

WTMJ The Upswing August 29, 2026 Christy Brown Alverno Transcript

Speaker 2 ([05:11](#)):

Welcome back to The Upswing. I'm Jeff Sherman. We are in the Pella Windows and Doors of Wisconsin Podcast Studio. Comfortable and cozy. I love this wonderful space. We're talking about a Milwaukee institution with a deep history and a really distinctive approach to education, a very real story also of change and a bit of challenge and resilience. Alverno College has helped shape generations, women and leaders in our community. But like a lot of colleges, and I'm saying this as a father that just dropped off son in college way out in West Virginia, but like a lot of colleges across the country, it's faced some financial pressures. You have the whole changing enrollment patterns, and there's some hard decisions about what's happening now and then looking into the future. My guest today is Alverno president Christy Brown. Christie, I thank you for taking time. We appreciate it.

Speaker 3 ([06:03](#)):

Certainly happy to be

Speaker 2 ([06:04](#)):

Here. We're gonna talk really open and candidly about the recent chapter at Alverno. We'll talk about what the college has learned through its restructuring. Most importantly though, we're gonna dive in, Christie, to like what is happening at Alverno now and why? I think you're on the upswing and that's a good thing. So Christy, thanks again for being here. You have, , gosh, as I said, as a father that just dropped off our son at college, we get so many questions on like, all right, what's the ROI of higher education? And I'm sure in your role you're asked that all the time. From your lens, how do you talk about an Alverno College and like the outcomes that you want to measure and have your students receive after they graduate?

Speaker 3 ([06:53](#)):

Well, thanks for the question, Jeff. Yeah. We do think outcomes are very important for our students and for the community, quite frankly. So we are always focused on what happens to the graduate after they leave, and we have lots of evidence that our graduates are achieving, , their, the outcomes that they want. As an example, we survey all of our students like many colleges do, and over 90% of our students say that they feel prepared for the workforce and the jobs that they get when they graduate. Yeah. But we also have employers who tell us that Alverno graduates always come, day one, ready for the work environment that they're encountering. And I think that has a lot to do with what you mentioned earlier - Yeah. The way we prepare students, and I'm sure we're gonna talk about that. Yeah. , But we have many employers on our board, Aurora sits on our board, Northwestern Mutual, , Manpower, and those same employers are hiring our students.

Speaker 3 ([07:49](#)):

Are,

Speaker 2 ([07:49](#)):

Are you getting the, like the whole is college worth it question more in the last couple of years? Well - Or is that just something we're talking about in the media more? <Laugh> I

Speaker 3 ([07:58](#)):

Think it is something that we get just, , not specifically at Alverno, but just generally in high ed, as you started off by saying. , So when we get that question, we try to look to all of those things I just mentioned, what our students say, what employers say, just the abundance of evidence in our community in terms of some of the leaders that have come out of Alverno, people who are leading, , small businesses like Athena communications, people who are leading nonprofits. Mm-Hmm. , Like the Brewers Community Foundation. And again, we have, , employers and alum who work at Northwestern Mutual and those kinds of places. Yeah. So we know that our graduates, so most recently, we know that our graduates have been, , blessed with being seventh in the state of Wisconsin in terms of earning highest earnings in Wisconsin, four years after graduation.

Speaker 3 ([08:49](#)):

So that is, , after MSOE and after Marquette in the Milwaukee area. Okay. So third in the Southeastern Wisconsin area.

Speaker 2 ([08:57](#)):

So when you look at the, kind of the abilities model at Alverno, and someone hears about that for the first time, what does that look like in a typical classroom setting at Alverno?

Speaker 3 ([09:09](#)):

So, so first let me give you a framework in terms of, you know, what are the abilities? They are things that 50 years ago, , Sister Joelle Reed went out into the community and said, "Hey, employers and community, what do you need for your graduates to show in order to be successful?" Mm. And they said things like communication skills, social interaction, , problem solving. Mm-Hmm. , Those things were then put into a curriculum that we have, which is a non-graded curriculum. Hmm. And in the classroom, the faculty, whether they're in nursing or business or whatever discipline they're in, you have an expectation of that discipline content knowledge that you have to show, as well as certain abilities. Not every ability is in every setting. Okay. But they have to show a certain level. There are four different levels. So

Speaker 2 ([09:56](#)):

Alverno was doing no grades before. Yes. No grades was

Speaker 3 ([09:59](#)):

A big thing. Cool.

