

ACCESS GUIDEBOOK

November 2023
Quarterly

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VALUING THE INVALUABLE: WISCONSIN FAMILY CAREGIVERS

There are **over 580,000 family caregivers in Wisconsin** who provide an estimated **540 million hours of unpaid care** each year to their family members, friends and neighbors. That unpaid care has an estimated **economic value of \$9.2 billion**. You can find this data in a recent [AARP report](#) as part of the Valuing the Invaluable series. According to a [survey](#) conducted by the Wisconsin Family & Caregiver Support Alliance (WFACSA) in 2019, approximately 60% of the 580,000 family caregivers are also employed—working either full or part-time jobs in addition to their caregiving.

That is why we say **caregivers are the backbone of our communities and of the economy**. We can not afford to lose them. Without family, friends, and neighbors, hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities would not get the help they need to live life to the fullest.

Join us in expressing our deepest appreciation for family caregivers throughout **November's National Family Caregiver Month**. Do you have someone who helps you from time to time? Is your neighbor taking care of a loved one? Do you work with someone who, in addition to their full or part-time job, also takes care of a child, spouse, partner or parent? If so, tell them thank you. Tell them they are important. Make them a card. Buy them a coffee. Leave them a secret piece of candy. Whatever you do, make sure they are not forgotten.

Read more about the role of family caregivers in Wisconsin:
<https://states.aarp.org/wisconsin/wi-valuing>

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

WRITTEN BY: DAN EUMURIAN

In September, 1952, at ten months of age, I contracted polio.

According to Wikipedia, 0.1 to 0.5 percent of children infected with the virus have paralytic poliomyelitis. I did.

The doctor first failed to diagnose it. The fever was extremely high. You normally take liquids orally; I couldn't. Somehow, Mom remembered that the large intestine absorbs water. She'd give me a cool enema every half hour. The doctor later said that probably saved my brain or life, but he told my parents, "If he lives, he'll be a 'vegetable.' He'll never be able to use a wheelchair. He'll be a burden. Why don't you put him in an institution?" They didn't.

After two weeks' quarantine in the Camp McCoy hospital, I reached for my walker, but my legs didn't work. The universe was against me. I had to fight. My arms began to recover, so Mom and Dad gave me a throw rug. I would pull myself across the floor and up and down stairs headfirst. (I don't recommend any of this.) That shouldn't have been possible. I did it.

When my sister was eight and I was six, our parents obtained an old upright piano. I now play, sing with, teach, tune, and fix pianos, and have substitute-taught thousands of kids. I've written hundreds of songs and poems; some are on my website.

In theology, counseling, and music therapy courses, I learned that someone with great power can become a servant, someone can understand how you feel without judging you, and someone can connect with you where you are and help you move outward, upward, and forward--and beyond expectations!

Mom once said, "I will wash anyone's feet, but I won't let anyone scuff their feet on me." I want to affirm people wherever I can, whether or not they have a disability, and whether or not I always agree with them. I'll work and fight for proper acknowledgement, accessibility, and accommodation. I'm thankful for who I am, who has helped me, and what I've accomplished, and I'd love to hear your thoughts and stories! Visit www.lacrossepiano.com or email me at djeumurian@gmail.com.

I suggest in my song "Coming Closer to the Wind," some "anchors" should be cut away. Others can be brought on board like "ballast" to improve your sailing.

My poem "What Happened to You" ends:
"Watch the way I happen back!"

**Do you have a story to share?
We want to hear it!**

Submit your writing to: adrc@lacrossecounty.org
Put "Access Guidebook" in the subject line.

OR mail it to:
ADRC of La Crosse County
C/o Access Guidebook Team
300 4th St. N
La Crosse, WI 54601

Get on our mailing list!
Call: 608-785-5700
Email: adrc@lacrossecounty.org

**Read more of
Dan's work at
lacrossepiano.com**



**"Some
'anchors'
should be
cut away."**



NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVER MONTH

Self-Identifying as a Caregiver: Let the Truth Set You Free!

