

Verona

N E I G H B O R S

GOODMAN COMMUNITY CENTER

MEET CEO
LETESHA NELSON



EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS



BROKER ASSOCIATE

DREAMLANE REAL ESTATE RE/MAX PREFERRED
LANE MANNING, REAL ESTATE AGENT
608-535-5131 | www.DreamLaneRE.com
Lane@dreamlanere.com

Lane Manning of DreamLane RE/MAX Preferred is an active member of the Verona community. He and his family live in Verona and both of his children are involved in Verona Sports! Lane is known for his commitment to the community and big heart. Lane Manning is celebrated as the 2020 Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS), Man of the Year.



CHILDREN'S SPORTS TRAINING

GYMFINITY GYMNASTICS | J ORKOWSKI
6300 Nesbitt Road, Fitchburg
608.848.FLIP (3457) | www.gymfinity.com

J Orkowski has operated Gymfinity in Madison since its inception back in 1999. He's coached national competitors, regional champions, state champions, and scholarship recipients. While still coaching every day, his main duties are running the gym and managing a staff of over 50 coaches. J speaks all over the country; most recently he spoke in Australia about successful principles for running a children's activity center. J continues to coach in the gym because his passion is in building teams of athletes and helping individuals reach and surpass their potential. He also enjoys the opportunity to "coach" his employees with the same passion and intention. J lives in Verona, Wisconsin with his wife, two sons, and two Aussies named Kumo and Taevis.



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**WE ARE ALWAYS HAPPY
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<u>Content Due</u>	<u>Edition</u>
December 10	January
January 10	February
February 10	March
March 10	April
April 10	May
May 10	June
June 10	July
July 10	August
August 10	September
September 10	October
October 10	November
November 10	December



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Dear Verona Residents,

Welcome to the June issue of Verona Neighbors!

We are excited to share our fifth issue of our new Verona Neighbors publication. Thank you for all the emails and comments about our new publication design. We are excited to bring Verona Neighbors to your mailbox each and every month! Once a year we plan to feature a local non-profit on the front cover. This month we feature the Goodman Community Center! Read all about their commitment to supporting communities in and around Madison.

For our local racing fans, we've included a story about Verona race car driver, John Beale. Read about how Beale captured the win at Marshfield Motor Speedway.

The Verona Ice Arena kicked off a large expansion project. Learn more about the project and see how you can help! This is going to be super cool. Get it??

Involved in local sports? We want to hear from you! Please email us about Verona sporting events or updates. We would love pictures too!

Be sure to check out the information regarding the Verona Farmers Market starting this month! There are a number of wonderful vendors excited to start the season! A big shout out to the Verona Chamber of Commerce for all the great work in coordinating this weekly event.

Get out and enjoy the beautiful weather! Checkout a guide to local state parks. Did you know that Wisconsin State Parks are free the first weekend of June? Happy Trails!

Would you or your family like to be featured in a future issue of our Verona Neighbors publication? Maybe you would like to recommend someone. Let us know, we are excited to bring people together in Verona!

Health & Happiness!



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MEET CEO *Letesha Nelson* GOODMAN COMMUNITY CENTER

BY KAILEY MURPHY | PHOTOS BY ILANA NATASHA

The Goodman Community Center strengthens lives and secures futures throughout the greater Madison area. Located in the heart of Madison's Atwood neighborhood, GCC offers programs for preschoolers through teens, families, individuals and older adults. The Goodman Center has on-site childcare services, including fully licensed and accredited preschool, 4K and elementary after-school programs, as well as a teen center that offers after-school activities and employment opportunities for teens. The center's food pantry serves more than 200 households a week and is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and they also offer meals, social activities and health and wellness opportunities for seniors. Accessibility is a top priority of the Goodman Center, most of the center's programs are free or priced to be very affordable, including access to its fitness center, catering services and community spaces.

CEO and Executive Director Letesha Nelson joined the Goodman Community Center on Jan. 25, 2021. Letesha brings more than 20 years of nonprofit experience that ranges from working directly with program participants all the way up to leading an organization as its Executive Director. When asking Letesha what her biggest inspiration is for getting into this line of work she responded with, "My dad is my biggest source of inspiration. He worked for the Social Development Commission in Milwaukee, a one-stop shop for community resources like food, energy assistance, childcare and more. I grew up watching him serve our community, and he taught me to do that too. So when this position with Goodman opened up, I thought, "I'm made for this." I've been preparing my whole life to do this work."

