



WINTER/SPRING 2024 PROGRAM GUIDE

Welcome to Mercy Connections

Who We Are:

Mercy Connections is an educational and community resource center that offers a wide variety of classes and programs for adults who are looking to advance themselves through education, mentoring, small business development and community.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated and talented professional staff who facilitate, coach, mentor and are available to reach your goals.

Our beautiful center is for everyone. We welcome you and ask that you participate with a kind heart and take good care of the shared space and community.

Programs & Services Offered:

- Academic Tutoring
- Community Lunch Food Program
- English Language Learning
- Inclusive Entrepreneurship
- Justice & Mentoring
- Personal Growth
- U.S. Citizenship Preparation

Our Philosophy on Inclusion and Belonging:

Mercy Connections is made up of people from many different backgrounds and lived experiences that include various cultural, religious and language backgrounds. This may also include differing viewpoints, life circumstances and identities. We greatly value the richness that this diversity brings.

We strive to create an environment that is welcoming, safe and inclusive for each person who comes through its doors. One way that we do this is by respecting an individual's identity—whether regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, pronouns, ethnic or racial background, or any other identifying characteristics that people choose to share.

We ask that you contribute to this value of inclusion by treating all those you encounter at Mercy Connections with respect and with kindness.

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CALENDAR OF WINTER/SPRING PROGRAMS: JANUARY - JUNE 2024

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Morning Classes	Budgeting Time & Money 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Tutoring 9:30 am - 11:30 am		Tutoring 9:00 am - 10:30 am
	English Conversation for Intermediate-Level Speakers 11:00 am - 12:30 pm	Small Business Launch Pad 10:00 am - 12:00 pm		Mercy Makerspace 9:00 am - 11:00 am
Afternoon/Evening Classes	Men Moving Forward 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Vermont Community Leadership Training 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Developing Self 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm	Circle 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
	Personal Growth Accelerator 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	English Language Learning for Beginners (A) 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Beginning English Language & Literacy 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Pens & Pages 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm
		English Language Learning for Beginners (B) 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Tutoring 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	English Language Learning for Beginners (A) 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm
	Beginning English Language and Literacy 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm		Start Up 5:00 - 7:30 pm	Personal Growth Accelerator 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
	Tutoring 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm		Vermont Women's Mentoring Program Training 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	English Language Learning for Beginners (B) 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

CALENDAR OF WINTER/SPRING WORKSHOPS: JANUARY – JUNE 2024

Workshops are classes/programs held for a shorter period of time, typically one to three-day sessions.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
	Introduction to Small Business 10:00 am – 12:00 pm February 13 – May 28	Idea to Action: Session 2 9:00 am – 11:00 am March 13, 20, 27	
	Idea to Action: Session 1 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm February 13, 20, 27		
Idea to Action: Session 3 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm April 15, 22, 29			
		Opening to a Growth Mindset 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm February 14, 21, 28	
		Connecting Today to the Future 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm March 13, 20, 27	
		Inspire Your Life 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm May 15, 22, 29	

English Language Learning Classes

English Language Learning for Beginners (A)

Date: Tuesdays and Thursdays
January 23 - June 06

Time: 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Where: In-person at
Mercy Connections

Instructor: Maxine McGowan

Description: This group class is intended for adult beginning level ELL students who are literate in reading and writing in at least one other language, and who have at least some formal education in their first language.

Instruction will include skill development in reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well as survival English.

ELL students that have some basic English skills (such as knowing the English alphabet, greetings, asking/answering simple questions) may benefit from continuing to practice and grow these skills, alongside additional thematic units.

How to Register: Contact Raquel
Raquel Aronhime
raronhime@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: January 16

To register after the deadline, please contact Raquel

English Language Learning for Beginners (B)

Date: Tuesdays and Thursdays
January 23 - June 06

Time: 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Where: In-person at
Mercy Connections

Instructor: Maxine McGowan

Description: This group class is intended for adult beginning ELL students who are literate in reading and writing in at least one other language, and who have at least some formal education in their first language.

Instruction will include skill development in reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well we survival English.

ELL students that have some basic English skills (such as knowing the English alphabet, greetings, asking/answering simple questions) may benefit from continuing to practice and grow these skills, alongside additional thematic units.