Are you a caregiver? It is surprising how many of us will quickly answer “no” to that question. We admit that we help out a loved one a few times a week, take them to appointments and do their shopping. But for some reason, we hesitate to call ourselves “caregivers”. In fact, according to an [AARP Caregiver Identification study](#), only about 19 percent of caregivers in the country are willing to identify themselves as such.

The Benefits of Identifying as a Caregiver:

People who self-identify as caregivers are:

- more likely to find and use community services that are available to them like respite, support groups and educational classes.
- more proactive about seeking resources and skills they need to provide care.
- more confident when talking to healthcare professionals about their loved one's care.
- more likely to feel a sense of purpose and experience satisfaction.

So Are You Really A Caregiver?

If you are helping with any of these activities, you are a caregiver.

- **Personal care:** bathing, grooming, toileting, exercise assistance.
- **Chores:** yard work, laundry, cleaning assistance.
- **Food:** shopping for and preparing meals.
- **Errands:** delivering mail, picking up prescriptions, driving to hair appointments.
- **Health Care:** helping with medications, keeping track of vitals, reporting to doctors.
- **Emotional support:** being there for someone personally and emotionally.

Paraphrased from: Palmer, Michelle. *Self-Identifying as a Caregiver: How the Truth May Actually Set You Free!*, Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, 15 Apr. 2021, benrose.org/-/resource-library/family-caregiving/self-identifying-as-a-caregiver.

Caring for a loved one but don't know where to start?

Get access to an online library of short courses, skills training, useful local resources and support—all from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

www.wisconsincaregiver.trualta.com/login



RESPIRE CARE ASSOCIATION OF WI



**Do you need respite care?
Do you want to be a
respite care provider?**

RCAW has the resources and connections you need!

- FREE training for caregivers and respite providers
- GRANTS for caregiver respite
- FREE online Respite Care Registry
- Respite Connections job board
- Other respite resources and virtual learning

Website: www.respitecarewi.org

Email: info@respitecarewi.org

Phone: 608-222-2033

“Family caregivers save the government billions of dollars—respite saves the caregiver.”

-National Respite Coalition



75-85% of caregivers are not getting the break or “respite” they need.

\$1,000 spent on respite = 8% drop in hospitalizations

Check out this podcast for caregivers!



Listen on:

- Spotify
- Google Podcasts
- Amazon Music
- Anchor.fm

To help us continue providing this valuable newsletter, please consider making a donation.

Donate online at www.lacrossecounty.org/adrc
Find the yellow “donate” button toward the bottom of the page.

Mail a check to: ADRC of La Crosse County
300 4th St. N, La Crosse, WI 54601
Write “Access Guidebook” in the memo line.

Thank you for your support!

LOCAL RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS

STAR Center

Physical fitness, adaptive and therapeutic recreation, parasports

The STAR Center programs are for youth, adults and seniors. Parasports or adaptive sports are designed for people with physical and developmental disabilities. They make adjustments to a game or sport so that everyone can play!

Fall & Winter Programs 2023:

Parkinson's Disease programs

Adaptive Soccer

Adaptive and Para Badminton

Adaptive and Para Pickleball

Adaptive and Para Strength & Conditioning

Wheelchair Basketball

Adaptive Flag Football

Wheelchair Football

Sled hockey



Sign up for the STAR Center newsletter!

Website: www.starcenterlacrosse.org

Email: info@starcenterlacrosse.org

Phone: 608-797-6718

Adaptive Kickball League

@ Features Fieldhouse, 1425 WI-16, West Salem, WI 54669

Adult & High School League. Middle & Elementary School League.
\$60/athlete.

