

The VOICE

A VODEC Publication—Reach Full Potential with VODEC today!

Elm Program goes to Reunion Prom

On April 17th consumers from VODEC's Elm program joined students at the J.P. Lord school for a reunion prom. Staff from J. P. Lord invited Elm to wish Principle Mike Dotson a fond farewell. "Mike is retiring this year so I planned and organized a special gathering," said Kristina Berzina, J. P. Lord teacher. "I thought it would be fun to bring everyone back." Principle Dotson was looking forward to seeing the students that transitioned to the Elm program.

J.P. Lord School started in 1938 with the help of Omaha Public Schools (OPS) and the Nebraska Society for Crippled Children. J. P.

Lord is a specialized school that serves students, ranging from 5 to 21 years old, with multiple disabilities. "The Elm Program was conceived at J. P. Lord school almost 12 years ago," stated Daryn Richardson, Services Development Director at VODEC. "I am proud of the

partnership that we have had with the school through the years."



Photo on the left, from left to right; Kate Clemenson, Mike Dotson, and Susan McIntosh. Above photo from left to right; Kristina Berzina and Emanuel Harrington.

Artists in Transition Exhibit at Hot Shops

Artwork produced by students from Omaha Public Schools Transition Program (OPSTP) were on display at the Hot Shops Spring Open House. The Spring Open House began May 2nd and ended May 3rd. The artwork was created over six workshops from February through April 2015. The artists learned about techniques and art mediums from a variety of cultures around the world. Exhibits based on Native American, African, Japanese, Chinese traditions were on display.

"After the success of the adult program last year, we really wanted to see how the students in the transition program would benefit", stated Daryn Richardson, VODEC Services Development Director. Richardson was approached by Omaha Public Schools senior staff

members and OPS board member Marian Fey to facilitate a program for the Omaha Public Schools Transition students. VODEC applied for and was awarded a grant from The Omaha Schools Foundation.

"It's always a pleasure to work with the wonderfully creative students at the transition program," said Carolyn Anderson, Director of WhyArts? "We're so happy VODEC brought us together for six weeks at Hot Shops and we look forward to having the honor of doing it again soon!"

Top: Lisa Kalantjakos, WhyArts? artist, teaching transition students how to make clay Native American medallions. Middle: Brian Priesman teaching improvisation to a group of students. Bottom: Kalantjakos guiding students in creating Chinese symbol artwork.



From the CEO's Desk:

We make our best efforts to plan to protect those we leave behind before we are the 'dearly departed'. I know this sounds morbid. But we'll each have our last day. When that day arrives we want to have things left in proper order. What does that mean?

In most cases it means we have a will and testament, an executor, a conservator, and so on appropriately in place and selected. Decisions are made about who gets something and who maybe doesn't get anything. Some of these will be tough calls. This whole process gets a bit more challenging when an heir is a person with special needs.

In this case particular care is necessary when making final plans. If done incorrectly the heir with special needs could lose Social Security Disability benefits and eligibility for Medicaid Waiver programs which could be worth more than the inheritance. With the best of intentions an inheritance could be very detrimental to the heir with special needs. How do you avoid this from happening?

One way is to find a professional financial advisor trained in the packaging of special needs trusts. An advisor certified to do this provides even more assurance of a special



Steve Hodapp, CEO

needs trust truly meeting your needs.

From time to time VODEC has arranged events with planning professionals to present information on special needs trusts to our consumers' families; we may arrange

more such events. I believe bringing this information to you is still critical so efforts continue to do so. We can provide names of certified advisors who we believe will work in your best interest.

For you who have not done a special needs trust, please lose the deer in the headlights look and take an action step. Not doing anything for planning is almost as harmful as planning incorrectly. You can do this. It's in the best interest of your son or daughter. And if you know someone who plans to leave your son or daughter a bequest then please share this information with them as well.



From left to right; Clarissa Conolley, VODEC Staff and Cecelia Losee, Financial Planner, at the Special Needs Resource Fair, Lied Activity Center in Bellevue.

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 daryn@vodec.org or call 712-328-2638 to set up a guided tour.

THANK YOU....

to all of our valued supporters

(This list reflects donations received 3/9/15 to 4/15/15)

*Knights of Columbus
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Job Opportunities Increase for SEAC Students

In the last three months, seven students in VODEC's SEAC program have obtained jobs in our community. The SEAC program stands for Supported Employment and Academic Collaboration.

Funded by Council Bluffs schools, the SEAC program places a Community Employment specialist alongside a teacher in a work skills classroom at two Council Bluffs high schools. The program puts theory into practice by taking classroom activities such as job seeking, resume building, and application completion under guidance of the community employment specialist.

In the last three months, students obtained jobs at Ameristar and Horseshoe Casinos, Wal-Mart, Menards, and Applebee's. The students perform a variety of tasks including working with greyhounds at the dog track and retail duties. "Seeing the excitement when a student obtains employment for the first time after working so hard is the highlight of my experiences with the program", said Danielle Nordby, Community Employment Supervisor. "The students are so grateful it makes me realize how important employment is to families and students. I am glad that we are able to provide this service."



From left to right: Alena Sorlien, VODEC SEAC specialist, and Steve Smith, special education teacher that facilitates the SEAC program at Abraham Lincoln High School



OMAHA GIVES!

powered by the Omaha Community Foundation

May 20, 2015

VODEC's goal is to raise \$10,000

www.omahagives24.org

Please donate! An added benefit to your donation is that VODEC is also participating in a funds matching program sponsored by Omaha Community Foundation.



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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.

Project Search at Nebraska Medicine Concludes its first Rotation

VODEC staff members and interns at Nebraska Medicine have concluded their first 10-week rotation of Project Search at Nebraska Medicine. The rotation started last January. Interns began their rotation by completing their background check and orientation. Project Search interns were assigned work site locations and mentors from Nebraska Medicine.

On April 13th the interns began their second rotation by transitioning to their new work site within Nebraska Medicine. Each intern met with their new mentor, received their new uniforms and participated in an activity called "wayfinding". This activity is used to teach new interns how to find their way to and from each of the Nebraska Medicine work sites.

In addition to the hands on

experience at Nebraska Medicine interns also participated in classroom training. The classroom training utilizes the Project Search curriculum which teaches work readiness skills, financial literacy, areas of daily living and job seeking skills.



From left to right: Max Zdan, consumer, and Angel Brooks VODEC staff



From left to right: Kelli Shibata, VODEC staff, Kortney Jackson, consumer, and Angel Brooks, VODEC staff



Project SEARCH