

Reaching Full Potential After Graduation



(Above) Staff member Laura McFayden (L) and consumer Lindsey Wichita work at the Millard VODEC location.

“I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to do.” That’s what VODEC consumer Lindsey Wichita said when asked about what she wanted to do after graduation back in 2009. This is a very common response from many young adults. Lindsey is no different, she was unsure as to where her life would take her but knew that her family would support any decision she made. It was time for her and her family to decide what Lindsey was going to do with her life. They determined that **VODEC would be the best option**. After touring many facilities throughout the Omaha metro. “We wanted Lindsey to be challenged and successful and VODEC’s day services seemed to offer that to Lindsey.” Says her father Tim Wichita who thought extensively about where Lindsey should go. “It’s important that they get out into the community and be apart of society as much as possible.”

“**Millard was a very nice work center and everyone was very friendly when I visited,**” she said about her choice to attend the location at 4526 South 140th Street. She was apprehensive about starting at the work center though, “I was scared about making new friends.” Once Lindsey started all those fears retreated and are now just a memory. “Now I have lots of friends!” She attends the Millard work center each day and interacts with both other consumers and staff. Bridget Greco, Vocational Services Supervisor at Millard stated, “Lindsey is always happy and smiling. She really has a knack for lifting others spirits and helping create a fun and happy work environment.”

Quality Improvement Committee Submits Quarterly Results

VODEC’s Quality Improvement Committee meets on a quarterly basis to discuss quality within the organization and what steps can be taken to increase quality and/or decrease incidents on a yearly basis. During a recent meeting the committee reviewed the fourth quarter of 2012 and its results. The committee looks at many different indicators and determines any errors incurred, VODEC’s goals to work towards, and a plan of action to reach those goals. Indicators that the committee looked at included: Health and Safety; Outcomes including health, habilitation, individual goals; Census, Satisfaction; Workforce; and Incident Data. The committee set goals for each of the Indicators and put in place plans to reach those goals each quarter. A quarterly report is available to any interested parties at the VODEC Council Bluffs main office.

ATP works on Money Skills



(Above) Adult Transition Students play a game of Monopoly to enhance their money skills.

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How to Enroll in VODEC Services by: Daryn Richardson (Part 1 of a 2 Part Series)



(At Left from L to R) Staff member Drew Morgan consumer Heather Haas and Director Daryn Richardson talk about the importance of Heather's tour in choosing VODEC.

From the Desk of the CEO Steve Hodapp



With Spring comes flowers and high school graduations. Both signify a new stage in life. And this Spring will be full of both. As flowers bloom a new group of young people will enter life's adult stage. For some it will be a splash of cold water, particularly for those who may need adult services from VODEC and other providers, and who might not have been prepared for this transition.

How can we help? If you have a graduate (or know of one) this spring who will need adult services you need to **today** get information about what adult services are available and how to access them. Let me repeat, **today**, if you have not already done this.

Where do you go for information? You can start by

contacting Daryn Richardson, VODEC's Services Development Director. Call him at 712-328-2638. He can help whether the graduate is in Iowa or Nebraska. Daryn has helped hundreds of graduates and their families navigate the adult services system in both states. He is an accessible, friendly and valuable resource.

Entering adult services can seem daunting. It doesn't have to be. It just takes a good guide. A graduate who already has an adult services provider selected is way ahead of the game. But it's not too late if a provider isn't lined up yet. Call Daryn today.

"I knew my friends and others from school were attending VODEC and wanted to as well. The tour helped me decide." Says consumer Heather Haas. Recently as I was speaking with Heather I was reminded that from time to time I am asked "How do people get enrolled in VODEC Services?" With the graduation time fast approaching I think that this is a great time to review the process for people to enroll at VODEC.

I want to point out that there are many ways that people come to VODEC. Usually, they are referred by a Case Management Professional such as Case Manager in Iowa or a Service Coordinator in Nebraska. The Case management professional is critical to the process. Not only are they an impartial advocate for the person seeking services but they are responsible for making sure that the funding for such services are in place. To be clear, without funding services cannot happen. When a person calls seeking services one of the first questions that I ask is about funding. If the person does not have funding I am able to provide information to where funding may be secured. In some cases a person may not be eligible for VODEC services or funding. In those cases I am able to provide information on other community resources that may be at little or no cost.