Sign up at: www.featuresfieldhouse.com

Livin' Ona Spare! Adaptive Bowling

Nov. 13, Dec. 11, Jan. 8 @ Features, West Salem

For adults 18+ with cognitive or mobility challenges

\$8 for 2 games and shoes

Contact Keri: meske@onalaskaschools.com

YMCA Inclusion & Adaptive Programs

Various sports and programs offered throughout the year for children and adults with disabilities.

Website: <https://www.laxymca.org/inclusion/>

Phone/Text: 608-782-9622



Special Recreation Programs

La Crosse Parks & Rec

More information at: www.cityoflacrosse.org/parks

Phone: 608-789-2489

Special Olympics Sports

Winter Season (December—February)

Downhill Skiing

Snowboarding

Bowling (September—December)

Spring Season (January-April)

Basketball

Swimming

More information and register online at:

www.cityoflacrosse.org/parks

Phone: 608-789-2489



**Special
Olympics**
Wisconsin

Chair One Fitness

Tuesdays Sept. 26—Nov. 28 2:30—3:30pm

Chair-based dance fitness program with activities of daily living incorporated into cool dance moves.

Concordia Ballroom

All ages and abilities

\$40/8-week session. Scholarships available. Free for Veterans.

Taught by UW-La Crosse Therapeutic Recreation students.

Register at: www.starcenterlacrosse.org or **Call:** 608-797-6295

RESOURCES CONTINUED

North American Squirrel Association (N.A.S.A.)

Outdoor recreational therapy

N.A.S.A. provides outdoor opportunities for people with disabilities.

Activities include: fishing, pontoon rental, hunting, shooting clinic, skiing, golf, kayaking, sled hockey, bicycling, and free Action Trackchair rentals.

Website: www.nasasquirrel.org

Email: nasasquirrel@yahoo.com

Phone: 608-234-5988



All Abilities Market

Microbusinesses, artists & makers



Are you an artist, maker, or business owner with a disability? Would you like to showcase your goods and products? Check out the All Abilities Market. Makers also have an opportunity to sell their arts and crafts at the annual Self-Determination Conference.

Website: www.allamarket.org

Google “Wisconsin self-determination conference” for more information about that event.

Tell us what you think!

Take our survey and tell us what you want to see in future newsletters.

Let us know how we are doing and if we can make any improvements.

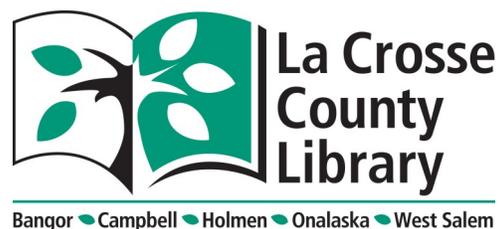
Survey link: <https://forms.gle/rNuFUHBZ2x5TGgtW8>

Able Reads Collection

Books for all abilities

- Nonfiction
- Picture cookbooks
- Graphic novels
- Easy to read novels
- Picture books for adults

Check out these books at the Onalaska Public Library or on the county library website.



Website: www.lacrossecountylibrary.org

Email: onalaskalibrary@lacrossecounty.org

Phone: 608-781-9568

Next Chapter Book Club

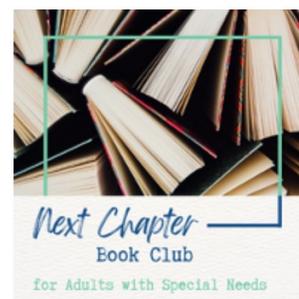
For adults with disabilities, all reading levels

Onalaska Public Library

Thursdays 10:30am

Email: libraryprograms@lacrossecounty.org

Phone: 608-399-3383

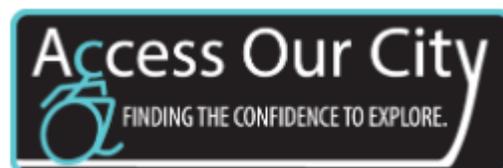


AccessOurCity.org

Community access

Access Our City helps people locate inclusive stores, restaurants, and local businesses with information on the accommodations provided at each place as well as a helpful map. You are encouraged to leave reviews that will help others know more before they go!