How to Register: Contact Raquel
Raquel Aronhime
raronhime@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: January 16

To register after the deadline, please contact Raquel

English Language Learning Classes

Beginning English Language and Literacy

Date: Mondays and Wednesdays
January 22 - June 05

Time: 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Veronica Bernicke

Description: This group class is intended for adult beginning level ELL students who have not had literacy instruction in English, and for whom English is a new language.

The class will include instruction in the four main skill areas of ELL development: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Instruction will also focus on survival English literacy skills such as studying the letter names and sounds in English, reading street signs, greetings and asking/answering simple questions.

How to Register: Contact Raquel
Raquel Aronhime
raronhime@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: January 15
To register after the deadline, please contact Raquel

English Conversation for Intermediate-Level Speakers

Date: Mondays
January 22 - June 03

Time: 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Melissa Lang

Description: Participants may come and improve their conversation skills in this fun and engaging class with activities that will focus on oral communication.

How to Register: Contact Raquel
Raquel Aronhime
raronhime@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: January 15
To register after the deadline, please contact Raquel



Tutoring Programs

Note: This is not a drop-in program. Each student is matched with their own tutor and commits to a 90-minute time slot each week at the same time and on the same day from the following schedule:

- Mondays: 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm
- Tuesdays: 9:30 am – 11:30 am
- Wednesdays: 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
- Thursdays: 9:00 am – 10:30 am

U.S. Citizenship Preparation

Date: January 22 – June 06

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Time: One weekly 90-minute time slot from the above schedule

Facilitator: Melissa Lang

How to Register: Contact Raquel
Raquel Aronhime
raronhime@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: We maintain an active waiting list. New students can be accommodated as spots open up.

Description: Adult learners are matched with skilled tutors one-on-one to prepare for the U.S. Citizenship test and interview. Students will study United States history, government and geography.

Each session includes practice questions and answers from the U.S. Citizenship test and time to practice English language skills.

It is recommended to register for tutoring prior to submitting the N-400 application to USCIS. Students learn about the N-400 application process and receive support to understand the language of the application.

Academic Support

Date: January 22 – June 06

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Time: One weekly 90-minute time slot from the above schedule

Facilitators: Melissa Lang, Veronica Bernicke

How to Register: Contact Raquel
Raquel Aronhime
raronhime@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: We maintain an active waiting list. New students can be accommodated as spots open up.

Description: Adult learners are matched with skilled, trained tutors, one-on-one, to improve academic skills.

Each student is provided with an individualized educational support plan. Students meet with their tutor in the center, and the program is facilitated by the Tutoring Program Coordinators.

Tutoring Programs

Note: This is not a drop-in program. Each student is matched with their own tutor and commits to a 90-minute time slot each week at the same time and on the same day from the following schedule:

Mondays: 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Tuesdays: 9:30 am – 11:30 am
Wednesdays: 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Thursdays: 9:00 am – 10:30 am

English Language Learning (ELL)

Date: January 22 – June 06

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Time: One weekly 90-minute time slot from the schedule

Facilitators: Melissa Lang, Veronica Bernicke

How to Register: Contact Raquel

Raquel Aronhime
raronhime@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: We maintain an active waiting list. New students can be accommodated as spots open up.

Description: Adult learners are matched with skilled, trained tutors, one-on-one, to improve English language learning skills.

Each student is provided with an individualized educational support plan. Students meet in our center and the program is staffed and facilitated by the ELL/Tutoring Program Coordinators.

Personal Growth Programs

Personal Growth Accelerator

Date: Mondays or Thursdays
by appointment
January 22 - May 28

Time: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Heather Gilbert

Description: Participants sign up for three to six one-on-one sessions with the Personal Growth Facilitator to prepare for or build upon the concepts taught within personal growth programming.

Concepts include life skills such as time and money management, goal setting, communication skills and building positive relationships.

Participants will create specific goals and set up a plan for self-assessment with their instructor.

How to Register: Contact Heather
Heather Gilbert
hgilbert@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: January 22
Limited spots available. A waitlist will be maintained if needed.

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather.

Men Moving Forward

Date: Mondays
January 22 - June 03

Time: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Michael Hechmer

Description: An engaging support group for men and male-identifying persons. Participants will learn from one another as they explore circumstances, experiences and goals over the course of the semester.

