



OPPORTUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
CENTERS, INC.

[www.odcinc.com](http://www.odcinc.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ODC CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF CONNECTING PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES 1965-2025**

**Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, February 17, 2025**

Sixty years ago, in 1965, a small group of parents and supportive community leaders had the forethought and courage to look to the future in meeting the employment needs of people with disabilities. They believed that by forming partnerships with their communities, they could do great things. This small group of committed citizens helped to create the “South Wood County Sheltered Workshop” and the “Marshfield Rehabilitation Workshop” to provide employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. Just 5 years later, the two workshops merged to become Wood County Workshop. In 1975, Wood County Workshop changed its name to Opportunity Development Centers, Inc. (ODC). Over the last 60 years, ODC has grown and changed significantly while still focusing on supporting people with disabilities.

According to a 1967-68 annual report, ODC supported 167 adults in 1 program (center-based work) in Wood County. Today, ODC supports more than 1,500 individuals through 20 programs and services in 21 Wisconsin Counties. And we continue to grow. What started out as a center-based work program for adults with disabilities is now a full-service agency that supports individuals with disabilities of all ages to achieve their work and life goals. We offer a variety of programs and services, which include employment, community pre-vocational training, self-employment, school transition, Project SEARCH, mental health services (including outpatient mental health clinics), children’s long-term support, community day services, independent living skills, housing counseling, assistive technology, community connection services, peer mentoring and guardianship services. All of ODC’s programs are designed and intended to promote independent living, inclusion and community integration of people with disabilities within the workplace and all aspects of community life.

Ann Lepak, ODC’s Director of Public Relations & Fund Development, has dedicated 33 years of employment to ODC. She is amazed at how the organization has grown and changed significantly throughout the years. Lepak has had the unique experience of working in many departments throughout her time at ODC, including supporting individuals to find and maintain employment and starting and leading Project SEARCH sites in Wisconsin Rapids, Wausau and Stevens Point. She is currently serving as the Director of Public Relations & Fund Development. Her dedication to ODC is remarkable, and it’s a testament to her commitment to ODC’s mission of “empowering people with disabilities to achieve their work and life goals.”

“I truly believe in the work we do at ODC. ODC is a very special organization and I feel honored to have had the privilege to come to work here every single day for the past 33 years. I’ve enjoyed being a part of all of the growth and change we’ve gone through over the years. It’s amazing to think back to how different it used to be when the majority of work took place at ODC, compared to now the majority of individuals we support are working and participating in the community,” Ann Lepak said.

Great things did and continue to happen at ODC. “ODC’s success is a credit to the many people that are partners in our mission. We could not do any of this without our employees and the support of community members, families, small businesses and large corporations, clubs, churches, private foundations and community groups. We look forward to what can be accomplished in the next 60 years,” said Julie Strenn, President & CEO.

*Opportunity Development Centers, Inc. (ODC) is a non-profit agency whose mission is to empower people with disabilities to achieve their work and life goals. ODC was established in 1965 and supports individuals in 21 counties in Wisconsin. ODC supports individuals with disabilities from early years to adulthood. ODC provides skills training, employment services, and connects people with their communities. For more information or to learn more about ODC, please call Ann Lepak at 715-424-2712 or email [alepak@odcinc.com](mailto:alepak@odcinc.com).*

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