 15th @ 5pm-6:45pm
T.B. Scott Library
106 West First St.

Stevens Point

Sing for Fun (FREE)
2nd Thursday of every month
6pm@ADRC/Lincoln Center

Wausau

Candlelight Snowshoe Hike
Saturday, Feb. 17th @ 6pm-8pm
Rib Mountain State Park (state park
one day or year pass required)
14980I State Park Rd

Wisconsin Rapids

Winter Candlelight Hike Hosted by
Friends Of Sandhill
Saturday, Feb. 24th @ 5:30-8:00
Sandhill Wildlife Area
1715 County Hwy X
Babcock, WI
FREE Event but Registration is required!
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Lands/WildlifeAreas/sandhill/calendar>

For more information on how Community Connection can support you, please contact

Anna Morehouse

Phone: 715-818-6445

Email: amorehouse@odcinc.com



Upcoming Better Together Events

February's game night will be sponsored by Delta Dental of Wisconsin. We look forward to the fun and friendship!

In March of 2024 we are inviting everyone involved in our programs, as well as citizens of the community, to the Portage County Disability Coalition's "Community Inclusion Showcase"

It will be held at the Inclusa Atrium (the old Delta Dental building) 2801 Hoover Rd, Stevens Point, WI 54481 from 1-6pm and will include vendors, registration raffles, games, food trucks, and socialization.

If you or your organization would like to sponsor an event with friends in Better Together, reach out to Sami today!

Better Together Contact

Samantha Szynskie

Phone: 715-347-7461

Email:

sszynskie@odcinc.com

Website:

<https://www.odcinc.com/better-together-friendships>



What is DEI?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

On January 11 and 12, 2024 MSTC held their first DEI Applied Conference on the Stevens Point Campus. Over 100 people attended to learn about principles and practices aimed at creating a workplace, community, and society where everyone feels valued, respected, and included, regardless of their background, identity, or characteristics.

ODC's own Samantha Szynskie and Ann Lepak presented on "How to Authentically Bring Inclusion to our Communities" that focused on ways we can be inclusive in our every day lives, at work, and through volunteering. To continue this conversation, they will join the Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin's "Community Lunch Hour" on February 12, 2024 at 12noon via Zoom. Register for free at this link: <https://cfcwi.org/clh/>

Curling Together

January's Better Together Event

As the Community Friends crew has joined Better Together, we celebrated in a BIG way! Sentry sponsored our first event at the Stevens Point Curling Club where 10 Sentry/Curling Club volunteers greeted us, taught us how to curl, and had fun socializing. Every one of us in Better Together had not curled before, so it's safe to say we all learned something new about the sport! Some of our friends chose not to curl on the ice, but they still had lots of fun. They said that it was great to watch their friends play in the cool building and enjoyed some friendly competition on the tabletop curling gameboard.