This program is intended for participants to grow skills in building supportive relationships with other men to challenge and sustain one another, work through personal goals and life transitions and learn how to show up consistently for themselves and others.

How to Register: Sign up online
or call Raquel at 802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: January 15
To register after the deadline, please contact Heather

Personal Growth Programs

Vermont Community Leadership Training

Date: Tuesdays
January 23 - May 28

Time: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructors: Heather Gilbert & Vicky Tamas

Description: This program is aimed for those looking to gain leadership skills to make a difference in their community. This one-of-a-kind leadership and civic experience program combines exciting community-based projects, field trips and presentations from diverse leaders as well as leadership and self-awareness activities for all abilities.

Through participation, students will gain confidence, develop a personal leadership style and find a voice in relation to the issues affecting themselves and family.

How to Register: Register online or call Heather at 802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: January 23

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather

Pens & Pages

Date: Thursdays
January 25 - June 06

Time: 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructors: Melissa Lang & Peter Burns

Description: Participants will read the historical fictional novel entitled “The Book Thief,” by Markus Zusak. Set in Germany during World War II, this story is about a young girl whose family protects a young Jewish man, and how she finds comfort in books.

Participants will explore the themes of love and hate in human culture, acts of genuine kindness to Jews amidst the war, and how antisemitism or hate against any group of people impacts everyone, especially given recent antisemitic and anti-Muslim events.

The class will also consider the power of literacy as a way to gain a sense of control when the world seems chaotic and uncertain. Students will read about 30 pages weekly for homework and discussion, and will have weekly writing assignments, which may be shared. Participants will provide feedback to peers with the goal of helping one another become stronger writers.

This class is designed for native English readers, writers and speakers. English Language Learners are welcome but need to possess an advanced level of spoken and written English. Books are provided free by Vermont Humanities.

How to Register: Register online or call Melissa at 802-846-7084

Registration Deadline: January 18

Personal Growth Programs

Budgeting Time and Money

Date: Mondays
January 22 - February 19
With follow-up sessions monthly
on March 25, April 22 and May 20

Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Heather Gilbert

Description: This program aims to equip participants with confidence and basic organizational tools for managing time and money. It also will support the exploration of more in-depth personal finance programs available in the community.

Participants will meet as a group once a week for four weeks to learn about and practice with various planning tools and resources. After the four sessions, each participant attends at least one of three follow-up sessions monthly.

How to Register: Sign up online
or call Heather at 802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: January 22

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather

Circle

Date: Thursdays
January 25 - June 06

Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Facilitator: Sr. Ann Duhaime, R.S.M.

Description: Circle is a supportive experience where people can take time to reflect on peace, hope and healing. Participants find renewal and gain strength as they listen to and talk about experiences. This is a special time to feel part of a nurturing community and imagine new possibilities.

This program does require registration, but participants are not required to attend every session.

How to Register: Sign up online
or call Raquel at 802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: January 18

Personal Growth Programs

Mercy Makerspace

Date: Thursdays
January 25 - June 06

Time: 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructors: Heather Gilbert

Description: Crafters and makers are supported in a co-working environment to develop and create products to sell at craft and art fairs, as well as Mercy Connections' Mercy Marketplace fair in December 2024.

Participants work one-on-one with instructors to design and create products, hone time and project management skills and set sales goals for vending opportunities that they wish to pursue.

How to Register: Sign up online or call Heather at 802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: January 25

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather

Developing Self

Date: Wednesdays
February 21 - April 24

Time: 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Heather Gilbert

Description: This course facilitates the process of self discovery and is a perfect introduction to Personal Growth programming at Mercy Connections. Participants will build on their life experiences and reframe the impact of their future through guided activities.

The program aims to connect participants to their inner strengths, gain confidence and find a new sense of belonging and community.

How to Register: Sign up online or call Heather at 802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: February 21

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather

Personal Growth Workshops

Note: All personal growth workshops are held online only

Opening to a Growth Mindset

Date: Wednesdays
February 14, 21 and 28

Time: 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Where: Online

Instructor: Heather Gilbert

Description: Participants will learn about their own “growth mindset” and how to incorporate it into their life.

Through activities and reflections, participants will explore how to grow towards a desired life balance that includes basic needs, love, power, freedom and fun.