Website: www.accessourcity.org



RESOURCES CONTINUED

Home Accessibility Grants

Up to \$10,000 available to assist eligible homeowners and long-term renters with accessibility modifications to their homes in order to maintain or find employment for themselves or other household members.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Live in La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon or Crawford County
- Household income must be at 80% county median income or lower
- Participate in a home assessment provided by Independent Living Resources

The \$10,000 includes assessment fees and is granted to the client. Additional repair funds may be available pending eligibility.

Contact Sara Berger at Couleecap
sara.berger@couleecap.org



Assistive Technology Needs?

Independent Living Resources (ILR) has a technology loan and demonstration program including a donation closet with safe, gently-used devices and durable medical equipment. Call: 608-787-1111 Email: advocacy@ilresources.org

Virtual Daily Living Skills Training

Skills building & education

Open to people with developmental & intellectual disabilities.

Do you want to be more independent? Do you want to learn how to cook, manage your money, or do your own laundry? What about getting out in the community?

Contact Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin (DSAW)

Website: www.dsaw.org/hcbs

Email: info@dsaw.org

Healthy Relationships & Sexuality Workshop

Skills building & education

Part 1: General Relationships

Part 2: Sexuality and Advanced Topics

Open to ages 14+

To register for a class series or to learn more, contact Aptiv.

Website: www.aptiv.org

Phone: 608-785-3527

Parkinson's Disease Support Group

Monday Nov. 6 5—6:30 pm

Monday Dec. 4 5—6:30 pm

Black River Beach Neighborhood Center, 1433 Rose St., La Crosse

Looking for support with Parkinson's disease? You are not alone. This support group is for care partners and persons who are living with a Parkinson's diagnosis. Members will have an opportunity to ask questions, share resources, and learn tips from one another for how to proactively manage Parkinson's.

Contact facilitator Amy Brezinka at La Crosse Parks & Rec

Coffee Connect for Visually Impaired Persons (VIP)

Open to people with visual impairments and their caregivers.

Meets 1st Friday of the month 10:45am—12pm

Harry J. Olson Senior Center

1607 North St., La Crosse, WI

Zoom option available

Contact Jeannie Nylander for more information

Phone: 608-781-3361

Email: mjnylander61@charter.net

RESOURCES CONTINUED

Financial Planning Workshops

Presented by Joel Dettwiler, ChSNC, founder of the Quantum Group
Register through La Crosse Parks & Rec [online](#) or call 608-789-7533.
Registration deadline: One day prior to session

ABLE Accounts & Special Needs Trust with MA

Thursday, Dec. 7 10—11:30am

Black River Beach Neighborhood Center

Are you concerned about asset limits and staying eligible for Wisconsin Medicaid? There are ways to save money for the future even if one is receiving public benefits. Learn about the various savings tools in this seminar.

Special Needs Financial Planning—Open Forum Q&A

Thursday, Nov. 2 6—7pm

Thursday, Dec. 7 6—7pm

Emerson Elementary School Library

Do you or your family member have a disability? Are you looking for answers to your questions about Social Security, MA, and financial planning? Bring your questions to this open forum and make sense of your disability plan.

Questions? Contact Joel at jdettwiler@quantumplanners.com

Social Security Basics—Applying for Disability

Presented by the Aging & Disability Resource Center

Thursday, Nov. 30 5—6pm

Thursday, Jan. 18 5—6pm

La Crosse County Human Services Building and VIRTUAL option

Get helpful tips on how to apply for disability benefits. Understand what information is needed for the application, what the process looks like, and what resources are available to help you.

Registration required.

