

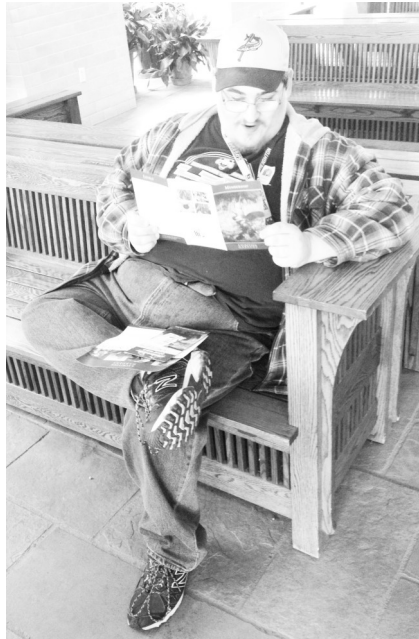
# The VOICE

A VODEC Publication—Reach Full Potential with VODEC today!

## Lauritzen Gardens: Popular Destination for VODEC Nebraska Cares Consumers

On May 19 VODEC consumers from the Nebraska Cares program made their latest visit to Omaha's Lauritzen Gardens. This living museum exhibits plants in a metropolitan sanctuary. The consumers enjoyed the beautiful Displays and educational experience.

"Lauritzen Gardens is one of the most popular choices for outings," said Jennifer Lindly, Cares Coordinator. "The consumers are already asking when they will be returning to visit the gardens." Lindly feels that beautiful walking trails, fragrant flowers, and availability of benches makes the Gardens popular with the consumers. Additionally, their experience is topped off by a relaxing view of a waterfall. The program will be returning to the Gardens next month.



*Matt McCarthy reviewed the Lauritzen Gardens map to decide which exhibit to visit next.*



*Bill Fenner pointed out the Japanese Koi swimming in the pond.*

## Finding the Right Roommate is Key to Success in VODEC's Residential Program

VODEC has a process for finding new roommates when there is an opening in an existing group home or when opening a new group home. VODEC currently manages 16 group homes. Typically three consumers live in a group home setting. The group homes have staff available at all times to assist consumers with day-to-day living and leisure and recreational activities. VODEC prides itself on providing a warm and active home for the consumers. "The key to facilitating a great home is ensuring that everyone is comfortable living with each other," stated Sarah Wysocki, Services Operations Director for VODEC's Nebraska Programs.

"Most of the time our consumers are excited to get a new roommate," stated Wysocki. "Potential roommates participate in a group activity with current consumers in an initial meeting. The activities are as varied as the consumers. One group decided to go bowling. Another group decided they wanted to have dinner together."

VODEC helps current consumers and the potential roommate compile a list of questions that can be asked at the meeting so they can get to know each other better. VODEC has found that this has helped the initial meeting especially in cases where everyone is too shy to talk or can't remember the questions. "On few occasions we

have had consumers requesting additional meetings in order to get to know each other better. In these cases we scheduled more group activities until everyone felt comfortable with each other," added Wysocki.

Once VODEC staff are confident that a good match has been made an intake meeting is scheduled for the new roommate and final arrangements are made for the new roommate to move in. "We are very careful about finding the right match; our ultimate goal is to find the best possible roommates for our consumers," states Steve Hodapp, VODEC CEO.



## From the CEO's Desk:

Some of you may recall this line "Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night." Spoken by Bette Davis in the movie *All About Eve*. Well, that could be said about the next couple of years. There is as much in the air as I have seen since I've been in this business since 1987. I've written about some of that in prior VODEC

*Steve Hodapp, CEO Voice issues.*

There is the assault on sheltered workshops and the subminimum wage. There's the exclusive promotion of supported employment fitting every person with a disability. There's also the coming change from a state-run management system for developmental disability (DD) services to one run by managed care organizations (MCOs) in Iowa in 2016 and in Nebraska likely some time in the not-to-distant future. Nebraska is putting out a request for proposal (RFP) for MCOs to assume management of several Medicaid funded programs, just not for DD services yet. There is the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) which will eventually impact our ability to provide services to high school students.

Through all of this I need to emphasize for you that VODEC has an experienced leadership team, a dedicated group of employees providing direct services, and a Board of Directors made of seasoned professionals and stakeholders. The individuals who comprise these groups understand the importance of navigating these waters successfully so our consumers can reach full potential with little to no awareness of service disruption.

The leadership team has nearly one hundred years

combined experience in their areas of expertise, all supporting VODEC's mission. Being a team means each member brings a skill set which completes the whole.

We are lucky to have around 265 employees who I believe for the most part want to be here doing what they do every day. They are to be admired and respected for their perseverance, humor, tenacity and patience. I admire and respect them.

Board members include individuals from finance, insurance, personnel, quality assurance, education, and family members of consumers. These folks approve the course VODEC takes to fulfill our mission.

