

PLATTEVILLE, Wis. — A new community hub in Platteville aims to be a place where residents from underrepresented backgrounds can feel like they belong.

Our Spot, located at 30 S. Bonson St., is an effort of Sakara Wages, owner of Subversive Social Work, and Black Platteville Community Network. It will launch fully in May, though some residents already are using the space.

“It is a physical space, and it is a community hub of programming,” Wages said.

Wages previously ran her social work business out of her home. As she started to realize the need for an office for Subversive Social Work, she and other members of Black Platteville Community Network realized they also could benefit from a space to hold events.

The network is a collective of Platteville residents whose efforts have included Juneteenth celebrations, youth programs and soul food events. Since its formation in 2020, the network hasn't had a regular, dedicated space.

“Folks in the community have been gracious enough to host,” Wages said. “It will be great to have a space.”

Our Spot is intended as a welcoming environment for Platteville's Black community, as well as for people of color and other underrepresented groups, including the LGBTQ community.

Wages said that the focus of Our Spot is on building trust with individuals so they feel comfortable coming there not only to find community, but also to seek help and counseling resources if they need it.

Wages said there is room for the collaboration to grow. She also pointed to mental health, substance abuse efforts and suicide prevention as potential focuses.

Platteville Common Council Member Lynne Parrott, who also is involved in Black Platteville Community Network, said she stopped into Our Spot and was excited by what she saw.

“I think the whole concept of what they are doing is phenomenal,” she said.

Parrott, who is Black, said that Platteville, where almost 93% of the population is White, needs a space where people of color can go to feel connected to their culture.

Parrott said that growing up in Chicago, she had countless places — such as community centers and churches — where she could go to feel empowered and culturally connected because the population was much more diverse.

“There’s nothing here in Platteville that would help address that,” she said. “If you live in a town, you want to be able to enjoy the town. ... Every town needs a place where people can come together and just chill.”

Our Spot could be a place for youth to learn more about Black culture, she said.

“We need to empower our children so they know they are more than just what the books say — we’re not just ex-slaves,” Parrott said.

It is particularly important for children to experience their culture in a positive way, she said.

“We want kids to feel confident with who they are and their place in this community,” Parrott said.

“We’re building on the vision of Platteville as a family-oriented place.”