Letesha was also asked to share a special memory she's had with Goodman thus far, "I remember walking into Goodman for the very first time. I was visiting



Beth Skogen Photography

GOODMAN COMMUNITY CENTER
214 Waubesa St., Madison, WI 53704

HOURS Monday-Thursday: 7am-9pm
Friday: 7am-8pm
Saturday & Sunday: 8:30am-6pm



childcare teachers! If you're interested in different career opportunities check out goodmancenter.org/jobs to learn more!

Goodman would love to invite everyone to take a moment to think about how you can be the good in your own corner of the world. Goodman is an oasis of kindness in Madison, who knows lots of their neighbors (including you) are doing their part to spread good. Learn more and share your story at goodmancenter.org/bethegood, or share your story on social media and use the hashtag #BeTheGoodMSN.

for an interview, and coming through the doors of our Ironworks building, I instantly felt at home. I was welcomed so warmly by our front desk staff, and every single person I met on that visit was so kind and warm. This was during the height of the pandemic, and the center wasn't operating the way it normally did. But, it was still buzzing. There were teachers working with kids, the food pantry was open for drive-thru service. I could see right away that this place and its people were doing good things for the community.

More recently, I stopped in to visit some of our preschool classrooms. It was a Monday, and honestly, I wasn't ready for the work week to start. But I tell you, the best way to jump start your week is to visit with a bunch of 4-year-olds. They lifted my spirit and gave me the energy I needed to get to work. And, one of the teachers told me the kids needed the visit too. She said before I came in, the class was having a rough time, but the mood totally shifted when I was in there. That was such a great moment of connectivity and community. It reminded me we're all giving something to each other, we all need each other. And, it's ok to need the help of other people."

This story from Letesha emphasizes the importance of creating a sense of community and safe space for both the employees and participants at Goodman. The six values of Goodman Community Center are community, equity, integrity, respect, caring, and trust. These six values are part of the fabric of the GCC. Every day, Goodman strives to embody these values in themselves as staff members while guiding their participants to internalize the same values. Together, the Goodman Six helps strengthen lives and secure futures.

Every year in November, the Goodman Center hosts its Thanksgiving Basket Drive, where they collect donations to provide thousands of Dane County families with everything they need to make a Thanksgiving meal at home. Letesha explains, "Last year was my first time seeing it in action, and my word, it was a joyful three days! Our team works tirelessly for months leading up to Thanksgiving, fundraising and taking food donations. Then, the weekend before Thanksgiving, the magic happens. We distribute everything a family needs to make a traditional Thanksgiving meal at home. Thousands of families from across Dane County sign up to receive a basket, and hundreds of volunteers work to pack and distribute those baskets for three straight days. It's a sight to behold and truly a heartwarming and beautiful thing to experience."

Goodman Center is always looking for volunteers who can commit some time on a regular basis to work with their young people. Roughly 70% of the participants at Goodman Center children and youth programs are Black or kids of color. Representation matters so much, so volunteers who are also Black or people of color are particularly encouraged to get involved. The Goodman Center is always looking for passionate people to join their team, especially

PROGRAMS & SERVICES GOODMAN OFFERS

- Licensed and accredited preschool and 4K program, as well as full-day summer camp.
- Licensed and accredited elementary after-school program and full-day summer camp.
- For both of the programs above, 80% of participants receive financial assistance or funding.
- FREE after-school and summer teen programming for middle school through high school.
- TEENworks teen employment and job skills training program. Teens get paid to work in a supportive environment.
- Older Adult program: Dane County meal site for lunch Monday through Friday; activities offered every day of the week; place for seniors to socialize and feel a sense of community; management staff acts as case workers to get older adults the services they need.
- Fritz Food Pantry: Goodman has a full-service food pantry that is open three days a week. Their pantry also organizes and hosts a Thanksgiving Basket Drive every fall, Goodman gathers food and distributes Thanksgiving groceries to thousands of Dane County residents.
- Fitness Center and fitness classes: very affordable classes, offered for free to those who need it.
- Goodman has two beautiful buildings with a modern industrial feel. Able to host large events like weddings, corporate retreats, craft sales, and quinceaneras, as well as smaller events like birthday parties, retirement parties, book clubs, small meetings, and more.
- In-house catering offers a menu with a wide variety of options, prepared by a professional chef, with the help of our TEENworks employees.
- The hospitality team are also educators: They train teens in the art of hosting and hospitality, as well as in essential food safe and kitchen skills.



K. Rosales Photography

