



## StrongBodies: A Powerful Partnership

### Strength Training at Ascend with FoodWise and HeartCorps

#### Challenge

Ascend Services, Inc. assists more than 200 people in the Manitowoc community, helping them build a full schedule of life activities based on their choices. FoodWise staff met with Ascend staff to discuss options to meet individual's goals.

#### Approach

Ascend Services promotes individual growth through community experiences, education, and employment opportunities. StrongBodies is a community-based program designed to improve physical health, confidence, and social connectedness. Given Ascend's commitment to empowering individuals, StrongBodies was a natural fit to help participants build strength and independence.

HeartCorps member Sue Koepple leads the exercise portion of the class on site Tuesday and Thursday mornings at Ascend. FoodWise nutrition educators Jace Purdy and Haley Wagner join the group once a week to share information about healthy eating. Ascend staff offer a 3<sup>rd</sup> exercise activity outside of class to reach the goal of exercising three times per week.



Brandon Lesperance (front) and Alex Dehnert (back). Photo by Haley Wagner.

#### Results

Ascend participants choose activities to engage in based on their personal and vocational goals. FoodWise is delighted to report that 12 people signed up to participate. Strength training improves mobility, reduces the risk of conditions like osteoporosis and heart disease, and enhances overall physical and mental health.

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**DEANNA GENSKE**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
ASCEND SERVICES, INC.

#### Program Highlights

- 20** Strength-Building Exercise Classes
- 12** Registered Participants
- 10** Weeks of Healthy Eating Tips



Ascend StrongBodies group led by HeartCorps member Sue Koepple



