

The VOICE

A VODEC Publication—Reach Full Potential with VODEC today!

VODEC Vikings Victorious



VODEC Viking Gold Medal winners for Cheerleading from left to right, front row: Elise Collins, Sandy White, Katie Liddick, Trisha McPartland, Corina Gray, Angela Eckles. 2nd row from left to right: Misty Anderson, Amanda Chapin, Tony Kramer, Paula Ross, Heather Haas, Andrew Eppert, Joyce Donahoo, Tammy Barber (coach), Jamie Brown (VODEC's Residential Manager). 3rd row from left to right: John Majerack, Adam Donor, Nick Donor, Lisa Watson, Sarah Arnold, Richelle Dennis, Kathy Craig, and Matt Ringgenberg.

On March 14th twenty-three athletes with VODEC traveled to Iowa City to compete at the Special Olympics Mid-Winter Tournament. A squad of twenty-one individuals competed in the cheerleading competition and two athletes in a basketball competition. The competition was the culmination of months of practicing.

The cheerleading athletes were coached by former Dallas Cowboy Cheerleader Tammy Barber and VODEC staff members. They have been competing in Special Olympics since 2008. The team started with eight cheerleaders and has grown to a team of twenty-one athletes. "I don't think anyone realizes how hard they work for just three minutes on the floor," said Barber. The

cheerleaders practice every week for two months to prepare for the Mid-Winter Tournament. "The dedication just blows my mind," said Barber.

The basketball competitors coached by VODEC Residential Manager Jamie Brown were Jessica Moore who won a bronze medal and Brian Elliott who won a ribbon for sixth place.



Jessica Moore, Bronze medal winner in basketball.

From the CEO's Desk:

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. I believe we should all be aware every day, year round. But I also believe we take note when there is a day, a week or a whole month designated for a purpose. Designating a whole month for Developmental Disabilities Awareness really underscores the importance of the focus. It gives us a reason to enhance awareness for 31 days in March, not just for a day like for cucumbers (Cucumber Day is May 12, 2015). Sorry, but cucumbers are not as important.

Why do we think promoting awareness of developmental disabilities is important? Some people have not been associated with a person with a developmental disability; some people have even avoided such persons. Those people may have incorrect preconceived notions about a person with a developmental disability. Will she understand me? Will he hurt me? Will she act inappropriately? More awareness would make those people more comfortable when approached by a person with a developmental disability who may speak loudly or appear to have a forceful demeanor.

By increasing awareness, an employer may be more receptive to interviewing and even hiring a person with



a developmental disability. The other employees without disabilities may be more accepting of their co-worker. The person may actually have a chance to earn enough money to live independently.

And towards living independently, awareness may increase a landlord's receptiveness to let a person with a developmental disability rent an apartment or a house without needing someone else 'of authority' to sign a lease 'for' the person.

Those are just a few examples of how awareness could improve the life of a person with developmental disabilities. But how could that person increase his awareness of what his rights are? Presently that person may have an advocate or a guardian who could provide information and guidance. The person could do research about what programs or services might be available to increase their

quality of life. While March is a month of making (more) people (more) aware of developmental disabilities, it does not replace the responsibility of the person to become (more) aware of how to be independent. It is a two-way street.

On March 29th ARC sponsored a National Day Out to encourage people with and without developmental disabilities to partner up and **go out** to do something. **Go out** to dinner, **go out** to a dance, **go out** to the park, whatever. Just **go out** and do something you both like to do. Just by being part of the local activities you can help dispel myths and create opportunities for yourself. So maybe if you are a person with a developmental disability you can find someone without and take them out!

VODEC

Entrance Criteria

1. Be at least 16 years old for any employment training 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.

For more information or to apply contact Daryn Richardson at (712) 328-2638 or drichardson@vodec.org

THANK YOU....

to all of our valued supporters

(This list reflects donations received 1/8/15 to 3/9/15)

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ATP students present to VODEC's governing board

VODEC's Adult Transition Program students prepared lunch for VODEC's Board of Directors' meeting on March 25. The purpose was to highlight skills the students are working on in the new teaching kitchen in the Council Bluffs location. Students prepared salad, pork loin filets,

mashed potatoes with gravy, and vegetable medley.

Lunch was served followed by a presentation by a few of the students. Students discussed cooking skills and food safety. "The students were invited to showcase their cooking skills and gain confidence from a public

speaking experience," stated Steve Hodapp, VODEC CEO. "It also provides an opportunity for the board to witness the benefits of the new kitchen that our supporters, the IowaWest Foundation and Ride for Full Potential, made possible."



In the photo to the left, Angela Blain, VODEC's Day Services Assistant, Adam Kjos, James Snodgrass, and Katherine Sangster presented information on how they prepared lunch to the Board of Directors. In the above photo, Katherine Sangster and Angela Blain work together to prepare salads for the governing board's lunch.

Grant will take students to Iowa's Capitol Building

In April VODEC's ATP students will be traveling to the Iowa State Capitol Building. This exciting trip will allow our students to participate in an ID Action opportunity called *Capitol Day*. Michael Points, ATP Day Service Coordinator, stated "With the ID Action grant our students will have a great firsthand look at how they can take an active role in our government and advocate for themselves through their elected representatives." During this outing the students will meet with Representatives and Senators to talk about issues related to Iowans with disabilities.

Beginning their day the students will be given advocacy training by ID Action staff. This training will

enlighten the students on effective ways that they will be able to make a change within the Iowa Legislature and appropriate ways to engage with their Representatives. From there the students will go to the capitol building to watch a floor debate and attend a committee meeting to observe the legislature at work.

VODEC staff are arranging for the students to meet Senator Michael

Gronstal and Representatives Mary Ann Hanusa and Charlie McConkey. During these meetings, the students will learn the importance of building relationships with their legislators and why their voices are important and need to be heard. Experiences from *Capitol Day* will aid the students in their future self-advocacy efforts.





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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.

April 2015

Council Bluffs Mayor Walsh
Makes Proclamation at VODEC



From left to right, top to bottom: Darian Smith, Jonathan Bryen, Hensley Stewart (VODEC’s Business Development Director), Amie Duncan, Adam Kjos, Matt Walsh (Council Bluff’s Mayor), James Snodgrass, Eric Dunkle, Megan Rewolinski, Jacob Still, Sydney Turner, Shawn Holmes, Katherine Sangster, Cheyenne Tague, Adrianna Espinosa, Michael Point (VODEC’s Day Services Coordinator), Steve Hodapp (VODEC’s CEO), and Joe Bosco (VODEC’s Human Resources Director).

On March 20th Council Bluffs Mayor Matt Walsh proclaimed March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness month during a ceremony in the Adult Transition Program (ATP) VODEC’s Council Bluffs Center. The Mayor presented the ATP students with the proclamation. The proclamation will be on display at the Council Bluffs office.

In attendance were representatives of the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce, Council Bluffs Community School District, Lewis Central Schools, Goodwill, and VODEC.

“Awareness is important because it leads to community inclusion which

benefits everyone,” stated Daryn Richardson, VODEC’s Services Development Director. “All of us at VODEC would like to thank the Mayor for his continued support of VODEC.”



Mayor
Matt Walsh