What am I trying to get across here? I want you to feel secure and confident that VODEC will continue to provide high-quality services to fit a wide array of needs among all of our consumers. I want you to understand that we strive fully every day to deliver to the best of our abilities the quality of services you want.

All that stuff coming down the road which I mentioned above, are just bumps in the road. It may make some of what we do today look different tomorrow. But, different isn't bad. It's just different. VODEC will continue to be your provider of choice because of what we do and how we do it. Thank you for being part of it all.

To share your thoughts and questions about any of the changes I mention in this article, please contact one of your elected representatives.



*Above: Iowa State Senator Mike Gronstal visits Steve Hodapp during a 2014 tour of the Development Center in Council Bluffs.*

## 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](mailto:daryn@vodec.org) or call 712-328-2638 to set up a guided tour.

[www.vodec.org](http://www.vodec.org)

## Thank You....

### to all of our valued supporters

(This list reflects donations received 4/16/15 to 5/8/15)

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## Iowa State Special Olympics Summer Games Award Recipients

VODEC consumers competed in the Iowa State Special Olympics Summer Games in Ames, IA May 20-23. The award recipients are as follows:

Sarah Arnold	Gold	100 M Dash
Angela Eckles	6th Place	Running Long Jump
Angela Eckles	Silver	Shot Put
Brian Gress	Silver	Shot Put
David Jenson	Bronze	50 M Dash
David Jensen	Silver	Softball Throw
Norman Jones	Gold	50 M Walk
Javier Llanas	Silver	400 M Dash
Javier Llanas	4th Place	Running Long Jump
John Majerack	Bronze	Shot Put
Jessica Moore	Gold	Softball Throw
Tom Pedersen	Gold	50 M Dash
Derek Taylor	4th Place	Running Long Jump
Lisa Watson	Silver	50 M Dash

VODEC also had consumers on two Bocce Ball teams. The award recipients are as follows:

4th place: Joyce Donahoo, Norman Knott, Brian Elliott, and Paula Ross

4th place: Tom Pedersen, Sarah Arnold, Jessica Moore, and Norman Jones



*Jessica Moore celebrates winning the gold medal for the softball throw.*



*Brian Gress competing in shot put.*



*David Jensen awarded the bronze medal for the 50 meter dash.*

## Adult Transition Program Students Graduate

On May 29 eight students graduated from VODEC's Adult Transition Program (ATP). ATP teaches students the skills necessary to develop independence and prepare students for life as an adult. Students are able to explore their strengths and interests through budgeting, healthy cooking, and community based volunteering. Additionally, they focus on employability skills such as resume development, interviewing practice, and job-shadowing. These last few months students enjoyed the use of a newly remodeled teaching kitchen which was completed in January 2015.

"I am very proud of our graduates," states Chado Carrillo, Day Services Supervisor. "Over the past three years we have watched them transform from students to young adults. Four of the graduates are working in competitive employment. Most of the students have developed the skills to live independently."

This past year, 18 students from Council Bluffs and Lewis Central School Districts have participated in ATP. Students from ATP are referred to VODEC by their local school districts. The program follows the school calendar. For more information on ATP and other VODEC programs, please contact Daryn Richardson at 712-328-2638 or [daryn@vodec.org](mailto:daryn@vodec.org).



*Pictured with staff member are the 2015 graduates. Top row left to right: Jacob Still, Aaron Wellnitz, and Eric Dunkle. Bottom row left to right: Adriana Espinoza, staff member Felisha Neighbors, and Vaneka Harris. Other graduates not available for photo: Patricia Fulton, Elizabeth Stearns, and James O'Daniel*



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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 Award-winning Cheerleaders Perform in Parade

The VODEC Viking cheerleaders performed in the annual Celebrate CB Parade on May 16. The parade, a Council Bluffs tradition every May, began and ended in downtown Council Bluffs. The 2015 theme was *Picture Me in CB*.

“The Cheerleading team looks forward to being part of the parade each year,” stated Daryn Richardson, VODEC Services Development Director. “The Celebrate CB parade provides an opportunity for the team to perform as well as show off their Gold Medals.” The Vikings Cheerleading Team won first place at the Special Olympics Mid-Winter Tournament last March.

The Cheerleaders, lead by coaches Tammy Barber, former Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader, and Jamie Brown, VODEC Residential Services Manager, performed cheerleading routines along the parade route.

“CB has a lot to celebrate, foremost being the achievement of it’s citizens with disabilities.” added Richardson.



*Above Photo, left to right; Tony Kramer, Nick Donor, and Angela Eckles*



*Top photo: Andrew Eppert  
Bottom photo, from left to right: Mackenzi Smith, Adam Donor, Sandy White, Heather Haas, Katie Liddick, Tony Kramer, Nick Donor, and Angela Eckles*