Speaker 2 ([10:00](#)):

Right. I mean, yeah, for sure. That's

Speaker 3 ([10:01](#)):

Great. Yeah. We're innovative.

Speaker 2 ([10:04](#)):

My, , a little aside here, my godmother, Sister Mary is School Sisters of St. Francis. Oh my gosh. So Alverno has always had a soft spot in my heart because my godmother has like guided me through life and she's 82 and still lives in the area. Oh my goodness. So like that's my personal connection to

Alverno, among other things. Yeah, that's great. But that, that's a wonderful connection. So we're kind of in this AI skills obsessed world now. Are you, as a college, continuing to almost double down on what you just said in terms of like the human skills involvement? Or are the students asking for, all right, I need to be in the technology space, but help me be in both worlds at the same time. Well,

Speaker 3 ([10:47](#)):

I think it's exactly how you describe it. We are doubling down on those essential skills that we know students need. And when I talk to students, they tell me that the abilities have helped them not only in the jobs that they have when they're in school with us - uh-huh. But in their life generally when they're in school. And we know that's the case when they graduate. So we are doubling down on communication and, , you know, problem solving and those types of skills because even though AI is going to be a tool that we wanna continue to use and we wanna help our students know how to use, we want them to use it ethically and, , knowledgeably. Yeah. So we have coursework that we're implementing that talks to them about how to use it ethically and ha- ha - we also want them to be able to question it.

Speaker 3 ([11:29](#)):

Hmm. , You have to be able to interrogate it, validate it and understand what it's producing. And recently we had a conference or a meeting at our school - Okay. , With our campus minister - Hmm. With a former faculty member or a faculty emeritus and our current vis - vice president of academic affairs where we looked at the most recent encyclical by Pope Leo, which is called Magnifica Humanitus. And it talks about humanity as it relates to AI. Mm-Hmm. And that we have to remain true to our values. And even though we're using these tools, we have to understand and be aware of how they impact those things that are most important to us. Mm-Hmm. Like social justice and those types of things. Mm-Hmm.

Speaker 2 ([12:16](#)):

We're talking with Christie Brown, president of Alverno College. So Christie, as you look at, again, the current student and maybe the, the COVID generation a little bit, do you see a difference of the students coming into the classroom who kind of live through being online 100% in their youth? And then what are their expectations getting into the classroom now? Are they comfortable without phones in the classroom? Are there, you know, this kind of dovetails on the AI discussion. Mm-Hmm. But I think there's a real difference in this current generation of college student.

Speaker 3 ([12:50](#)):

Mm-Hmm. They did, , come different than students may have come in the past. Yeah. But that's actually all the ca - all the time. Students are always changing. Yeah. And one of the tenants of the School Sisters of St. Francis who founded the school was that we have to be able to respond to the t- the needs of the time. So we know that students are coming in and they have built community online, , is one of the things that they've done. They have a different perspective than maybe some of our other students do. We think that our method of teaching around those, , abilities - uh-huh. No grades, we think that actually is a method that is still effective and is very effective in terms of helping those students who may have lived through COVID with some essential skills that they may have missed. Remember I talked about communication and social interaction action.

Speaker 3 ([13:38](#)):

Those are my favorite, - Yeah. Abilities. , You may guess that because I talk so much, but - <laugh> , but, , they might have missed some of those skills when they were in, , the online environment that they were in during COVID. So we help bring those out and we emphasize that they have to be able to demonstrate those when they graduate.

Speaker 2 ([13:58](#)):

Do you have any specific student stories that kinda help showcase that to us? 'Cause It, it, I think it's interesting probably for the fans and listeners, like, how do you really showcase on the resume if there isn't a grade, you have to show it in the work that you're doing, right?

Speaker 3 ([14:16](#)):

Mm-Hmm. , I, I hadn't thought of it in terms of the resume - Okay. But I mean, I do think of it in terms of my interaction with some of the students. I've been there only three years. Okay. So when I was actually interviewing one of the students that I ran into into the hall, in, in the hallway during the interview, which was a little scary to me because nobody knew I was interviewing. <Laugh> Remember I was the CEO of Girl Scouts? Yes, right. I ran into a Girl Scout in the hallway. Okay. And I said hello to her and I was just really excited to see her. Were you still

Speaker 2 ([14:41](#)):

Employed at the girls? I

Speaker 3 ([14:43](#)):

Was. Yeah. I know. Exactly.

