

Connecting Communities

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

The Second Act



After LeAnn met with the Director at The Grand Theater back in December, there was a brief intermission. The second act of LeAnn's exciting story now takes center stage! LeAnn and her Connector had several meetings with the Director to figure out her last steps. Those steps included completing a volunteer training and attending a volunteer meeting. With a ride to the theater from a friend, LeAnn completed both tasks and was ready to find a way to be more involved with the theater.

After a few walk throughs, LeAnn was feeling comfortable in The Grand and was ready to sign up for a show! LeAnn's first show was on a chilly Thursday evening in February with The Dallas String Quartet set to perform. Upon LeAnn's arrival, the Director was waiting for her to give a run down of what the night would be like and answer any questions LeAnn may have had. She made her way to the area that the rest of the volunteers were waiting in for the pre-show meeting, was introduced to the group by the Director, and everyone welcomed her with open arms! Once the meeting was done, LeAnn and her Connector headed to the upstairs lounge to get herself ready for guests to come. Prior to the arrival of guests, LeAnn had some time to meet fellow volunteers and get to know them. Slowly but surely, the lounge began to fill with guests eager for the show to begin.

One by one, guests began to line up at the door to scan their tickets. Once the tickets were scanned, they were directed to LeAnn to receive a program for the show! LeAnn's volunteering truly began in this moment. Guests thanked LeAnn for the programs and headed into the theater. Shortly after, the theater doors closed. The show is about to begin! LeAnn chatted with new friends, and even an old friend from her childhood before heading to the coat room to gather her belongings. As LeAnn and her Connector were heading to the car, LeAnn said to her Connector, "I'm so thankful for this opportunity to be a volunteer at The Grand. This was the most fun I've had in years!" LeAnn headed home feeling and proud of the work she's put in to get to where she is now! LeAnn's story continues with many more upcoming shows at The Grand Theater.

Community Events and Activities

Marshfield

Chocolate Challenge
Tuesday, March 13th @ 6pm-8pm
Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library

Merrill

Ambassador Club
Tuesday, March 19th
@ 7:30am-8:30am
Merrill Chamber Office

Stevens Point

Community Inclusion Showcase
Tuesday March 12th @ 1pm-6pm
The Commons
2801 Hoover Rd.

Spencer

March Art Night
Wednesday March 27th
@ 6:30pm-8pm
105 S Park St, Spencer

Wausau

Neurographic Art
Wednesday, March 14th
@ 5:30pm-6:30pm
Marathon County Public Library - Rothschild

Wisconsin Rapids

Write Night
Thursday, March 28th @ 5pm-7pm
McMillan Memorial Library

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

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" From 1-6pm on March 12th at the Inclusa Atrium: 2801 Hoover Road Join us for a vendor fair, free registration raffle, games, and fun! Smokehouse BBQ will have their food truck available to purchase a meal and support locally.

In April RPE is sponsoring our event at the new Food and Farm Exploration Center.

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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Website:

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



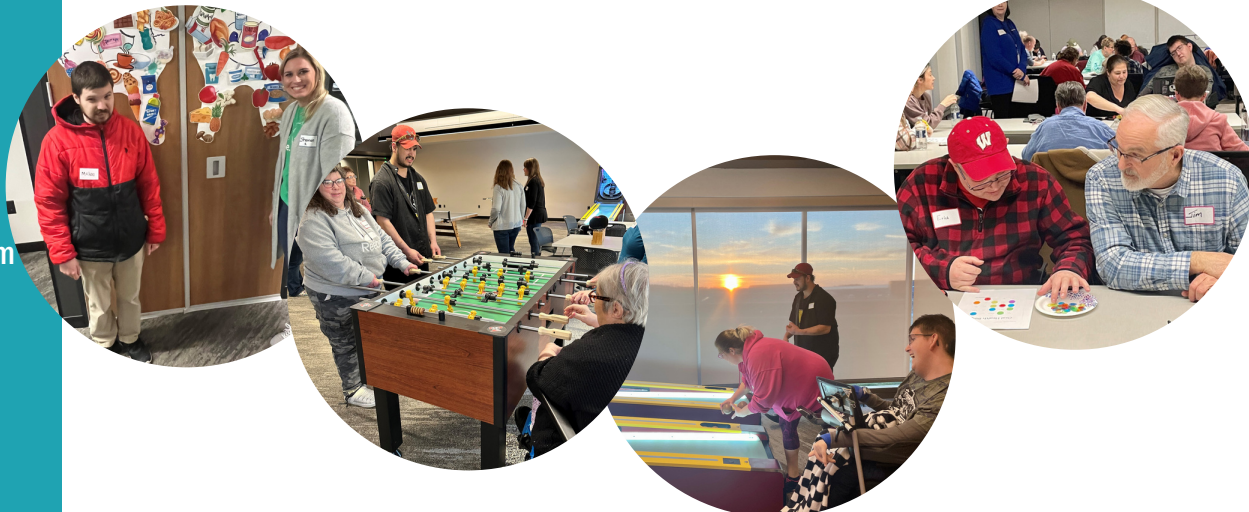
Community Lunch Hour An Online Conversation on Inclusion