Phone: 608-785-5700

Email: adrc@lacrossecounty.org

High School Transition Planning Basics

Presented by the Aging & Disability Resource Center

Tuesday, Jan. 16 5:30—6:30pm

La Crosse County Human Services Building and VIRTUAL option

Transition planning starts early. Get to know the ADRC as one of your transition partners outside of school. Learn about what services the ADRC offers and things you should be thinking about to prepare for life as an adult.

Registration required.

Phone: 608-785-5700

Email: adrc@lacrossecounty.org

Caregiver Workshop—How to Hire & Train Respite Providers

Presented by Val Madsen, Training & Development Specialist with Respite Care Association of Wisconsin. Sponsored by the ADRC.

Thursday, Dec. 7 5—6:30pm

Hunter's Last Chance Bar & Grill

140 Leonard St S, West Salem

Open to family caregivers and professionals.

Registration deadline: November 17, 2023

Phone: 608-785-5700

Email: adrc@lacrossecounty.org



Disclaimer

This resource directory has been developed by the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of La Crosse County. It is intended to help you find resources in the community. It is not a complete list of services. It is not a marketing tool and is not meant to endorse or recommend specific businesses or agencies. The ADRC of La Crosse County is not responsible for any changes that may have been made after publication. Please contact your desired resource for the most up-to-date information.

Good to Know: Adult Disabilities Social Worker at Gundersen Health System

My name is **Dawn Kimpel**, and I am the **Adult Disabilities Social Worker at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse**. I've worked in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities for approximately 25 years. I grew up with exposure to people with disabilities as the daughter of a speech therapist and parents who did respite and foster care for children with disabilities. I am also the mother of a child with special needs. My work experience ranges from residential services, Family Care, homeless services, mobile crisis, information and referral, and as a parent specialist at Wisconsin First Step.

I became the Adult Disabilities Social Worker in July, 2018 following the retirement of Julie Holzwarth who worked at Gundersen for 27 years as the Adult Disabilities Coordinator. Most of the work I do occurs in the out-patient clinic, however, I sometimes help bridge the gap between the inpatient and outpatient settings.

The types of support I provide includes:

- attending appointments
- coordinating follow-up care
- accessing appropriate care for individuals with complex medical needs
- seeking creative ways to help patients meet their needs
- collaborating with medical staff and community supports
- providing education to clinicians and patients
- assisting with the transition from pediatric to adult health care
- improving communication between patients and their health care providers
- offering assistance and support enabling patients to feel heard and respected
- advocating to improve health care access and equity



Contact Dawn by phone at 608-775-2789 or by email at

dlkimpel@gundersenhealth.org

WHAT'S THE WORD?

“What’s the Word?” is a column where the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) features a different leader in Wisconsin living with a disability. “What’s the Word?” is an opportunity to hear directly from self-advocates about what’s important to them.

Read stories from self-advocates in
“What’s the Word?” online:

www.wi-bpdd.org/index.php/whats-the-word



If you or someone you know would like to be featured in “What’s the Word?”, contact: Jeremy Gundlach jeremy.gundlach@wisconsin.gov