Speaker 2 ([14:44](#)):

I'll talk to you later. <Laugh>

Speaker 3 ([14:47](#)):

That's what I say. , And then, you know, it's, it's, it was a full cir- circle moment when I saw her at graduation. Okay. And I've seen her throughout the time that she's been there, as well as when she was a Brownie at Girl Scouts. And she had been a, you know, I wouldn't say necessarily completely quiet, but more on the quiet side. And when I saw her during her development at Alverno, I saw someone who was learning to use their voice, someone who was very active and engaged in some of the, , student orgs on campus. And now she has a bachelor's degree in public health and she wants to do community organizing sort of work. I mean, so I think, I think she is in that generation and she is somebody who I look to, to see, you know, really the purpose of me coming there to help develop strong leaders and someone who's gonna help our community, which is what I think is also important.

Speaker 2 ([15:37](#)):

We're talking with Christie Brown, president at Alverno College. So Christie, when you came from the Girl Scouts to Alverno, what was that, what was that thought process? I mean, obviously a career step for you, but talk about that transition.

Speaker 3 ([15:52](#)):

Well, I, I don't, I mean, well, Jeff, can I say that I know - Yeah. I knew you 20 years ago or - Well,

Speaker 2 ([15:57](#)):

Probably a little bit

Speaker 3 ([15:58](#)):

Before that. Maybe 30. Yeah, right. Don't guess. , And I think you and I were in an organization, Future Milwaukee - uh-huh. Which was always concerned about the impact of the work that we were doing on the city - Yeah. And its future. So that's been the driving kind of thing for me in all the different, , jobs that I've had. Yeah. So coming to Alverno was another step in that direction. , It was specifically focused too on kind of as a continuum of what I was doing at Girl Scouts or a continuation of what I was doing at Girl Scouts, helping advance women leaders, , in our community. I have a little bit of a, a, a - Yeah. Focus on that. Yeah. But as well as anybody who's been disen- disenfranchised - Right. Or, , marginalized. I wanna make sure they have the skills and tools that they need to survive.

Speaker 3 ([16:43](#)):

And at Alverno, it's all about the students. So that's our guiding star, that's my guiding star. That's why I think all the people are there who are there - Yeah. Who stayed there - Right. Who've been resilient during these times.

Speaker 2 ([16:54](#)):

And I'm sure you've had wonderful mentors through your career too, and now you're able to be a mentor to current students. And that's really important. I mean, I look at, at my own little world in Milwaukee, someone I really looked up to and that introduced me to so many people was Gary Gruno. Mm-Hmm. A developer that really helped showcase and build downtown Milwaukee. But, you know, and Gary put me on the Alverno College marketing board years ago - Oh my gosh. When Sister Joel was still. Mm-Hmm. And I'm like, well, you're a developer. Like what? He's like, "No, Jeff. This is what we have to do. We have to build for the future." And I'm, what I'm trying to do is showcase current students to communications and media and business development. So, you know, the importance of Milwaukee as a college town, whether it's Alverno College or wherever else, it's just, I think it should be near and dear to all of our

Speaker 3 ([17:45](#)):

Hearts. And did you know too that Gary was instrumental in lifting up Al- Alverno athletics?

Speaker 2 ([17:51](#)):

Ooh, nice. All right. We're gonna talk about Alverno Athletics later. Sure. 'Cause, Well, why don't we do that right now? Okay. Let's go right to athletics because again, as a, as a parent of a new freshman, I'm seeing athletics really be a driver for colleges because every student, if you're a student athlete, you wanna continue your career. Mm-Hmm. So what does athletics look like in the current Alverno environment?

Speaker 3 ([18:17](#)):

Well, we, we are rebuilding. So we had a time, , when, probably when Gary was there and helped lifting that up where we were very successful in athletics, particularly women's basketball. , We had a lull for a while. Mm-Hmm. And since I've been there, we've been trying to rebuild athletics. We have a new athletics director. We got into a new conference, the Coast to Coast Conference - Okay. With which we

compete locally, , in terms of our day-to-day schedule, but the competi - but the, , national competitions are from s - there are eight schools and they go from coast to coast. Okay. So our, our athletes will have an opportunity to do that. But right now, athlete, athletics is kind of helping to drive our surge in enrollment that we're experiencing right now happily. , They're over 40% of our new incoming class, which is -

Speaker 2 ([19:01](#)):

I think which is similar for - uh-huh. Lot of schools, Alverno size. What, what's the current enrollment at Alverno?

