

From Development Center to Community Employment



(Above) L to R- Cathy Mardesen, Human Resources Manager for Hy-vee and VODEC consumer Derek Taylor prepare for Derek's assessment at the West Broadway Hy-Vee in Council Bluffs.

"I am really excited to be going to Hy-Vee and hope that it works out so I can continue working there," said VODEC consumer Derek Taylor. Derek is currently working with a VODEC Community Employment Specialist preparing for his workplace assessment with Hy-Vee.

Workplace assessments are crucial to determining the best place for a person with an intellectual or developmental disability, like Derek, to work. VODEC's Community Employment Specialists work alongside community employers and Vocational Rehabilitation to perform these assessments for persons with disabilities. Consumers work at a local business so they can be observed in a community setting for the assessment. They get a list of job tasks to complete and the Employment Specialist is there to observe the work they do and see how they handle situations and communicate with coworkers,

guests, and supervisors. After the initial assessment the Employment Specialist will then take their observations and place that into a report. From the report, the Community Employment staff conclude if they feel Derek is ready for Community Employment, based on his strengths and which employability skills he can continue to develop. "Some of the main goals for an assessment is to get the individual involved and see if that type of job is something they would like to do permanently, assess the individuals strengths and weaknesses, and try to place them in a community job," said Community Employment Supervisor Danielle Nordby.

While the ultimate goal for these assessments is community employment they also offer many other opportunities for the consumers to practice workplace, social and problem-solving skills.

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From the Desk of CEO Steve Hodapp



To any Consumer:

Dear _____,

So you may have heard of “taking a vacation”. What do you think it means? No doubt you have an idea and that idea may be different from someone else’s. That’s OK because it’s your idea.

What may be consistent between your idea of vacation and someone else’s idea is the departure from work. That is to say, time off. Time off is a good thing.

The opportunity to recharge may be another common idea. For many people vacation provides a way to get re-energized by seeing and doing things they don’t do everyday. That is kind of exciting.

Another idea in common may be that a vacation involves going somewhere. I have to say not always. Sometimes a stay-cation can accomplish the objectives of a vacation.

If you can’t get away then you have to punt by getting creative. This could involve sleeping in (remember, no reporting to work on vacation). You might try a different restaurant or even just a different meal at a favorite cafe. Go to a movie in the afternoon. Like to just lounge around? This is your chance!

But one thing we all have in common is that after vacation we return to work feeling like we have a smile inside. It gives us something to visit with our friends about. And sometimes we are just glad to be back with our friends. Do you feel that way?

So regardless of the time off you get (even weekends!), enjoy it. Do something special. Make your insides smile. And I want to hear all about it.

Cares celebrates Father’s Day with party

VODEC’s Iowa Cares program celebrated Father’s Day in June with a luncheon and games. Father’s who attended were given gifts, made crafts, and played a few games with their family members. “It was great to meet and speak with all of Janelle’s friends,” said VODEC consumer Janelle Schwaninger’s father. Amanda Bible was thrilled that her father came and she introduced him to everyone. It was a great day and both the consumers and their families really enjoyed it.

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*This list reflects donations received between
5/15/2014 and 6/5/2014*



(Above)- Gifts for Father’s at the Cares Father’s Day Party.

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Consumers who work with VODEC's Community Employment Specialists spend time working on job skills such as preparing for an interview with questions, deciding on the appropriate clothing for both the interview and the job, and determining what type of job they would like. To accomplish this, the Community Employment Specialist interviews consumers, like Derek, to discover person centered preferences such as what time of day do they prefer to work, do they have transportation, what interests them and why, what do they think their skills are and what does their team think their skills are, how are their communication skills, and anything else that the Community Employment Specialist needs to know to help find them an assessment and a permanent community job.

For Derek, who wanted to work in a comic book store or a grocery store, this process has been a valuable one. "I have really liked working with my Employment Specialist and they have helped me a lot with this process," said Taylor. This process has also been an encouraging one for Derek's family. "We have noticed Derek's self esteem has really risen. Even though this assessment is short term, Derek sees this

as a shot at longterm employment. During the last few weeks, he has been letting all his friends and family know how excited he is to be given the opportunity to work at Hy-Vee," said Derek's mother Angie Richardson about his newest accomplishments.



(Above)- Consumer Derek Taylor puts returns away during his assessment at Hy-Vee.

Ride for Full Potential reaches midway point

The Ride for Full Potential has reached the midway point of the trip traveling through Newton, KS. Ron, his son Matt, and their friend Terry have been riding from Virginia to Oregon to raise awareness for persons with intellectual disabilities and also to help raise money for VODEC's teaching kitchen. They have traveled through Virginia, into Kentucky and Illinois and then into Missouri. Newton, Kansas is the midway point across the nation and their trip will end up in Astoria, Oregon in August. Follow their progress at www.rondickinson.org and donate to VODEC for the teaching kitchen at www.razoo.com/ride-for-full-potential.



(Above)-Map of the Ride for Full Potential route. (Far Left)- Matt Dickinson mailing nonessential items back home to lighten the load. (Left)- Matt and Ron at the Kansas boarder.



Blackjack Run raises money for VODEC Programs

“It was a windy day but everyone had a great time,” said Iowa Operations Director Mark Stromer of the Blackjack run that took close to 100 people through Southwest Iowa on June 14th. The day started at the American Legion Post 2 in Council Bluffs with a breakfast provided by the Legion Auxiliary in which all the donations from the breakfast also went to VODEC. After breakfast and registration, riders traveled through the Southwest Iowa towns of Oakland, Griswold, Emerson and Mineola.

Over \$2,000 was raised in total and a portion of that will be used for the Iowa and Nebraska Residential programs to provide activities for consumers in services. “I had a great time. It was a lot of fun,” said consumer Norma Hammers of the days events.



(Above)- Riders prepare to head out.

Thank you for donating to and sponsoring the 2nd annual American Legion Riders/VODEC Blackjack Run

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Todd Vosberg

John Watt

Rheanna Webber

Sandy White

Roger Wilson

Doug Wilson

Wes Woods

Robert and Karen Wright

Blackjack Run raises money for VODEC Programs



(Top Left)- L to R- Rider Jeff Catron and VODEC consumer Norman Knott Jr. (Top Right)- Consumer Norma Hammers enjoys breakfast before the ride. (Above Center)- Riders leave for their first stop on the Blackjack run.

Residential Programs stay busy with activities

Between the Iowa program and the Nebraska program, VODEC serves 160 consumers in either hourly services or in a group home setting with 24-hour staff on hand. With each consumer usually wanting to do something different, it is up to a committee of staff and consumers to decide on some of the summer activities that everyone can attend. In the past both programs have made day trips to

Adventureland and Worlds of Fun, gone swimming, held BBQ's at local parks, and many other activities and this summer is no different. Consumers will once again be able to travel to venues to enjoy the weather and the fun they have to offer.



(Above & Left)- VODEC residential consumers enjoy the rides at Worlds of Fun.

VODEC

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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.



VODEC is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. Donations may be tax deductible. VODEC 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 by the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise to provide waiver services to individuals with intellectual disabilities, brain injuries and we are an approved habilitation service provider. We are a provider of Host Home services in Iowa and Extended Family Homes in Nebraska. We have accreditation from CARF for Community Employment Services, Organizational Employment services and Community Integration.



VODEC is a proud member of:

drichardson@vodec.org

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



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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 benefited VODEC so far! It's easy and it works!

- 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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