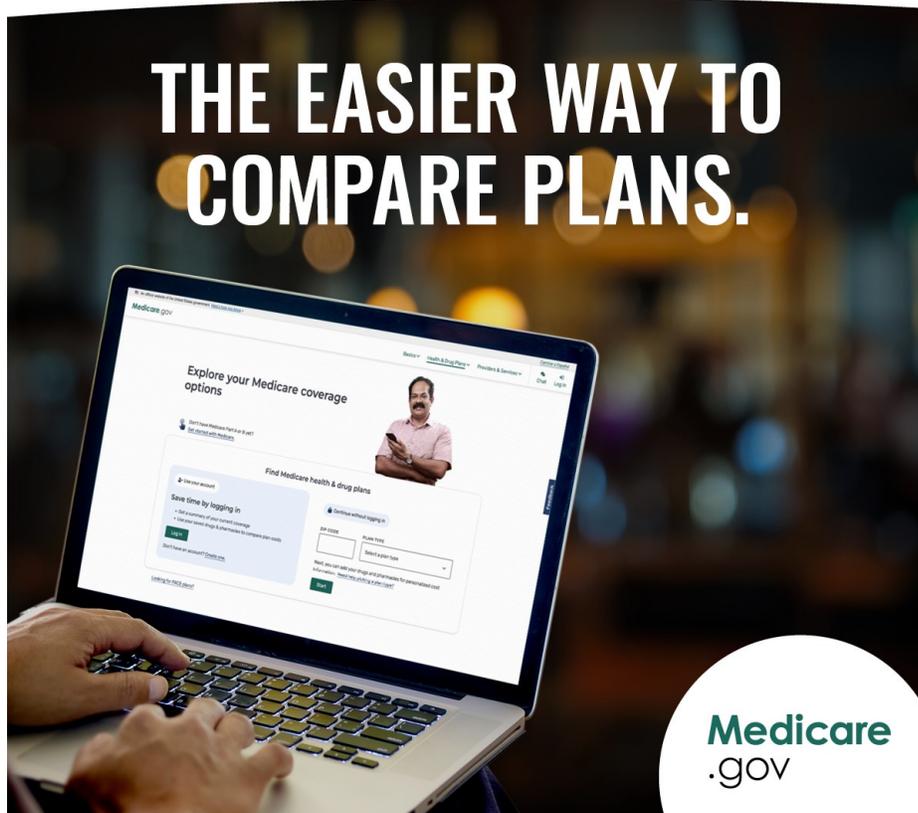
Center On Youth Voice, Youth Choice

The Center for Youth Voice, Youth Choice supports youth with disabilities and their families to learn and share information about alternatives to guardianship. There are ways that youth can have control over their decisions after they become a legal adult. Supported decision-making is one option that gives youth more control. The Wisconsin State Team of youth ambassadors is focused on spreading word about supported decision-making to other youth, parents and professionals.

Find out what the youth ambassadors are saying at:
www.youthvoicestg.wpengine.com/wisconsin-state-team

Medicare Open Enrollment Oct. 15—Dec. 7

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT | OCT. 15–DEC. 7



Now is the time to find the best fit for your needs and budget!

www.medicare.gov/plan-compare makes it easy to compare coverage options, shop for plans, and feel confident in your choice.

Contact a Benefit Specialist at the ADRC if you have any questions about your Medicare or other health insurance coverage. 608-785-5700



During Medicare's Open Enrollment Period (OEP), you will likely experience more marketing from private Medicare plans, like Medicare Advantage Plans and Part D plans. Companies try to reach consumers in various ways, like television commercials, radio ads, events, mailings, phone calls, and texts. The government has rules, though, to protect you from aggressive or misleading marketing. Knowing the rules can help you make the best choices for yourself during OEP.

Protecting Yourself from Marketing Violations

Medicare Plans cannot:

- Call, text or leave voicemails unless you are already a member or gave prior permission
- Email you or call you if you have opted out of communication
- Approach you in public areas (parking lots, hallways, sidewalks)
- Ask for personal information or try to sell you a plan at an educational exhibit
- Give you prizes or gifts worth over \$15
- Provide full meals at sales or marketing events

Watch out for people who:



Ask for your Medicare number, Social Security number, or bank information, especially before you decide to enroll. Someone can use this information to enroll you in a plan without your permission.



Say they represent Medicare. Plans are never allowed to state they represent or are endorsed by Medicare or any other government agency. They cannot use the Medicare name or logo on their marketing materials in a way that implies this.



Send you unsolicited text messages or phone calls.



Pressure you to enroll in their plan. You can use the entire Open Enrollment Period to make your decisions. You will not receive extra benefits for signing up early.



Offer you gifts to enroll in their plan. Gifts must be given to everyone at an event regardless of their enrollment choice, and cannot be worth more than \$15.