Speaker 3 ([19:07](#)):

About a thousand, so - Okay.

Speaker 2 ([19:09](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. All right. What, , I know the answer to this, but it's Alverno, what's the nickname?

Speaker 3 ([19:16](#)):

Oh, Inferno.

Speaker 2 ([19:17](#)):

It is the Inferno. Okay. Can I ask you other area, other colleges - Sure. And what their nicknames are? You can ask me. You know what MSOE is?

Speaker 3 ([19:29](#)):

Raiders.

Speaker 2 ([19:29](#)):

The Raiders? Yeah. Oh, very good. Very good. All right,

Speaker 3 ([19:32](#)):

Chris. Some of them I will know.

Speaker 2 ([19:33](#)):

What about Carthage College in Kenosha? Greater Kenosha.

Speaker 3 ([19:39](#)):

Are they a bird?

Speaker 2 ([19:40](#)):

They are a bird. Firebirds. <Laugh> Carthage College Firebirds. All right. I have one more for you. And I did not know this, and I grew up very close to Mount Mary. Mm-Hmm. And I feel bad, but Mount Mary?

Speaker 3 ([19:51](#)):

Oh, they're the Blue Angels. The Blue

Speaker 2 ([19:53](#)):

Angels. I, I, I - Yeah, because they're - Mount Mary, I didn't know, but yes, the Blue Angels - They're a sister school. At Mount Mary. All right. There we go. There's our little, , sports quiz with Christie Brown, who's the president of Alverno College. Christie, let, let's talk about the, kind of the financial restructuring a little bit. , You've been there three years. The school faced some pretty serious financial challenges, deficits, enrollment, declines, and some painful cuts. What were some of the biggest differences now compared to the restructuring time? And 2025, as I look through the numbers, seemed like it was a - uh-huh. A good year for you.

Speaker 3 ([20:37](#)):

2025 was a good year financially. , As you described, there were some painful decisions that had to be made in order to get to that 2025, , number in terms of financials. But we are more focused really because we had to, or we decided to eliminate those programs that had low enrollment. Yeah. Which, you know, many schools are doing that. Right. And so we, that was one of our strategies, as well as we had to then, of course, , downsize and right size to match our enrollment with our people. Mm-Hmm. So we had to cut some faculty, had to cut some staff. , And now we look, again, focused on what the future is going to be, and also trying to grow new programs in areas that we know students want and that our market needs. Yeah. So we're working on that now. , But I think we're just operating more efficiently.

Speaker 3 ([21:27](#)):

, We are investing in technology. We are investing in online programming, which we have had, but we wanna extend the way that we. So you remember I talked about our method of teaching? Mm-Hmm. I wouldn't say that it's changed that much, but our modalities have changed, right? So we're trying to do more online teaching and programs in that area. , What I find interesting is when I talk to students about online, students who have been in our online programs, like we have an EDD that's completely online, , they tell me that they are so surprised that it feels like a family even though it's online. Hmm. So I think that speaks to the, well, the caliber of teachers that we have. Right. But also the fact that we wanna just extend what we're doing in person to all of the modalities that we can.

Speaker 2 ([22:09](#)):

Well, and, and I think that is from a parental standpoint, you are paying for the community, right? Mm-Hmm. And ultimately, it's hard as a freshman, wherever you are, to realize that 20 years down the road, that's why you went to college. Mm-Hmm. But that's kind of what every college president's selling. And I'm not, like, doing your job for you, but that is what it's all about, right? Right. You, you, you're paying to be a part of a ecosystem of an alumni base that's gonna help you for generations. Right. And again, that's the, my passionate Milwaukeean speaking, but that's what it is all about. , When, when you look at some of the current new partnerships at Alverno, can you walk us through some of those, please?

Speaker 3 ([22:52](#)):

Sure. A few, , that we have are. One is with MPS, , and we have always been a partner with M- MPS. We have a number of programs with them, but the newest one that we have, MilwaukeePublic Schools, just, I don't know if I said that, but MPS. And we also have par- partnerships with Greenfield and other school districts, but the most recent partnership is a direct admit program. Hmm. So I think many people know that if you go to a UW school or a technical college, you have direct admissions into. If you're an

MPS student - Correct. You can be directly admitted to those programs. Okay. We're the first private school to engage in that relationship with MPS. Hmm. , And just this week, I learned that our. So juniors are able to apply, of course, they're rising seniors, I should say. Okay. And we've doubled the number of applications already at this point, , based on that direct admit program.