How to Register: Sign up online or call Heather at 802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: February 14

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather

Connecting Today to the Future

Date: Wednesdays
March 13, 20 and 27

Time: 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Where: Online

Instructor: Heather Gilbert

Description: Participants will discover what motivates them and create a vision of their life. This workshop series will encourage participants to learn how creativity can expand one’s potential to adapt, grow and move forward.

Group discussions and creative assignments will encourage students to develop an inspired vision of their life.

How to Register: Sign up online or or call Heather at 802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: March 13

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather

Personal Growth Workshops

Note: All personal growth workshops are held online only

Inspire Your Life

Date: Wednesdays
May 15, 22 and 29

Time: 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Where: Online

Instructor: Heather Gilbert

Description: Participants will analyze where they find inspiration in life through examples of language, arts, people and writing. They will have a chance to reimagine what inspires them and brings joy to their lives. Students will also learn how creativity can expand their potential to adapt, grow and move forward.

How to Register: Sign up online
or call Heather at 802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: May 15

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather



Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programs

Small Business Launch Pad

Date: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays
February 06 - June 04

Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Claire Wheeler & Jacob Cribbs

Description: This class is for participants who are looking for community and support as they start their new business. Launch Pad is a supported, drop in, co-working space for folks actively working to start a new business. Participants work alongside other entrepreneurs to take action and get support on tasks to get their business up and running.

The Inclusive Entrepreneurship program staff will offer help on everything from registering a business or setting up bookkeeping software, to building a marketing strategy.

Registration: Interested students must schedule a chat with Claire Wheeler before enrollment in order to survey each person's needs and ensure fit.

Claire Wheeler
cwheeler@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7081

Registration Deadline: January 30

For Further Assistance

Learn More Online:
www.mercyconnections.org

With Registration:
Call the instructor listed for the program

All Other Questions:
802-846-7063

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programs

Start Up *Signature Business Program*

Date: Wednesdays
February 07 - May 22

Time: 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Where: Online

Instructors: Small Business Instructors

Description: Start Up is Mercy Connections' signature business program. This supportive, inclusive, semester-long course is a deep dive into business planning.

Start Up is for those who:

- Have a solid business idea to pursue
- Are serious about learning and taking action
- Can make the time commitment to fit this into a busy life
- Welcome active participation in a small-group environment
- Are ready to make positive change and take control of their future
- Identify as women regardless of assignment at birth and/or are transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming and gender-expansive and are comfortable in a woman-centered space

This course helps folks gain knowledge and build skills critical to having a successful business. Using the framework of writing a business plan, students learn the language of business and graduate armed with the knowledge they need to launch or expand their business.

The curriculum covers the fundamentals of three content areas in depth: marketing, finance and business operations. It is taught by a team of instructors who are also business owners.

Students will graduate knowing how to start and operate a successful business and will have completed a comprehensive, realistic business plan that can be used as a guide to talk to a lender for funding. This course is also designed for folks who are already in business and want to reinvent their business or take it to the next level.

Class size is intentionally small, so students can expect lots of personal attention and to form lasting bonds with classmates. This small-group experience has been referred to as "life-changing" by many previous graduates.

How to Apply: Please fill out an application online at mercyconnections.com/inclusive-entrepreneurship under the "Start Up" option or contact Claire Wheeler at 802-846-7081

Application Deadline: January 31

Tuition Details: The total cost of the class is \$2,590. The tuition for the course is \$2,500 and mandatory fees include the \$25 application fee and a \$65 license fee for a dedicated LivePlan account for 6 months.

We are grateful to partner with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) to offer Advancement Grants to cover the cost of tuition for income-eligible students, and we offer internal scholarships and flexible interest-free payment plans to make the cost of the class accessible to everyone.

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Workshops

Intro to Small Business

Date: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays
February 13 – May 28

Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Claire Wheeler

Description: In this in-person introductory workshop series, participants can learn about a variety of topics to support them in starting and operating their small business in Vermont.

Note: Attendance at all sessions is not required. Participants must register separately for each session and may attend one or more that they choose.

Session Topics/Dates:

1. Design Your Business Model Using the Business Model Canvas – February 13

Design a one-page business model using the Business Model Canvas; a graphic business planning tool that displays nine interconnected core components of any business.

