

# Connecting Communities

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

## Reconnecting Through Faith

### Rediscovering the Ties That Bind



Reconnection shows a strong bond. Recently Bee was able to reconnect with her church community after not attending for two years. After having lost her parents during the pandemic, Bee lost not only two very important people in her life, but also her main source of transportation. Bee and her family could be seen every Sunday at church as active members of the congregation and were well known by many.

Through Community Connections, Bee was able to explore her interests and where she might be able to connect with them in the community. Bee most notably showed a love for crafts and crocheting, as well as an interest in the library at first. Further conversations with Bee led to her talking about her faith and how she used to go to the UU Church of Wausau with her family. Although she initially explored a church within walking distance, Bee wanted to reconnect with her old church.

Upon walking in the door at UU Church of Wausau, Bee and one of the ladies at the front desk immediately recognized each other, gave each other a huge hug, and engaged in conversations about how each other were doing and what new things were going on. Not long after this, the pastor from the church came in the door and the same thing happened. It was like Bee had never left and they all just picked up right where they had left off. Bee is hoping to not only attend church again, but also wants to be more involved with activities going on at or through the church. The church is also hopeful to assist Bee with transportation through connecting her with various members of the church.

## Community Connector Contacts

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## Community Events and Activities

### Marshfield

Art Share at the Chestnut Center for the Arts

\*A free gathering for artists, crafters, and creative beginners

\*Bring your materials, or use a few basic materials that are provided

\*Held every 3rd Thursday of the month from 6pm-8:30pm

### Merrill

Cosmo Theatre

Monday nights

\$5 movie showings

### Stevens Point

Mid-State Technical College Adaptive Career Awareness Series

\*3 free sessions offered starting Nov. 16th at 10am

\*Visit website to register

<https://www.mstc.edu/CA-series>

### Wausau

Michaels on Rib Mountain Dr.

\*Free craft event every Sunday 2-4pm

### Wisconsin Rapids

YMCA Turkey Trot Fun Run/Walk

\*Thursday Nov. 23 from

9am to 12pm at Witter Field

\*No fee/registration

\*Non-perishable food item donation encouraged

Mid-State Technical College Adaptive Career Awareness Series

\*3 free sessions offered starting Nov. 8th at 10am

\*Visit website to register

<https://www.mstc.edu/CA-series>

We want to continue to build strong communities. If you are, or if you know about a group, business, institution, or space that brings individuals and communities together, please reach out to us.

## Upcoming Better Together Events

An event will be held each month at a different location in the community to bring people together. As our name implies, we feel that people are better when they are together. Visit our website or contact Samantha for updated dates and times for upcoming events.



## Better Together Contact

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## Better Together Friends Visit to Schmeckle Reserve

"I'm so glad to live in a world where there are Octobers." Most of us have heard this quote, and on October 11th, the Stevens Point community got to live it out. Samantha Szynskie of Better Together, ODC partnered with Melissa Ruether and Griffin Bray of UWSP's Schmeckle to provide an Autumn Gratitude Walk to the friends in the Better Together – Friendships program and invited the whole community to join. After everyone gathered in the Welcome Area to meet and greet, Melissa led the group of 20+ people around the Schmeckle trails. Moments after beginning to meander, someone pointed out a deer in the field and the group stopped to admire. Melissa taught about why and how leaves change colors with our lively and participative group – children and adults alike were offering ideas and learning together. Griffin showed us sweet fern and described how it can be made into a delicious tea. The group made it back to Menzel Pavilion just as the sun set to enjoy comradery and snacks.

Special thanks to Cassandra Sepeda and News Channel 7 for joining us on our walk and sharing in our gratitude. The Better Together program and their longest paired friends will be featured on WSAW and wsa.com on October 27 at 5pm with a shorter segment at 6pm as well as online. To view the Channel 7 story click <https://www.wsa.com/2023/10/27/your-town-stevens-point-volunteer-program-fosters-friendship-inclusion/>

## Adaptive Career Classes

### At Mid-State Technical College

Collaboration at its finest, Mid-State Technical College and Opportunity Development Centers, Inc first partnered in October 2023 to create an Inclusive Career Awareness program series on the Stevens Point MSTC Campus. Ben Nusz, Stevens Point MSTC Campus Dean, worked with Samantha Szynskie, Better Together-ODC, to create and implement 6 classes that allowed students participating in ODC's Day Services to engage with different areas of the college. This included fine and gross motor skill activities presented by Early Childhood, an experience with Criminal Justice tools, a look at web development, and so much more! The series was so fun and engaging that Ben Nusz agreed to prepare a second session for the winter/spring semester which culminated in a very special graduation ceremony where MSTC President, Dr. Shelly Mondeik gave the commencement address.

To continue and build this opportunity, MSTC is offering another series starting in November 2023 and is open for adults of all ages and abilities to participate in classes both at Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids MSTC campuses. To learn more or register, be sure to follow this link <https://www.mstc.edu/CA-series>.