Speaker 3 ([23:39](#)):

So that's one in, in, in our education area. Then in our nursing program, we have a partnership with Curely. It is an organization that does, like, biometrics and other kinds of, , , nursing support, - Okay. For people. And our students are doing internships - Okay. With Curely. So we're excited about that and the opportunities that it brings for our students. Got it. , Nursing is our biggest program and, and has. We've been known for a very long time for our nursing - Yeah. Program. So we're excited about

Speaker 2 ([24:09](#)):

That. We had a high school orientation this week for my daughter, and the largest line at the club - Was nursing. Organization was, like, the healthcare line. Oh, healthcare. Yeah. And I'm like, wow, wh - how. Why? She's like, "I, it's just a good profession to be in." Mm-hmm. But also, you look at it, it's like the most kinda AI resistant, right? And maybe that's how

Speaker 3 ([24:29](#)):

The kid are

Speaker 2 ([24:30](#)):

Already thinking. Yeah. That's right. You need the person. You have the AI tools, but you need the human touch. So nursing is definitely growing at all colleges around the country and in the region. What about the collaboration with, , Sherman Park Grocery and - Oh, so. The invisible. Is it the Invisible Realty Ministries?

Speaker 3 ([24:48](#)):

Yes. And, , similarly, actually, for that one, we have an, an alum who, , was, who hooked us up with the Sherman Park - Okay. , Internships. So our, our, our students are there, I think, working with healthy foods and those types of things. Yeah, okay. I, I'm not as familiar with that one as I am with the first one, but we're excited about that. Well, we're always excited to be doing anything in the community, and this is one of those where we were lucky that one of our 18,000 alum, , said they saw a need and then called us in to help.

Speaker 2 ([25:17](#)):

Yeah. That's

Speaker 3 ([25:17](#)):

Good. Satisfying the

Speaker 2 ([25:18](#)):

Need. And meeting, meeting the students with the empl - with the community - uh-huh. That's what it's all about. So, , Christy, if a prospective student or parent is listening right now, what's the one thing that you want them to remember about Alverno?

Speaker 3 ([25:37](#)):

Well, the one thing, I guess I would say that it's tough to say just one thing, but I think the thing that I would say is when you come to Alverno, you will have a distinctive learning experience that prepares you for the world. It prepares you in terms of life skills, it prepares you in terms of job readiness, , and it just prepares you to, I think, be a better human, prepared for all of the AI and any other, , technologies that might come forward - Yeah. Because you'll know about the humanity that is within, , you know, your gra - , I, I, that's. I'm probably not saying the right thing, but, , I think that we prepare students for the world, not only because we help them with those abilities that I described earlier, but because they also have the values that we help instill in them - uh-huh.

Speaker 3 ([26:26](#)):

Which have to do with the dignity of every human person and those types of things.

Speaker 2 ([26:29](#)):

When you look, when you look at campus, what's the percentage of students living on campus and commuting? Well, that's a

Speaker 3 ([26:36](#)):

Good question.

Speaker 2 ([26:37](#)):

Like,

Speaker 3 ([26:37](#)):

Do you know, like, is it - Right now, I, I'm gonna say between 15 and 20%. We've, we've

Speaker 2 ([26:42](#)):

Been - Live on campus?

Speaker 3 ([26:43](#)):

No, no. Yes, yes, yes. Okay. All right. Okay. So we're hugely commuter. Okay,

Speaker 2 ([26:47](#)):

Right. That's what I

Speaker 3 ([26:47](#)):

Thought. And I think last year we probably were more like 10%, and this year I think we're gonna be more. Many of the athletes, of course, live on - Yeah. Live on campus. Right. Whether they are local or not

Speaker 2 ([26:57](#)):

From Wisconsin. Makes getting to those 5:30 AM practices a little easier, right? <Laugh>

Speaker 3 ([27:02](#)):

Sure.

Speaker 2 ([27:02](#)):

Okay. Let, let's talk, , community a little bit, Kristy. I- if I were, if I had this power to give you a Milwaukee magic wand, and you could wave it and make one wish, what would that be?