Who to contact for more information:

- **1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227):** Contact Medicare to request disenrollment if you were enrolled in a plan without your consent or based on misleading information.
- **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) (1-800-242-1060):** Contact your local SHIP to report any marketing violations or to request help correcting an unwanted enrollment.
- **Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) (1-888-818-2611):** Call your local SMP to report potential Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse, including marketing violations.

DISABILITY ADVOCACY DAY 2024

WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION IN OUR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Disability Advocacy Day is a day-long event focused on connecting self-advocates with their legislators to talk about issues that matter to them.

Participants support the Survival Coalition's mission to maximize community inclusion for all people with disabilities. The day starts with a morning briefing and legislator visits take place in the afternoon.

**Don't miss this opportunity to
let your voice be heard!**



**Survival
Coalition**

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

Calling All Advocates!

Are you interested in creating inclusive communities and taking action on issues that are important to people with disabilities?

Disability Action Network (aka DAN) is a grassroots organization of community members, service agencies, and local organizations whose mission is to develop an inclusive and engaged community, support impactful activities, and promote disability awareness and advocacy. DAN hosts the annual Disability Pride Fest in La Crosse.

**Meets 3rd Wednesday of the month
Virtually 3—4pm
Email: dancommittee@gmail.com**



@DisabilityActionNetwork



SPOTLIGHT ON: ORC INDUSTRIES

What is ORC Industries?

ORC Industries is a manufacturing facility headquartered in the La Crosse northside industrial park whose mission is to employ adults with disabilities.



Are you looking for work? Are you preparing for life as an adult with a disability? We can help you explore your options! ORC Industries provides employment as well as vocational education services.

What jobs can I get at ORC Industries?

Light Assembly Department: Learn how to package products. You could also work at our offsite partner, Select Custom Solutions, in their assembly department.

Redfeather Outdoors Snowshoes & Canoe Operating Division: Learn how to assemble nine different kinds of snowshoes ranging from children's "Snowpaws" to racing snowshoes. Or you can work with handcrafted composite canoes, built one at a time.

Sewing Department: Learn to sew the eleven parts of a sailor "Dixie" hat, attach size tags, UPC labels, and package them for the U.S. Navy. We also sew military grade tarps and tents, and military issue clothing such as ponchos, trousers, and jackets. Did you know we sew 144,000 U.S. Navy sailor "Dixie" hats each year?

Third-Party Logistics Fulfillment Center: Third-party logistics is our newest operation starting in Fall 2023 that features a state-of-the-art robotics system. Our fulfillment center uses robots that will assist you in fulfilling our Redfeather snowshoe orders and other third-party customer orders.

**Are you interested in employment with
ORC Industries?**

**Call 608-781-7727 to make an appointment and
learn more!**

Rides to Work:

ORC Industries is located on the MTU bus line.

You can also take:

**Abby Vans,
RSVP &**

**Caring Hearts
transportation.**

ORC Facts:

- Began 1966
- Non-profit
- Board of directors
- President:
Scott Iverson

Locations:

**La Crosse, WI
Arcadia, WI
Brownsville, TX**

**Aging & Disability Resource Center
of La Crosse County**

300 4th St. N

La Crosse, WI 54601

Phone: 608-785-5700

Fax: 608-785-5790

E-mail: adrc@lacrossecounty.org

The next issue of Access Guidebook will be available in Feb. 2024.



FROM THE ADRC

The Aging & Disability Resource Center has information about disability services and programs in the community. We can help with:

- transportation
- health insurance
- Social Security
- home care
- supported decision-making
- guardianship
- transition planning for youth graduating from high school

and more!



If you are caring for a friend or family member, we can help you, too! We are always here for you.

Call, email, stop by our office or visit our website.

608-785-5700

lacrossecounty.org/adrc

adrc@lacrossecounty.org

300 4th St. N
La Crosse, WI 54601

Walk-in weekdays

8:30am—3:30pm

Wed 10:30am—3:30pm