

The VODEC VOICE

Since 1968

January, 2013

From Student Life to Adult Life and Beyond



(Above) Sandy prepares a meal in her apartment that she shares with two roommates. Sandy enjoys finding recipes online which staff help her to prepare.

“I like to re-arrange my furniture when I want to... because I can” states Sandy White, a consumer at VODEC. Sandy also enjoys cleaning, cooking, working and managing her own budget.

Living in own home that she shares with two roommates has been exciting and challenging for Sandy. “Moving in was exiting and scary” Sandy states that this was because she was excited to move in with women that were the same age and would have a lot in common. She says it was scary because she was moving further away from her family.

A few years ago, as a student of Council Bluffs Community Schools, Sandy entered the Adult Transition Program (ATP) at VODEC which is designed to prepare students for life after graduation. Sandy recalls that while in the ATP she learned work skills in addition to cooking and managing to her own budget. After she graduated from the program Sandy began the process of finding her own place to live by enrolling in VODEC’s community-based residential program.

“When finding roommates, we always start with a meet-and-greet.” says VODEC residential Supervisor Dorcee (Dorrie) Baker. “The meet and greet is an important step that helps the consumers decide on their roommates are going to be a good fit.” Dorrie said that after the meet and greet Sandy and her roommates toured the home to see if it was where they wanted to live. The women then picked out their own bedroom with each roommate getting the one that she desired.

Now that she is gaining confidence as an adult living on her own with assistance from VODEC, Sandy dreams of one day going to college; starting a career in child care and owning her own home. Which would be “Awesome” according to Sandy.

VODEC receives a 2 Year Certification from the State of Nebraska

“Congratulations go out to all our Nebraska colleagues who made it possible for our Nebraska programs to receive the maximum two-year certification from Nebraska's Division of Development Disabilities.” CEO Steve Hodapp wrote in a recent email to all VODEC staff. This is a great achievement given the new rules implemented in 2012.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for all state certifications. A certification review is a rigorous process that takes months of preparation. Case file audits, stakeholder interviews and observations of daily activities are all a part of the review.

“My hat is off to all of you who worked towards this outcome. You should all feel extremely affirmed and proud. Thank You.” stated CEO Steve Hodapp.



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A Message from the CEO **Steve Hodapp**

It's crystal ball time. I wish I could be like Johnny Carson's 'Carnac' character and come up with clever answers to questions about 2013. It's better that I just be realistic. Given what I think I know today from information of others who think they know something, here's my fortune-telling for next year. Any or all of this fortune-telling is looking at moving targets so our responses to any of them may change.

Overall VODEC will sustain itself. We're not going anywhere. We are in a solid financial position. Our only long term debt is a loan for the 7110 F Street building in Omaha.

Our employees will continue to be some of the best in the business and our in-house training for them will continue to expand and improve which provides assurance that services will continue to be provided with caring and compassion.

Our services in Nebraska should proceed with little if any deviations. No disruptions are expected. What we're doing today we'll be doing in 2013 as I see it without help of a service fee increase from Nebraska Health and Human Services. Most of what we do in Nebraska is under agreement with NHHS. And our completely community integrated services model will continue to be tested in southeast Nebraska.

Our Iowa residential services are expected to continue without bumps. Focus will continue on providing industry-preferred settings for one and up to three persons each. A continued and growing focus on services receiving Medicaid funding will be prioritized by referral sources.

Ours and other providers' vocational/employment services in Iowa look to get a facelift. As a result of SF2315 passed in the 2012 Iowa legislative session a re-design of services is coming this summer. Regions of counties will be formed. Regional boards will decide which services beyond required core services will be provided in regions. The issue of county of legal settlement will be replaced with county of residency. And services which today are 100 percent county-funded are in jeopardy as a focus on Medicaid-funded services becomes priority. As these changes occur and become un-stoppable VODEC's response will continue to be, "What do you want us to do? Then let us do it".

I've never found it helpful personally to be a rabble-rouser. I have found it helpful to be of service. And being of service is what we all will continue to do in 2013.