Speaker 3 ([27:17](#)):

Well, I would, , I would eliminate poverty. And with that, I think it would allow there to be no barriers for students and young people to succeed. I, I should just say young people, because they'll have an opportunity to get an education as. So it all leads back to me for - Yeah. To education.

Speaker 2 ([27:35](#)):

That, that's good. That's good. Well, and on the education front, if you had a sit down like this with either candidate for governor, what would you ask both candidates in terms of what Madison can do for private and public institutions moving forward?

Speaker 3 ([27:54](#)):

Well, , until you said for both private and public, I had an answer that was going to just only apply to private. That's okay, that's okay. But, , they could, either one of them could support increasing the higher education grant, the Wisconsin higher education grant. Okay. So our students, , an abundance of them are eligible for that grant because we have a number who are first generation and, , have needs for college funds and Wisconsin supplies them with, , well, an amount that is significant and helps them attend Alverno. We would love more.

Speaker 2 ([28:29](#)):

Yes. More incentive. That is good all around. What was your favorite college course and why?

Speaker 3 ([28:37](#)):

Well,

Speaker 2 ([28:37](#)):

I'm a - It wasn't that long ago. <Laugh> So I, I know you can remember. <Laugh>

Speaker 3 ([28:42](#)):

I, I wasn't, , I was a psychology major. Okay. So I'm going to say developmental psych. Okay. So understanding how and when and why people learn what they learn, what imprints on them and those types of things. I think that's what that course was about. But I loved it.

Speaker 2 ([29:00](#)):

All right. Two other. I got like three other questions. As we wrap up our conversation with Christy Brown, who is president of Alverno College, Kristy, what's. How do you define success today?

Speaker 3 ([29:16](#)):

Well, I think it's achieving the outcomes that you desire. And so for Alverno, that is being able to successfully teach our students in a. And meet them where they are, , provide whatever it is that they need. And we know that our faculty do that. I, that's what students. I meet a lot of students in the lunchroom. I ask them what they like about Alverno and they say faculty go above and beyond. Do they talk

Speaker 2 ([29:41](#)):

Good things about the lunch and the food?

Speaker 3 ([29:44](#)):

They say faculty go above

Speaker 2 ([29:45](#)):

And beyond. Okay. Check out the ni - the niche ratings. Like that's what all students go to. They go to niche and see, "Ooh, what's the, what's the food ranked? Oh, I'm not going there. I'm going here." Well,

Speaker 3 ([29:53](#)):

I'll say this in terms of rankings. <Laugh> Our, our, , faculty have been, in the last 16 years, you know, US News World Report does a ranking of, , dedication and commitment to teaching. Got it. And Alverno is the only school in Wisconsin that's been ranked in that for the last 16 years that they've been doing it. So our faculty are incredible and awesome. Staff too. But, , and they, they wanna make sure our students get what they need.

Speaker 2 ([30:19](#)):

Above and beyond the Alverno cafeteria, do you have a favorite restaurant in the area? Oh, that's a tough one too.

Speaker 3 ([30:25](#)):

<Laugh> Just one. Yes. , I'm gonna say Mason Street Grill. Okay. For a number of reasons, but there are a lot of restaurants I like. I will say this, don't get mad at me. I like a good parking spot. All right. 'Cause If you're in a downtown restaurant -

Speaker 2 ([30:43](#)):

Convenience drives a lot around dr - dining, right? It really does. But the food is wonderful. The environment is wonderful. The food is great. And it's easy and easy out, right? Mm-Hmm. Yeah. They do a great job at Mason Street Grill for sure. Yeah. All right, Christie. , Finally, is there anything I should have asked you that I didn't?

Speaker 3 ([30:58](#)):

Well, you, you just should have asked me, , what are the, what, what is the most, , important thing about Alverno? And I would say that the most important thing about Alverno was that we, , help supply, you know, leaders and drivers in our community. Yeah. And I think we've been known for that. That's what people tell me when they know what I, when they learn what I do. They're like, "Oh, Alverno." <laugh> Or they say, "My sister went there," or, "My godmother went there," or whomever. And it just has a great reputation for, , being a part of the community and helping lead the community, so.

Speaker 2 ([31:31](#)):

All right. Well, very good. I really appreciate your time and, , go Inferno. <Laugh>

Speaker 3 ([31:37](#)):

Thank

Speaker 2 ([31:37](#)):

You. Thank you, Christie.

