

Connecting Communities

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

A Place to Belong



We've all been there at one time or another. Something we enjoyed being a part of came to an end and we were left wondering what to do next.

Jay had been a part of a local men's group and had enjoyed years of fun and friendship. Due to circumstances beyond his control, Jay was no longer able to be involved in the men's group he had grown to love. Jay wanted to find another opportunity where he could be involved in the community, help others and especially, use his sense of humor to make people laugh.

With the guidance of a Community Connector, Jay decided to explore the option of volunteering weekly with Meals on Wheels of ADRC-CW. When he met the other volunteers at the Lowell Center in Wisconsin Rapids, one of them, he discovered, was an old co-worker. Time melted away as they picked up right where they had left off and their conversation easily slid into a familiar banter.

Even in a new environment, having an old connection helped Jay feel comfortable enough to continue volunteering on his own and, with great joy, the Community Connector stepped back and watched Jay flourish. During the last month he has renewed old friendships, made new connections in the community and gained a new sense of purpose. Jay says, "It is nice to be with people my own age and be able to talk with them."

SHOUT OUTS!

Community Connection would like to thank McMillan Memorial Library of Wisconsin Rapids for providing the space for our Community Bingo last month and to all of the players who came out to join in the fun!



We would also like to thank the Central Wisconsin-ADRC Wausau for inviting us to their December Memory Café. Over fifty participants enjoyed live music and cookie decorating at the Covenant Community Church in Schofield. Watch for details for their next event in February.



Community Events and Activities

Marshfield

Dollar Skate Nights

Saturday, Jan. 13th @ 7pm-8:30pm

Marshfield Area Ice Arena
405 E. 17th St.

Merrill

Merrill School Forest Family Fun Day

Saturday, Jan. 27th @ 10am-3pm

Merrill School Forest
N4740 State Highway 107

Stevens Point

26th Annual Model Railroad
Show & Sale

Saturday, Jan. 20th @ 9am-5pm

Sunday, Jan. 21st @ 10am-3pm

Stevens Point Holiday Inn and Convention
Center | \$5 admission fee
1001 Amber Ave.

Wausau

Country Line Dance Lessons & Dance

Saturday, Jan. 27th @ 1pm-4pm

LT Club | \$7 admission fee
318 S. 3rd Ave

Wisconsin Rapids

Pickleball Drop-In Pick-Up Play

Monday, Jan. 15th @ 9am-12pm

Witter Athletic Field
521 Lincoln St

Bring your own paddle

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

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Upcoming Better Together Events

In January 2024 Sentry will sponsor a curling event at the Curling Club.

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

In March of 2023 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"

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

Better Together Contact

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



Ice Skating for All MILC's 2023 Adapted Event

Mid-State Independent Living Choices, Inc (MILC) held their third annual Adaptive Ice Skating Event at K.B. Willet in Stevens Point on Saturday, December 16, 2023. UWSP's Women's and Men's hockey teams volunteered to support individuals in their inclusive ice skating experience. The adapted options included using walkers and balance supports for skaters using their legs, wheelchairs (personal and borrowed) being pushed by MILC staff and volunteers, and special sleds with skate blades - be sure to check out MILC's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/milcinc/> to see all the photos! One participant could be heard saying, "I'm the happiest ever!" It was a joyful experience for all involved and MILC hopes to see you all join in the fun and joy next year!

What a Way to End 2023!

Better Together Survey Results

At the end of 2023, friends partnered in Better Together were given a survey to find out how being in the program has positively impacted their lives:

100% reported that their BT friend makes them feel HAPPY

100% reported that they feel that they've made at least one new friend since joining BT

100% reported that they feel that they've made more than one new friend since joining BT

100% reported that they feel more involved with their community since joining BT

91% reported that they feel they have a more positive mental health since joining BT

"You can just be yourself – it is enough to make a difference in someone's life.

"It is fun – come and join us!"

"You meet other people to do stuff with beyond just your BT friend."

"It gives an opportunity to give back and be given a happier experience."

"More people should get involved, it's not a lot of work, and it's so good."

