



2024 Summer Programs

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 help you 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.

What's Inside

Page	
04	Weekly Calendar of Programs
05	English Language Learning Classes
08	Tutoring Programs
10	Personal Growth Programs
14	Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programs
17	Justice & Mentoring Programs
18	Community Building & Food Security Programs
19	Contact Information

CALENDAR OF SUMMER PROGRAMS: JUNE - AUGUST 2024

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Morning Classes		Tutoring 9:30 am - 11:30 am		Mercy Makerspace 9:00 am - 11:00 am
	1:1 Small Business Coaching 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Small Business Launch Pad 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Small Business Workshop: Idea to Action 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Tutoring 9:30 am - 11:00 am
	English Conversation for Intermediate-Level Speakers 11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Personal Growth Accelerator 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Public Speaking Concepts & Practice 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Circle 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Afternoon / Evening Classes	Men Moving Forward 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Building English Fluency Through Writing & Sharing Stories (Group A) 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	English Language Pronunciation: Short and Long Vowels 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Light Bites 12:00 pm - 12:45 pm
	Tutoring 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Ideas Worth Talking About 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	Watermelon Wednesdays 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Intro to Small Business Lunch & Learn Series (Online) 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
	Circle (Online) 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Building English Fluency Through Writing & Sharing Stories (Group B) 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Pens & Pages for English Language Learners 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Building English Fluency Through Writing & Sharing Stories (Group A) 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
		Ideas Worth Talking About (at CRCF) 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Vermont Women's Mentor Support Group (July 17) 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm	Pens & Pages 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
				Personal Growth Accelerator 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
				Building English Fluency Through Writing & Sharing Stories (Group B) 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

English Language Learning Classes

Building English Fluency Through Writing and Sharing Stories (A)

Date: Tuesdays and Thursdays
July 09 - August 15

Time: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Where: In-person at
Mercy Connections

Instructor: Maxine McGowan &
Veronica Bernicke

Description: This class is available to beginner and intermediate level students. It will use personal storytelling as a tool for language acquisition, cultural sharing and fluency development.

Storytelling provides an engaging way for learners to improve grammar, comprehension, confidence and to explore the nuances of language.

This class is structured as a writing workshop, but students will work on all dimensions of language: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

How to Register: Contact Veronica or Raquel

Veronica Bernicke
vbernicke@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7084

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

Registration Deadline: July 02
Contact Raquel to register after the deadline

255 S. Champlain Street Suite 8, Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 846-7063; mercyconnections.org

Building English Fluency Through Writing and Sharing Stories (B)

Date: Tuesdays and Thursdays
July 09 - August 15

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Where: In-person at
Mercy Connections

Instructor: Maxine McGowan &
Veronica Bernicke

Description: This class is available to beginner and intermediate level students. It will use personal storytelling as a tool for language acquisition, cultural sharing and fluency development.

Storytelling provides an engaging way for learners to improve grammar, comprehension, confidence and to explore the nuances of language.

This class is structured as a writing workshop, but students will work on all dimensions of language: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

How to Register: Contact Veronica or Raquel

Veronica Bernicke
vbernicke@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7084

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

Registration Deadline: July 02
Contact Raquel to register after the deadline

English Language Learning Classes

English Conversation for Intermediate-Level Speakers

Date: Mondays
July 08 - August 15

Time: 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Raquel Aronhime

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 Aronhime
raronhime@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7162

Registration Deadline: July 01
Contact Raquel to register after the deadline

English Language Pronunciation: Short & Long Vowel Sounds

Date: Wednesdays
July 10 - August 14

Time: 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Veronica Bernicke

Description: This class aims to improve pronunciation and comprehension skills through practice of individual sounds (phonemes) and basic phonics drills.

Students will use tongue twisters, call and response, and articulation exercises to target vowel sounds and common pronunciation challenges.

Students are encouraged to share obstacles to production and comprehension to work on in this class.

How to Register: Contact Veronica or Raquel

Veronica Bernicke
vbernicke@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7084

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

Registration Deadline: July 03
Contact Raquel to register after the deadline



English Language Learning Classes

Pens & Pages for English Language Learners

Date: Wednesdays
July 10 - August 14

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Melissa Lang

Description: This class is intended for intermediate to advanced level English language learners. A brief reading and writing assessment is required for enrollment.

Students will be expected to read 20-25 pages per week, write a weekly essay and practice receiving and giving respectful feedback to classmates. The class focuses on strengthening writing fluency, skill and comfort.

Students will read “The Day of the Pelican,” by Vermont author Katherine Paterson. This immigration story follows the fictional Lleshi family, who are Albanians living in Kosovo, and find their way to Vermont just before the events of 9/11.