Once the initial referral information is gathered I strongly recommend a tour of a VODEC facility or service setting where the services will be provided. This is a good Idea for many reasons. First, it gives an opportunity to listen to the needs of the individual and those that are supporting the individual. Second it gives them a chance to see our best product, namely our staff. VODEC is very proud of its employees, thorough background checks and intensive training programs. Additionally VODEC is one of the few CARF accredited programs in the area. Finally it allows our staff to see the individual in the services setting that they desire. This initial contact helps staff gather preliminary information that is used in determining the best course of action for each applicant. Tours are easy to set up. "I really like it here and am glad I took a tour first!" Heather comments on her time since starting at VODEC.

For more information on VODEC services or to schedule a tour please contact Daryn Richardson or Michelle Nelson at 712-328-2638 or via email at daryn@vodec.org.

CARES visits the Nebraska Humane Society

In February the Iowa CARES program took a trip to the Nebraska Humane Society in Omaha. While there they visited the dogs, cats, bunnies, birds, and other animals currently in the shelter.

The Nebraska Humane Society is a 65,000 sq ft facility that at any one time can hold a minimum of 500 animals in its kennels and enclosures. They also have a training facility, doggy day care, surgery center, and gift shop.

Consumers from the Iowa CARES program interacted with a variety of animals throughout their morning and more than a few wanted to take some of the animals home with them.

"Most of the consumers were very excited to pet the animals since many of the consumers do not have pets at home. They especially loved it when they licked their hands" said Wendy Elliott VODEC staff member.

(Above Right) Consumer Brian Major gets in some quality time with a rat terrier at the Humane Society



(Above) Consumer Celeste Ring enjoys the day.



(Above) Consumer Michelle Burns says 'HI' to a beagle at the Humane Society

(Above L. to R.) Front Row- David Reid, Michelle Burns, Tammy Luke, Norma Hammers, Rhonda Rodgers, & Brian Major. Back Row Celeste Ring, David Steinhoff, Gina Dressel, and Jordan Belt.



An applicant must meet the following criteria to be considered eligible for any VODEC service:

1. Be at least 16 years old for any vocational program
2. Have behavioral needs within VODEC's scope of service
3. Have medical needs within VODEC's scope of service
4. Have transportation needs within VODEC's capability to provide
5. Have adequate funding in place (including service hours' authorization or private payment in place) for services being requested
6. If applying for an in-home service, the applicant's home must meet basic health and safety requirements



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Vocational Development Center is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3)corporation. Donations may be tax deductible. Vocational Development Center is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants for services or employment are considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or disability.

We are a certified provider of day and residential services by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

We are approved to provide vocational services by the Nebraska Department of Education.

We are approved by the Iowa Department of Human Services to provide waiver services to individuals with intellectual disabilities, brain injuries and we are an approved habilitation service provider.

We have accreditation from CARF for Community Employment Services, Organizational Employment services and Community Integration.

VODEC IS ON GoodSearch!



GoodSearch is a Yahoo! search engine that pays charities you select a penny per search! Go to www.goodsearch.com and add GoodSearch to your browser. Then select Vocational Development Center as your designated charity! And pass the news on to your friends and family! Over 15,000 searches have benefitted VODEC so far! It's easy and it works!

For more information on VODEC services please contact Daryn Richardson or Michelle Nelson at 712-328-2638 or by email at drichardson@vodec.org

VODEC is a proud member of:



The mission of VODEC is to provide services to persons with disabilities in order that those persons may live, work and participate in the community in the least restrictive environment to achieve their full potential. The purpose of VODEC is to support and advocate for persons with disabilities so those persons have opportunities to develop to their fullest potential, to interact with society, to experience a sense of belonging, and to contribute something of themselves at their own levels of ability.

Return Service Requested

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