

Champions!



Vodec Vikings take 7th consecutive gold medal in Special Olympics cheerleading

Quietly, humbly, and through a lot of hard work, Vodec's Special Olympics cheerleading program has built a dynasty. March 11th at the Iowa Mid-Winter Games, the advanced Vikings took a gold team medal. It is their seventh consecutive year taking the top prize at the Games in Iowa City.

Coach Micky Jackson says there was plenty to be nervous about heading into the

competition.

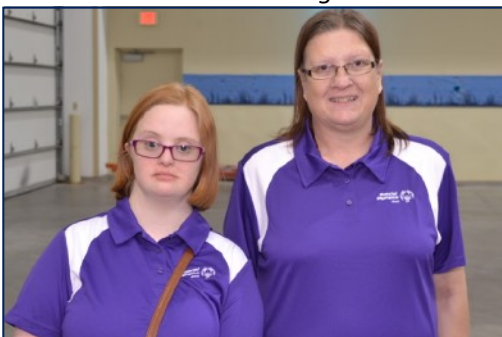
"The team went through a lot of changes this year. New coaches teaching new routines to a group that has some new people. We're really happy to see that our work has allowed the tradition to continue."

Cheerleading was just one of the bright spots for Vodec's trip to Iowa City. From the opening ceremonies, Council Bluffs was well represented at the event.

Vodec consumers Sandy L. and Amanda C. carried the Olympic torch and Special Olympic flag for the kick-off banquet.

The new Beginners Cheer squad also brought home a silver medal. Three participants took part in the basketball skills competition. Guadalupe G. earned a bronze medal. Derek T. earned a 4th place ribbon, and Brian E. brought home 5th place honors.

We owe a lot of gratitude to the staff members who have worked with these participants.



Amanda C. (left) and Sandy L., are Special Olympics Global Messengers



Vodec consumer Guadalupe G. smiles after earning her bronze medal in the basketball skills competition

Micky Jackson, Jade Donovan, Kelsey Preston and Maria Mabe coached and chaperoned the trip. Congratulations to ALL of the Special Olympians who participated. ▽

Vodec Plans “Reverse Job Fair”

Vodec is co-sponsoring an event that could help change the landscape of community employment for people with disabilities. It's the Reverse Job Fair, and based on the team that has assembled to support it, we believe it's going to be a really big deal.

It started in late 2016, when a Leadership Group from the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce approached Vodec for a community project that they could help develop to meet an emerging need for the community of people with disabilities.

Given the changes the Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act (WIOA) has established, we identified helping more people move to community employment as our priority.

The idea we have developed is a reversal of the traditional job fair. Typically this is a format used by employers to attract new employees to open positions.

We decided that for our population, it is more useful to showcase their abilities to companies in a position to hire; potentially on the spot.

Since the earliest days, a number of key community partners have joined the effort. On May 10th, our first Reverse Job Fair will

be the result of coordination between Vodec, Iowa's Vocational Rehabilitation Office, Council Bluffs Consolidated School District, IowaWorks, and the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce.

Thomas Jefferson High School is providing their field house as the hosting venue. Special Educators from across the city's high schools are selecting and preparing students with disabilities for participating in the fair, along with a group of our adult employees and Community Employment consumers. The combined group will present 40 potential job-seekers to some of the community's most prominent companies.

We constantly preach the benefits of hiring people with disabilities. You may already be aware of the low absenteeism and long tenure trends people with disabilities have demonstrated in the work force. The Small Business Administration champions the low cost of most accommodations. Our hope is that with this joint community push, we can spread that knowledge to the Community's employers.

Successful integration of more people with developmental and intellectual disabilities into the work force is a community



According to the U.S. Department of Labor, more than half the accommodations requested by people with disabilities cost absolutely nothing to implement, AND improved the work space for everyone

Source: "Workplace Accommodations: Low Cost, High Impact" —Report, U.S. Dept of Labor

challenge. We believe that efforts like this, put together by teams like this one, spearheaded by the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce, will put OUR community at the head of the pack of cities that show the best outcomes in rising to meet the challenge. We appreciate your support.

If you are an employer who would like to get more information on hiring people with disabilities, please contact Vodec Services Development Director, Daryn Richardson. You can drop him an e-mail about your business and potential job opportunities at drichardson@vodec.org, or speak to him by phone at (712) 328-2638. ▾

Vodec Entrance Criteria

- ▶ 16-years of age for any vocational program
- ▶ Behavioral, medical, and transportation needs inside Vodec's scope of service and capability to provide
- ▶ Adequate funding in place for requested services (including private pay or other options)
- ▶ For in-home services, applicant's home must meet basic health and safety requirements



Vodec is Certified by:

- ✦ Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
- ✦ Iowa Department of Human Services
- ✦ Iowa Medicaid Enterprise
- ✦ Nebraska Department of Education

Vodec is affiliated with the following organizations:

- ✦ Adel Partners Chamber of Commerce
- ✦ Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce
- ✦ Human Services Advisory Council
- ✦ Iowa Association of Community Providers
- ✦ Iowa Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
- ✦ National Association of Service Providers (NASP)
- ✦ Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM)
- ✦ Omaha Chamber of Commerce
- ✦ Sarpy County Chamber of Commerce

Vodec is an authorized provider in the following Iowa HealthLink networks:

- ✦ Amerihealth Caritas
- ✦ Amerigroup
- ✦ UnitedHealthcare

Thank you!

To our valued supporters...