Discussions will center on the themes of family, displacement and resettlement, as well as current challenges facing Vermont’s new American community. Books are provided free of charge, thanks to Vermont Humanities.

How to Register: Contact Melissa
Melissa Lang
mlang@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7084

Registration Deadline: July 03
Contact Raquel to register after the deadline



Tutoring Programs

Note: This is not a drop-in program. Each student is paired with their own tutor and commits to a 90-minute time slot each week at the same time and on the same day at Mercy Connections. Scheduled sessions will be at one of these times:

Mondays: 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Tuesdays: 9:30 am - 11:30 am

Thursdays: 9:30 am - 11:00 am

U.S. Citizenship Preparation

Date: July 08 - August 15
Where: In-person at Mercy Connections
Time: One weekly 90-minute time slot from the above schedule

Coordinator: Melissa Lang

How to Register: Contact Melissa

Melissa Lang
 mlang@mercyconnections.org
 802-846-7084

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: July 08 - August 15
Where: In-person at Mercy Connections
Time: One weekly 90-minute time slot from the above schedule

Coordinator: Melissa Lang

How to Register: Contact Melissa

Melissa Lang
 mlang@mercyconnections.org
 802-846-7084

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 paired with their own tutor and commits to a 90-minute time slot each week at the same time and on the same day at Mercy Connections. Scheduled sessions will be at one of these times:

Mondays: 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Tuesdays: 9:30 am - 11:30 am

Thursdays: 9:30 am - 11:00 am

English Language Learning (ELL)

Date: July 08 - August 15

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

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

Coordinators: Veronica Bernicke & Melissa Lang

How to Register: Contact Melissa

Melissa Lang

mlang@mercyconnections.org

802-846-7084

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: By appointment
July 08 – August 08

Time: Tuesdays b/t 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Thursdays b/t 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Facilitator: Heather Gilbert

Description: Participants may sign up for three to six one-on-one sessions with the Personal Growth Coordinator 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: July 01

Limited spots available. A waitlist will be maintained if needed.

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather.

Men Moving Forward

Date: Mondays
July 08 – August 08

Time: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Facilitator: Jacob Cribbs

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 summer.

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 contact Jacob
Jacob Cribbs
jcribbs@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7390

Registration Deadline: July 01

Personal Growth Programs

Circle (Online)

Date: Mondays
July 08 - August 05

Time: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Where: via Zoom

Facilitator: Heather Gilbert

Description: Circle is a supportive experience where people can take time to reflect on peace, hope and healing. Participants may 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.

The Monday session will be held online only. There is an in-person option on Thursdays (see page 12).

How to Register: Sign up online or contact Heather

Heather Gilbert
hgilbert@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: None

Ideas Worth Talking About: Discussion Group

Date: Tuesdays
July 09 - August 06

Time: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Facilitator: Heather Gilbert

Description: Find inspiration and great discussion at this drop-in community building program. Participants will watch a brief TED Talk or other thought-provoking videos, and then engage in a facilitated discussion of the ideas presented.

How to Register: Sign up online or contact Heather

Heather Gilbert
hgilbert@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: Register once to attend one or more weeks this summer. First session registration deadline is July 02.

Personal Growth Programs

Public Speaking Concepts & Practice

Date: Wednesdays
July 10 - August 07

Time: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Facilitator: Heather Gilbert

Description: In this class, participants will practice public speaking skills in a safe and supportive setting among peers.

Participants will learn about basic concepts and tools to help address nerves, organize a talk and more. Participants will also be expected to prepare brief presentations and apply what they learn.

How to Register: Sign up online or contact Heather

Heather Gilbert
hgilbert@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: July 03

To register after the deadline, please contact Heather

Pens & Pages

Date: Thursdays
July 11 - August 15

Time: 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructors: Melissa Lang & Peter Burns

Description: Participants will read and discuss “The Anthropocene Reviewed: Essays on a Human-Centered Planet” by acclaimed author John Green. In this memoirist collection of essays, Green reviews facets of the human experience that include diverse topics such as the penguins of Madagascar, Halley’s Comet, Canadian geese, and hot dogs.

Each week, participants will have a reading assignment and will be expected to produce one piece of writing.

In class, they will discuss the reading and share their writings. 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. There is also a Pens & Pages option for ELL students on page 7 for those who do not yet possess advanced-level English.

Books are provided for free, thanks to the generosity of Vermont Humanities.

How to Register: Sign up online or contact Melissa Lang

mlang@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7084

Registration Deadline: July 01

Personal Growth Programs

Circle (in-person)

Date: Thursdays
July 11 - August 08

Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Facilitator: Joanne Nelson

Description: Circle is a supportive experience where people can take time to reflect on peace, hope and healing. Participants may 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.