2. How to Register Your Business – February 27

Understand the process of registering a business in Vermont, as well as how to get set up with state agencies like the Department of Taxes and Department of Labor.

3. Intro to Marketing and Branding – March 12

Define and understand the difference between marketing and branding, and how to put together a simple marketing strategy for their business.

4. How to Create Your Own Website – March 26

Explore different website platforms, understand the content needed to develop a website, and learn about the behind-the-scenes functionality required in order to launch a website for a business.

5. Intro to Business Finance and Bookkeeping – April 9

Understand the basics of financial accounting, including the different accounting methods, categories and reports. Participants will walk away with a solid routine for DIY bookkeeping.

6. Paying Yourself and Your Taxes as a Business Owner – April 23

Understand the different ways that one can pay themselves as a business owner, as well as what to expect and plan for regarding income tax.

7. Managing Risk for Your Business – May 14

Evaluate the risks taken on in business and the ways to limit or mitigate those risks, including insurance, policies, procedures and contracts.

8. Time Management for Business Owners – May 28

Explore the multiple roles of business ownership and learn tricks and tools for managing time across those roles.

Registration: Register separately for each session. Sign up online or contact Claire.

Claire Wheeler
cwheeler@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7081

Registration Deadline: One week before the session begins.

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Workshops

Idea to Action

Session 1 (online)

Date: Tuesdays
February 13, 20 and 27

Time: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Where: Via Zoom

Instructor: Claire Wheeler

Description: This is a six-hour workshop over the course of three sessions. Each session is two hours and is for adult learners. This short course is designed to introduce aspiring entrepreneurs to self-employment and to assist with creating a vision and a plan for a path forward that includes business ownership. Space is prioritized for new participants.

Registration: Select a session and register online or contact Claire.

Claire Wheeler
cwheeler@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7081

Session 2 (in-person)

Date: Wednesdays
March 13, 20 and 27

Time: 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Jacob Cribbs

Registration Deadline: One week before each session begins.

Session 3 (online)

Date: Mondays
April 15, 22 and 29

Time: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Where: Via Zoom

Instructor: Jacob Cribbs



Programs Coming Soon

Check our website in January for details

Business Owners’ Workshop Series (online)

Date: Wednesdays
Date TBD

Time: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Where: Via Zoom

Instructor: TBD Guests

Description: A series of monthly 1-hour workshops that are presented by experts in the field on various small business topics.

Registration: Once the dates are posted, participants may register for each workshop separately online, or contact Claire.


Claire Wheeler
cwheeler@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7081


Registration Deadline: One week before the session start date.


Check Back for Further Information!

Details will be posted in our Center, on our website and on social media.

Website:
www.mercyconnections.org

Follow us on Social:
 @mercyconnectionsinc

 @mercyconnections

 @mercyconnections

Justice & Mentoring Programs

Vermont Women's Mentoring Program Training

Date: Wednesdays
February 21 - March 20

Time: 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm*

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections*

Instructor: Joanne Nelson

Description: The Vermont Women's Mentoring Program has a proven track record of pairing volunteer mentors with justice-involved women (mentees) in order to successfully reestablish their lives post-incarceration.

Volunteer mentors support, coach, and function as new, healthy companions to trauma-affected women facing many challenges.

Pairs are carefully matched, and training will provide everyone with the tools they need to be a successful mentor. Mentoring is a year-long commitment.

We welcome all people who identify as women regardless of assignment at birth, transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming and gender-expansive folks who are comfortable in a woman-centered space to join the training.

* All trainings are held at Mercy Connections in-person, unless the weather dictates otherwise. In those rare circumstances, training will be held via Zoom.

The last session will be held at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF) from 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Registration: Sign up online, or contact Joanne Nelson
802-846-7164
jnelson@mercyconnections.org

Registration Deadline: February 21



Where Learning & Living Come Together

At Mercy Connections, every person - regardless of life circumstances - experiences dignity, compassion and the opportunity to pursue personal aspirations within a supportive community. Our programs change lives.



QUESTIONS?

Contact:

Raquel Aronhime
Director of Education and Evaluation
Phone: 802-846-7162
Email: raronhime@mercyconnections.org

Mercy Connections Address:

255 S. Champlain Street
Suite #8
Burlington, VT 05401



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