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Sarah Miller
Patty Kahre
Teresa Stephens
Ruth Powers
Andrea Smith
Nicole Wright



Upcoming Events

April

8: Project Search Skills Assessment Day

Embassy Suites

10: Project Search Application Deadline

Embassy Suites

11: Special Olympics Track and Field Meet

Iowa Western Community College

14: Project Search Application Deadline

Nebraska Medicine

26-27: Project Search Mock Interviews

Nebraska Work Center

28: Henry Doorly Zoo Excursion

Iowa Residential

May

3: Project Search Skills Assessment Day

Nebraska Medicine

8: Project Search Skills Assessment Day

Embassy Suites

10: Reverse Job Fair

Thomas Jefferson HS Field House

17: Project Search Graduation

Nebraska Medicine

18: Project Search Graduation

Embassy Suites

25-27: Iowa Special Olympics Summer Games

Ames, IA

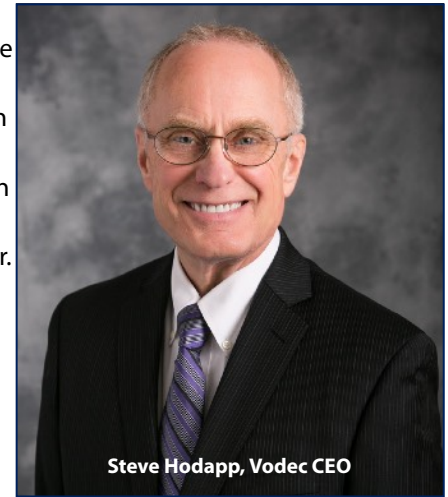
Notes From The CEOs Desk

I want to express my appreciation for our Vodec employees who 'carry the water' every day. These are the front line people who spend their time directly with consumers.

For a consumer's family or guardian an Assistant provides peace of mind. It means so much to them to know their loved one is treated well, that the environment is safe, and that personal needs are met. This is really where the rubber meets the road. This is where service issues are discovered and fixed. This is where relationships are built on trust.

For an Assistant's supervisory chain this means consumer service goals established by the team, including the consumer, are worked on. Goals which help the consumer reach his or her full potential sometime need support daily, and some days need support over and over. An Assistant does this with smiles and is not frustrated by the repetition but by not finding that 'perfect' method to help the goal lesson stick . . . yet.

For a fellow Assistant this means others doing the same job really 'know' about the daily grind. There is a peer group within which questions can be asked and answers given without a worry about how it looks to ask, without an assumption that he or she knows it all already. There is an esprit de corps that binds the Assistants together. And when an Assistant can promote to a supervisory role he or she has invaluable experience from which to pull and about which to train. ▼



Steve Hodapp, Vodec CEO

St.Paddy's Day Fun!



Iowa CARES hit the pavement for St. Patrick's Day — with chalk. Their holiday activity involved part of an afternoon making chalk art sidewalk drawings. Great idea for a gorgeous day! Photos: Ginny

Going "Beyond" the Arts

One of Vodec's most active community partners is WhyArts, a local organization that designs original arts and arts-and-crafts programming for us.

Several times each week, one of the teaching artists presents a workshop to our Nebraska Day Habilitation programs.

As a recent stop at a WhyArts workshop in Omaha demonstrated, the arts can be a very physical undertaking.

The project was an Olympic-styled Games for our CARES and ELM consumers. Day Services Supervisor Carl Rice talked about the events: "they did ring toss, they did limbo, they did bowling, basketball, a walk around the building — they've had a full morning...WhyArts definitely keeps them active."

That might be more than you'd expect from "arts and crafts," but teaching artist Lisa Kalantjakos says that level of activity is what keeps the teaching staff enthusiastic. "All of our crew LOVES coming out to Vodec. We know that the staff and all of the participants are going to give 110%." ▼



"C'mon, you got this!" Teaching artist Lisa Kalantjakos encourages a CARES consumer during the basketball portion of a WhyArts activity session in Omaha.



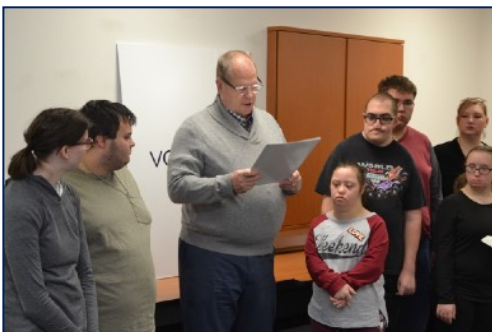
WhyArts teaching artists Kim Jubenville (l) and Lisa Kalantjakos prepare to hand out hand-crafted medals to activity participants in Nebraska CARES and ELM



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Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503

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Mayor Proclaims March DD Awareness Month



Council Bluffs Mayor Matthew Walsh reads his DD Awareness month proclamation at Vodec, flanked by ATP consumers

(Text of Mayor Walsh's Proclamation)
CITY OF COUNCIL BLUFFS IOWA
Office of the Mayor
Proclamation

WHEREAS, individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, friends, neighbors and co-workers encourage everyone to

focus on the abilities of all people; and

WHEREAS, the most effective way to increase this awareness is through everyone's active participation in community activities and the openness to learn and acknowledge each individual's contribution; and

WHEREAS, opportunities for citizens with developmental disabilities to function independently and productively while reaching their full potential must be fostered in our community; and

WHEREAS, we encourage all citizens to support opportunities for individuals in our community that include full access to education, housing, employment, and recreational activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Matthew J. Walsh, Mayor of the City of Council Bluffs, Iowa do hereby proclaim

March 2017 As Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in the City of Council Bluffs and we recognize that our communities are stronger when everyone participates.

Take time to get to know someone with a disability and recognize that we all reach full potential together.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the City of Council Bluffs, Iowa to be affixed this 16th day of March, in the year Two Thousand Seventeen.



Vodec Services Development Director, Daryn Richardson (l) acknowledges the Mayor's proclamation

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Help us "go green" and sign up for The Voice online at www.vodec.org