Speaker 1 ([31:39](#)):

Is that coffee? Time for a quick look at your coffee and how much it costs. It's the Upswings Coffee Index.

Speaker 4 ([31:49](#)):

Coffee Event.

Speaker 2 ([31:51](#)):

Welcome back to The Upswing. I'm Jeff Sherman. Thanks for being here. You maybe need a, another cup of coffee this morning or whatever you're listening to this. It's been a while since we've done the Upswing Coffee Index, so let's take a look at coffee prices and what's new in the coffee world all around the region. First up, a couple weeks ago was Downtown Employee Appreciation Week. Went to the world's largest coffee break at Catalano Square in the Third Ward. That's a great event. All local vendors, a lot of people, it's probably 150, 200 people, really showcases the vibrancy of, , Brew City from a coffee lens. One of the best locals around is Stone Creek Coffee. They just launched a new text-based service called Stone Creek One. Here's the deal, you go to their website and you sign up for it, and you get a text just once a week with a handpicked item every Wednesday.

Speaker 2 ([32:46](#)):

So it's a creative way to get some more data for the company for sure, but it's also a way to remind customers to stop in. Stone Creek has nine cafe locations across the Milwaukee area nearby suburbs. Owner Eric Rush says, "I love one because it forces us to choose one coffee each week." We send it out at 10:00 AM on Wednesdays and Eric and Jess and Kelly at Stone Creek, they text you the pick and you stop in the store. I wondered if I stop in, what's that gonna cost me? An eight ounce coffee at Stone Creek these days, \$2.75. The 12 ounce, \$3.25, a 16-ounce coffee at Stone Creek. You're almost at four bucks at \$3.75. One other really quality thing about Stone Creek Coffee is it's a certified B Corp, which means it agrees to meet verified standards for social and environmental business practices.

Speaker 2 ([33:46](#)):

I really admire the locals that take this extra step to put this certification upon themselves. And a fun fact, in 2026, the B Corp US and Canada Champions Retreat, their annual convention, it was held right here in Milwaukee at the Baird Center in April. Get out, get yourself another cup of coffee. It'll do the body good. It's good and good for you. Finally, this is back to school week in your household. Parents, grandparents, I'm sure you're going through orientations, you're going through our, what's the new sleep cycle gonna look like? How are we gonna prepare our students to get back to school? The American Heart Association has some good ideas. You know, always good to have good heart health

too. You stay active, you eat healthy, you get plenty of sleep so the kids can be ready to learn. Put those phones in the phone caddies when you get into the classrooms.

Speaker 2 ([34:42](#)):

That is statewide now, not just one district or the other. Every school in the state, you gotta put those phones away, make sure the kids are attentive and listening and learning in the classroom. But the American Heart Association has some really good ideas and I think this is always good to just reinforce as you get ready for back to school. First, schedule family time for physical activity. Make sure your kids are out and about pre, even if they got some time before school or after school. Weather permitting, get outside, go for a walk, go for a hike, leave the phones at home, make sure they're getting physical activity. Plan a weekly menu and prep your meals. This is easier said than done. Trust me, we don't do this well in the Sherman household, but make sure you write it down. You know what you're gonna eat for the week, especially on the lunch side.

Speaker 2 ([35:37](#)):

If you're packing your kids' lunches, encourage the kids to help. Encourage them to make the lists on the grocery side and so that they're eating good food and they know what's coming up the next day. Next, if you can simplify your family's schedule. It's, summers can be super busy with camps and sports and babysitting and all the other stuff that's on a family's plate. So if you can make that family schedule a little easier now that we're back to school, it benefits everyone. Set a regular bedtime and a wake up time, that's good for all of us. I would also say don't sleep with your phone in the bedroom and use that as an alarm. Use another old school alarm to get you up. But go to bed at the same time as much as you can and wake up at the same time. And finally for your parents and grandparents out there, and maybe I'm speaking a little bit to myself, live by example, right?

Speaker 2 ([36:29](#)):

You be a role model, you eat healthy, you have heart healthy habits. It doesn't mean you have to change up everything at once, but set those little goals, have those little baby steps. It's a good thing as we're all getting back to school. And it's a good thing to remember, you know what? We're all beginners in life too. Like we're doing something for the first time, whether you're 65 years old or you're five years old and going to school, we can all learn from beginning something new. So happy back to school, get to bed early, have a good school year.