

Community Connectors

Fact Sheet

Community Connectors (CC) is a program for young adults (18 and older) with disabilities who want to build leadership skills, network and socialize independently from their families and caregivers. It is designed to support these young adults to fully participate in their communities. CC is part of Pathways for Life, a component of TEEM (Transition, Education and Employment Model), developed by the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies.

Person-centered approach

Like other TEEM programs, Community Connectors uses a person-centered approach. It involves goal setting, individualized coaching, volunteerism and community service experiences, recreational events and personalized training sessions. Life coaches provide instruction, encouragement, information and guidance within a framework that focuses on the individual's hopes, dreams and goals.

Goals for participants

- Develop leadership skills they can apply to social connecting, self-advocacy and volunteerism in their community
- Enhance socialization and communication skills to help them develop friendships and relationships
- Improve their self-esteem by identifying and building upon personal strengths and utilizing these strengths to make a difference in the community

Positive outcomes of community service

- Fosters inclusion of people with disabilities into all facets of society
- Breaks down attitudinal barriers and stereotypes often held by the general public about the abilities of people with disabilities.

Leadership meetings

At monthly meetings, participants learn and practice organizational, interpersonal, and social skills—and develop new friendships—as they plan future events and recreational activities. Coaches facilitate these meetings and support individuals who volunteer to plan and lead each event. Connectors take leadership in planning and implementing such activities as attending sporting events, movies and theater performances; going out to dinner, having dinner parties and picnics; engaging in crafts; and performing community service.

Membership

Community Connectors is a membership driven organization. Dues are \$50/year. Members are responsible for their transportation and any fees associated with events. If you are self-motivated, eager to meet new people and interested in becoming involved in your community, contact Debbie Bain at dbain@udel.edu or 302-831-8733 to schedule an appointment.

"I wanted to do different things for the community and myself. I like to volunteer for the community. It makes me feel good to give back. It helps me to get connected with different people. I learned how to cook for a large amount of people. I learned about budgeting skills. This couldn't happen if I was not involved with Connectors".

- M, member, Community Connectors

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