

# UWO SOCIOLOGY

## Alumni Spotlight



Jennifer  
Stephany

UW-O 1994

Master's in  
Management &  
Organizational  
Behavior 1996

Executive  
Director  
Appleton  
Downtown  
Incorporated

I selected to pursue a degree in Sociology as it aligned most acutely with my interests in community work as it relates to ethnicity, social class and gender. While my focus has shifted to community development efforts, I find my work largely intersects with organizations with those specific missions. I am grateful to have had the many opportunities within the Sociology department for internships, teacher aide positions and club activities that truly enhanced and heightened my experience. As a teacher's aide I was able to grow my leadership skills as I assisted in class curriculum and leading group discussions and research. I can honestly say the support I received from faculty helped propel my interest and kept me engaged in many opportunities. In fact, it was one of my professors who guided my interest to a master's degree program to further my studies.

As a graduate of UW Oshkosh with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology with an Industrial Organizational Emphasis, I proceeded to obtain my Master's Degree in Management and Organizational Behavior from Silver Lake College. My professional career launched with an Executive Director position with the New London Chamber of Commerce in 1997. Throughout my time with the chamber, I enrolled in the Certified Chamber Director program and over the next five years took my personal mission of life-long learning to a whole new level. My next adventure would challenge my ability to be a problem solver, leader, event manager, fundraiser and community development advocate. As the Executive Director of Appleton Downtown Incorporated, I manage the Business Improvement District as well as a 501c3 organization focused on infusing Downtown Appleton with art and culture through placemaking activities.

My role within the community has evolved over the last 12 years to also include several local and statewide Board seats. I am currently serving as President Elect for the Downtown Appleton Rotary club, a Board member for Wisconsin Downtown Action Council and Arts Wisconsin. I look forward to the many opportunities and challenges yet to tackle in my career that will push my creativity and leadership. Nevertheless, regardless of my strong passion for community development, my role as a mother will always be the most fulfilling. If I could share a sliver of advice it would be: above all...focus on building strong relationships.

