



Connecting PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

JANUARY 2021



New Year. New Leadership.

Julie Strenn has been appointed President/CEO of ODC by the ODC Board of Directors, effective January 1, 2021.

Julie's appointment is part of a two-year executive transition plan, as Pam Ross, previous ODC President/CEO will assume an advisory role to continue to support this transition until her retirement in 2022.

Board of Directors President Nan Taylor said, "We are excited to welcome Julie to her new role. She has a wealth of knowledge and experience and will lead us in continuing ODC's mission and leading the organization into the future. Julie possesses many of the qualities we felt were imperative to the continued growth of ODC - strategic thinking, innovation and action."

Julie joined ODC in December 2019 as Executive Vice President. Prior to that, she provided consulting services to ODC from 2015 through 2019. Julie has more than 25 years



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- Pam Ross

of experience in long-term care, having worked for provider agencies, managed care organizations, and state and local government agencies including the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Inlusa (formerly Community Care of Central Wisconsin), and Wood County. From 2012 through 2019, Julie owned a consulting business through which she



Above: Julie poses in front of the new ODC sign in Wisconsin Rapids. | Julie visits with Mike, an ODC participant, on the mailing department's work floor.

worked with service providers, funders and multiple state governments in transforming the long-term care system to focus on community employment and community living for people with disabilities.

“I’ve known Julie for over 10 years through other agencies, she’s a great lady, I’m very happy for her! Not that I want Pam to leave”, ODC participant Amanda says with a smile. “I do think it is a great thing for ODC, she’ll continue to bring good opportunities here.”

This past year, Julie oversaw all of ODC’s programs and services and became involved in all facets of ODC administration and operations. During the COVID – 19 pandemic, Julie’s exceptional leadership and vision were evident as ODC quickly adapted and provided new and

innovative ways we could continue to support people during the pandemic. At the same time, she led ODC in launching new services that we will continue to develop in the coming year.

“I have had the great opportunity to work closely with Julie over the last decade. As I reflect back there are many examples and situations that highlight Julie’s ability to lead diverse groups to achieving great outcomes,” said Kris Kubnick, Chief Member Experience Officer at Includa, Inc. “But it is her steadfast commitment to taking a collaborative approach to breaking down barriers so that individuals can dream big and chase those dreams that stand out the most. Julie has had a significant impact on many, and I believe is a perfect fit to support ODC’s continued impact on our communities.”

Pam states, “Julie has already demonstrated that she is an incredible leader. She is innovative, energetic, and inspires our ODC team to be its very best. Most important, there is no doubt that she truly cares about the people that ODC supports. ODC is in great hands under her leadership.”

Julie reflects, “I could have never predicted 2020. When I joined ODC I knew that it was an amazing organization with dedicated and passionate people; however, the challenges of 2020 proved to me that I am in the perfect place, working along side the most talented and caring people. When challenges and diversity struck in 2020 we did what we always do, put others first, assuring that every person had the supports needed to live their best life, saying ‘yes we will help’ to anyone asking, and most important, we did it together as one team. I am so honored to be able to lead this organization.”

Julie lives in Arpin with her husband Rob and son Ethan. Rob works at the Research Center at the Marshfield Clinic in Information Technology and Ethan is a junior at Pittsville High School. Julie’s daughter Bethany currently attends UW Oshkosh pursuing a degree in Anthropology. You can find Julie cooking Thanksgiving meals at Crossroads Church, or volunteering at the Pittsville Schools. Julie is also one of the youth group leaders at Crossroads church. Julie currently serves on both the Wispact and Arrowhead Bible Camp board of directors.

Get To Know... Julie!

WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU WERE A KID?

I always wanted to be a nurse. However, when I shadowed surgeries in high school and passed out I thought that maybe I should look for a different career!



WHAT WAS THE LAST THING THAT MADE YOU LAUGH?

Watching my nephew at Christmas. His little sister was on the floor and we told him he couldn't jump and he said like only a three year old can, "I will jump OVER her"...

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOURSELF AT AGE 15?

This is but a short blip in life. Put in perspective what you are facing, as there is a big world out there in front of you. When there are many things in this world to choose, ALWAYS choose to be KIND!

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WISHED WOULD COME BACK IN FASHION?

For sure ologs... I loved my ologs

IF YOU HAD A WARNING LABEL, WHAT WOULD YOURS READ?

Full Speed Ahead... Someone hit the breaks and slow her down!



WHO IS YOUR HERO?

My grandpa. My grandpa was an amazing man. He taught me to work hard. He taught me to take care of myself. He taught me that winning is never worth it (being kind is). I was so blessed to have him in my life until he was 92.



WHAT WAS THE LAST BOOK YOU READ?

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead by Brene Brown



Above left: Julie doing meal prep at Crossroads Church of Pittsville Annual Free Thanksgiving Day Meal. | Above right: Strenn Family - Ethan, Julie, Rob and Bethany.



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A Look at ODC's Leadership Over the Years

*ODC has been fortunate to have strong, long term leaders throughout its history, with **two** of its leaders serving a combined total of 52 years.*



GARY GILBERT 1969-1999

Gary was hired when ODC was still in its infancy, and he developed a strong organization and board leadership. Gary's greatest legacy was initiating ODC's fund development program. He started ODC's Trust for Rehabilitation in 1978, and the ODC Endowment Fund in 1989. Over the years, the community support continued to grow, allowing ODC to start new programs and support vital services. During Gary's tenure, the community supported two capital campaigns to expand the Wisconsin Rapids facility and build a new facility in Marshfield.



PAM ROSS 2000-2020

Pam was hired in 1986 as the first Job Coach for ODC's Supported Employment program, and over the years, took on progressive levels of responsibility and leadership. Pam credits Gary for being a strong mentor and allowing her to learn and grow with the organization. During Pam's tenure, ODC added many new services, expanded its geographic area and transformed from a primarily center-based model to a strong community-based model. ODC's community and philanthropic support have also grown significantly, and ODC is recognized as a progressive, innovative, person-centered organization.