This Thursday session is held in-person only. There is an online option on Mondays (see page 10).

How to Register: Sign up online or contact Heather

Heather Gilbert
hgilbert@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: None

Need Assistance Registering?

Learn More Online:
www.mercyconnections.org

With Registration:
Call the instructor listed for the program

All Other Questions:
802-846-7063

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programs

One-on-One Small Business Coaching

Date: Mondays
July 08 - August 05

Time: 30-minute sessions by appointment
between 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections,
online or by phone

Instructor: Jacob Cribbs

Description: Individualized business coaching is offered for all aspiring, new and established business owners who need specialized support and technical assistance moving forward with their business.

Registration: Contact Jacob

Jacob Cribbs
jcribbs@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7390

Registration Deadline: July 03

Small Business Launch Pad

Date: Tuesdays
July 09 - August 06

Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Claire Wheeler

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: July 02

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programs

Small Business Workshop: Idea to Action

Date: Wednesdays
July 10, 17 and 24

Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructor: Jacob Cribbs

Description: This is a six-hour workshop that spans over the course of three sessions. Each session is two hours long.

The workshop is designed to introduce aspiring adult 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: Register online or contact Jacob

Jacob Cribbs
jcribbs@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7390

Registration Deadline: July 03

Introduction to Small Business Lunch & Learn Series (Online)

Date: Thursdays
July 11 - August 08

Time: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Where: Online

Instructor: Jacob Cribbs

Description: In this introductory series, participants can drop in to one or all virtual lunchtime sessions to learn about the basics of business ownership.

The format will include a short presentation, work time to complete a relevant activity and time for connection and Q&A.

Session topics:

1. Developing a Business Concept - July 11
2. Intro to Marketing - July 18
3. Registering Your Business - July 25
4. Business Finance - August 01
5. Paying Yourself & Hiring Others - August 08

Registration: Register online or contact Jacob

Jacob Cribbs
jcribbs@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7390

Registration Deadline: One week before each session begins.

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programs

Mercy Makerspace

Date: Thursdays
July 11 - August 08

Time: 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Facilitators: Heather Gilbert & Jacob Cribbs

Description: Crafters and makers are supported in a co-working environment to develop and create products to sell at craft and art fairs, including Mercy Connections' "Mercy Marketplace" fair that takes place in November, 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.

Registration: Register online or contact Heather

Heather Gilbert
hgilbert@mercyconnections.org
802-846-7294

Registration Deadline: July 05

Justice & Mentoring Programs

Vermont Women's Mentor Support Group

Date: Wednesday
July 17

Time: 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Instructors: Joanne Nelson & Kelly Moran

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.

Staffed by the Justice and Mentoring team, this monthly support group is for mentors who are already paired with a justice-involved woman to ask questions and share experiences in a supportive and confidential environment.

Registration: Open to matched mentors only

Ideas Worth Talking About: Discussion Group

Date: Tuesdays
July 09 - August 06

Time: 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Where: Chittenden Regional
Correctional Facility (CRCF)

Facilitator: Heather Gilbert & Kelly Moran

Description: Participants at CRCF will have the opportunity to find inspiration and great discussion in this community-building program.

The program will begin with watching a brief TED Talk or other thought-provoking videos, and then engage in a facilitated discussion of the ideas presented.

Registration: Open to CRCF participants only



Community Building & Food Security Programs

The below programs are open to current Mercy Connections participants. Community building and food security initiatives are intended to promote connection and provide resources to support successful learning .

Watermelon Wednesdays

Date: Wednesdays
July 10 - August 13

Time: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Description: Beat the heat at Mercy Connections! Participants may stop by to enjoy a slice of watermelon and cool off.

Light Bites

Date: Thursdays
July 11 - August 15

Time: 12:00 pm - 12:45 pm

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Description: Sandwiches and/or samosas and other light bites will be available during this time for participants. Stop by to enjoy a snack or come a little early for class this day to have a snack before heading into the classroom. This program replaces Community Lunch during the summer.

Fresh Veggies Distribution

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

Where: In-person at Mercy Connections

Description: Thanks to the generosity of the Intervale Fairshare CSA program, Mercy Connections will be distributing free vegetables to participants and their families. Be sure to check in later this summer for details of the dates when vegetables can be picked up!

Did You Know?

Food insecurity affects concentration, memory, mood and motor skills - all of which are required for adults to be successful in a learning environment.

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:

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Director of Education and Evaluation
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Email: raronhime@mercyconnections.org

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