Santa visits VODEC

Before Santa begins his worldwide tour to hand out gifts for Christmas he made a stop, with the help of the Council Bluffs Fire Department, to VODEC to visit the ATP and CARES programs. Although he was missing his reindeer the consumers forgave him since he brought them a fire truck. Once inside VODEC Santa took time to visit with the consumers and hear what they wanted for Christmas. Each consumer also received a candy cane and a photo.

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(Below) Santa and the Council Bluffs Fire Department visit VODEC. Also in photo staff member Rheanna Webber



Residential Services Enjoy the UGLY Sweater Party



(Above) Staff members help consumer Ricky Eppenbaugh and winner of the ugly sweater contest get his food from the finger food pot luck dinner.

“It was a great time that truly showed the spirit of the season,” states CEO and attendee Steve Hodapp.

Nearly 200 VODEC residential consumers enjoyed a fun filled night at the Council Bluffs location on December 5th celebrating the holiday season with food, gifts, an ugly sweater contest and other activities. Even Santa made the trip!!! Consumers were treated to and participated in a pot luck finger food dinner that included items like pigs in a blanket, pizza rolls, chips and dip, salads, cookies, cakes, and brownies.

After dinner was served any consumer that brought a gift was put into a grab bag gift exchange. Gifts ranged from candy to picture frames, stuffed animals and jewelry.

(Below) Santa (staff member Will Kardell) gives consumer Sheryl Harvey her Christmas gift from the grab bag exchange.



Once gifts were exchanged and a few more trades completed consumers and staff moved on to an ugly sweater contest, won by consumer Ricky Eppenbaugh, bingo and other activities.

As the evening wound down many consumers sat around tables talking and laughing with others showing off the gifts they received and making plans for the days to come. Consumer Derek Taylor says, “Both consumers and staff alike left with smiles and memories that will last a lifetime.”



(Above Left) Consumer Elise Collins shows off her grab bag gift.

(Above Right) Consumer Barry Belik is thrilled with his gift of cologne.

(Below Right) Staff member Sandy Anderson (L) and consumer Greg Foster enjoy the Ugly Sweater Party.

Adult Transition Program Helps Santa's Children Christmas Village

Recently the VODEC Adult Transition Program has been giving back to the community by helping out at Santa's Children Christmas Village in Oakland IA. “They are fantastic kids and staff, and work great together and for the charity” says President Orien Hodges.

In 1998 the Santa Visit Program was created so that Santa could visit children with life threatening illnesses and children in crisis. SCCV has expanded to include programs for the MDA and many other charities helping children in Iowa and Nebraska. Activities at Santa's Village include fire pits, fire truck, horse drawn wagon, and hayrack rides, Santa's forest, and the Tunnel of Hope, which remembers those we have lost.

Santa also hosts a Garden camp program that last year produced over 5,800 pounds of fresh vegetables that was donated to area food pantries, and shelters. Sponsorships are also needed for Santa's gifts to children. This program provides clothing, books, and toys to families in need at no charge to them.

VODEC's ATP program's involvement with Santa's Village has allowed them to learn many skills such as putting together shelter for items, wrapping gifts that are displayed on Santa's walls, picking up sticks and cleaning fire pits getting them ready for use, helping set up and manage the gift shop, and many other tasks to help Santa's Village get ready for the holiday season.

“Part of our mission is to help those with disabilities develop the social skills in working with the public and instilling in them the importance of giving back to the community they are a part of. VODEC has been a great help with that process and both the consumers and staff really take pride in helping the community.” Mr. Hodges states. The ATP program has plans to continue its work the Santa's Village and hopefully in the future work at one of the camps Santa has each year. For more information please visit Santa's website at www.santascampandwonderland.org.



From Left consumers Jonathan Brannan and Aaron Welnitz along with staff member Mike Points clean up the fire pits.

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

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



612 S MAIN ST
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51503
PH: 712-328-2638
hodapp@vodec.org

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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.

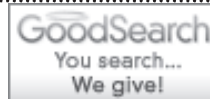
CARF INTERNATIONAL

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.

Vocational Development Center, Inc.
VODEC
612 South Main Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
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