On February 12, the Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin hosted their monthly Community Lunch Hour which featured Ann Lepak and Sami Szynskie from ODC to share about ways we can all be more inclusive. Ann presented a brief history of ODC as well as the many ways it has grown, especially in the more recent years in terms of programs and ways that ODC supports people in their work and life goals within each community that it serves. Sami encouraged listeners to find to volunteer opportunities, highlighting the Better Together program, to follow voices that promote inclusion and understanding of disability within their social media scrolls, to read books written by authors with disabilities, and to be mindful with people first language.

Games at Delta Dental of Wisconsin February's Better Together Event

Delta Dental of Wisconsin recently hosted an unforgettable evening filled with laughter, competition, and a healthy dose of oral hygiene for the friends in Better Together. The people with I-I friendship matches as well as new friends joining from the former Community Friends program were joined by Delta Dental volunteers to have a fun and inclusive time! Our game night featured the perfect blend of arcade style play and BINGO where the ultimate lucky winner won an electric toothbrush!

Shannon Semmerling, director of philanthropy and public benefit for DD of WI, played a large role in coordinating the event and we would all like to extend the biggest THANK YOU to her and her team. Thanks also to ODC's CEO, Julie Strenn, and DD of WI's CEO, Doug Ballweg, for attending the event and participating in the joy of friendship!



Additional Upcoming Events in the Community

Community Inclusion Showcase - FREE

Come meet local organizations and get involved in your community!

Free registration raffle, fun games, and a food truck!

March 12th, 2024 (1-6pm)

2801 Hoover Road, Stevens Point

***See attached flyer**

Tilting the Lens at the Portage County ADRC

Free movies that focus on disability awareness and inclusion.

Fridays - March 1 (Peanut Butter Falcon) - March 15 (Champions)

1519 Water Street, Stevens Point

***See attached flyer**

FIT for LIFE at 212 Fitness Club

Fun & inclusive training for individuals with disabilities

Monday & Wednesday - Times: 2:00pm - 2:45pm

3217 John Joanis Dr., Stevens Point, WI 54482

***See attached flyer**



-Portage County-
**Community
Inclusion
Showcase**

**March
12,
2024**

Vendors

Food Trucks

Games

Door Prizes

Learn about how our communities in Portage County support people of all abilities and find ways to get involved!

For More Information :

SSZYNSKIE@ODCINC.COM

OR (715) 347-7461

1PM-6PM

**@ The Nonprofit
Commons**

**2801 Hoover Road,
Stevens Point, WI 54481**

pcdc

Portage County Disability Coalition



Tilting the Lens

Focus on developmental disabilities in film

Join us in March for two exceptional movies that center on adults with developmental disabilities.



1:00 PM

**Lincoln Center
1519 Water St
Stevens Point, WI 54481**

FREE

Friday, March 1:

The Peanut Butter Falcon

A young man with Down syndrome escapes his assisted living facility and hits the road with a small-time crook.

Friday March 15:

Champions

A high-tempered professional basketball coach is sentenced to community service. He uses his skills to lead a team of players with intellectual disabilities to success.

**Developmental
Disabilities
Awareness
Month 2024**
A World of Opportunities

Call 715-346-1401 to let us know you are coming!



FIT for ALL

Fun Inclusive Training for Individuals with Special Needs

Fun & inclusive training for individuals with disabilities

This amazing program eliminates all barriers keeping individuals with physical, developmental and intellectual disabilities from reaching their fitness goals. We strive to become the most important part of these goals through fun and inclusive training. Open to the public!

SCHEDULE

Sign up anytime!

Days: Monday &

Wednesday **Times:** 2:00pm

- 2:45pm

Max 15 participants

PRICING

\$35 Per Month

Athletes must be at least 13 years old.

RESERVATIONS

Members and guests will need to visit the front desk to reserve a spot.

3217 John Joanis Dr.
Stevens Point, WI 54482
212fitnessclub.com
715.343.0212

DETAILS

Provides the many benefits of physical activity for an underserved population:

- Reduce onset of health-related risk factors
- Strengthen social skills
- Increase self-image, self-efficacy and self-esteem
- Boost positive mood and behavior

Athletes have the opportunity to workout with their peers and receive guidance through all exercises. Every exercise is adapted to their individual need, abilities and goals. The programming encompasses the four primary types of physical activity-aerobic, musculoskeletal strengthening, joint flexibility, and nutrition.



Want to volunteer?

212fitnessclub.com/fit-for-all

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the member services desk or scan the QR code