

THE VOICE

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FAMILY HONORS PATRIARCH WITH VODEC GIFT



Kate K. (L) and Vodec Staff Maria use one of the new iPads for a musical game.

When a group of families first approached Vodec in 2004 about developing a service for adults with multiple disabilities, the Klemmensens were among the voices asking for a new solution. They were speaking out for the daughter Kate. They wanted an option that would open her days to new experiences.

Their requests led to Vodec's Exceptional Living with Multiple Disabilities program — ELM.

For more than ten years now, they have

partnered and worked with ELM and Kate to make sure the program — and their daughter — were reaching full potential.

One of the milestones in Kate's progress has been her experience with a smart phone application called "Bitsboard." It's an educational learning game that lets you create and interact with custom flash card boards. The digital play helps stimulate speech and language. The program is widely used and praised by special education teachers across the country. One of Kate's staff members downloaded the app to her personal tablet, and taught Kate how to use it.

In time, Kate's mother, Julie, noticed the app helped her daughter make and express more of her own choices. She was even able to use it to communicate her preferences to her staff in ELM.

Late last year, the Klemmensen family lost its patriarch; Kate's grandfather Aage

(Ahh-gee) Klemmensen.

He was there at the beginning of the ELM journey, and the family chose to honor his memory with a gift to the program they were instrumental in creating.

In late December, Aage's widow Ether, announced some of his memorial funds would purchase two iPads, otter boxes, and materials for homemade stands ... for ELM.

For our part, Vodec offers our condolences in this time of family loss. We also send our gratitude for the thoughtful gift from our old friends. Thank you, Klemmenson family.

We are grateful for donations of all types. For more information please call Chantel LeMaster, Director of Grants and Giving at 712-328-2638 to ask how you can contribute.

ENROLLMENT WRINKLES DELAY IOWA HEALTH LINK START



We expected a few wrinkles in the transition from Iowa's State run Medicaid to the Modernized version operated by Managed Care Organizations (MCO). The process is meeting those expectations, but there's also good news to pass on.

Iowa has delayed the official start of Health Link, as the modernization program is called, until March 1st.

If you are a Medicaid subscriber, the delay doesn't affect your access to coverage or services. There are a mountain of administrative moves happening behind the scenes that caused the delay. Your coverage is intact.

BUT ... there are a few things you can do to help the system get up to speed.

First, by now you should have received your enrollment packet from an MCO. Those envelopes went out in late December and early January, and if one hasn't shown up in your mailbox yet, you need to contact Health Link and let them know.

The packet assigned you to one of four MCOs. If your original assignment was to a company called Well Care of Iowa, that company will not be a participant going forward. you should have already received a reassignment packet.

If you were assigned Well Care, and you have NOT received a new assignment, you need to contact Health Link. There is a chance your address is incorrect in the database, or some other error has occurred. By March 1st, you will need to know which MCO is assigned to you. You will also want some proof the MCO knows you are assigned to them.

As a service provider who is relying on the success of this transition for payments in coming months, Vodec remains confident that all the bugs will eventually be worked out. We recognize that changing how medi-

cal care for half a million people is prioritized, billed, and funded is a major undertaking. We might be a bit more nervous if there weren't any missteps in these early stages.

We are committed to making sure you have any information we have that will make the transition as smooth as possible for our consumers.

If you have questions, or need to contact DHS or Health Link, there are plenty of resources available to help you.

Your first option is the frequently asked questions page of the Health Link website. It's at:

<https://dhs.iowa.gov/iahealthlink/faqs>.

You can also contact Member Services by telephone: 1-800-338-8366.

We are all in this together. Once we get past these wrinkles, there are likely to be more. But smart people are working day and night to fix the bugs, and they'll be successful.

From the CEO's Desk:

It's crystal ball time. Let's look deeply into the murky mist which is 2016. Sit forward and gaze with me as the room darkens and the air becomes thick with anticipation.

First we see a consolidation in Nebraska of our Millard service into the 7110 F Street location. There has been a series of internal and external improvements made to the F Street property to accommodate the consolidation. There has already been some migration of staff and consumers. We believe there is room for all current activity at F Street. We look for the migration to be complete by end of February. I thank the staff involved with related activity for their patience and understanding during this process.

Next a re-branding by David Day & Associates (DDA) becomes visible. This started in 2015 when DDA selected us as its Brand Kind non-profit recipient. Anything connected with branding, they are doing with us. This includes updating logo, colors, tagline, and anything else we use to market and identify ourselves in the public eye.

Looking deeper into the crystal ball we see assistance to schools with their transition under WIOA (Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act). We'll help more students with their searches and placements into community employment while avoiding or delaying their enrollment into facility-based adult services after graduation.

Becoming visible through more mist is the continued down-sizing of sheltered work services, not just at VODEC but nationwide. Certain advocacy and legal actions in some states created momentum which is causing a shift away from sheltered work services being delivered in a facility-based setting to employment activity being more community-based.

Now coming into focus is an expansion of pre-vocational employment training, community employment and residential services into

four central Iowa counties comprising the Heart of Iowa Region. Following our strategic plan we are responding to a stated gap in services in that region.

Now we're approaching the center of the crystal ball. Bubbling crazily is Iowa Health Link (managed care) starting after March 1, after the green light is given by CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services). Originally planned to go live January 1, 2016 there was a stutter-start in December when CMS determined the managed care organizations selected by Iowa Dept of Human Services were not far enough along with activities to transition from a state-run operation.

As we begin to withdraw our gaze and re-enter an atmosphere of increasing light the crystal ball dims and we become aware of a sense of strength and confidence. We become emboldened by the VODEC team's collective experience of successfully navigating changes since 1968.

That's 48 years of continuous service provision, expansion and diversification. I hope you all feel as fortunate to have this experience in your corner as the team and I feel about being able to work with you through the 2016 challenges (or as I like to call them - opportunities).



Steve Hodapp
Vodec CEO

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. For in-home service, applicant's home must meet basic health and safety requirements

For more information, or to apply for Vodec services, contact Daryn Richardson; drichardson@vodec.org, (712)328-2638

Our Accreditations and Affiliations



Artist in Transition Program Gets New Funding



Vodec is excited to announce our "Artists in Transition" program will continue for a second year.

The Omaha Schools Foundation has awarded a grant to cover the costs of this partnership with WhyArts?

They are a local team of artists who tailor programs for people with disabilities to help with development of social, cognitive, and cultural skill through painting, sculpture, performance, and crafts.

In our first season, Vodec consumers explored African and Native American artistic expressions and artifacts, and tried their hands at using those techniques and materials to tell their own stories.

"Creativity is essential to success in the workplace," says Vodec Services Development Director Daryn Richardson. "The grant allows us to provide the chance for our students to explore their creativity with the guidance of local artists in a professional setting."

This year, we will expand this chance to get exposure to several new global cultures.

Past experience and academic research have shown that art is a powerful mode of communication for people with disabilities. Having "another" way to express ideas and desires has the potential for creating actual breakthroughs in some cases.

We are ecstatic to have this as another tool for helping us in the never-ending quest to reach full potential for each of the consumers that are part of our Vodec family.

This program is specifically open to students enrolled in both an OPS Transition Program AND a Vodec work experience program.



There are similar WhyArts? collaborations in our Nebraska Cares and ELM programs.

If you would like more information, or to apply for one of the arts programs offered at Vodec, you can contact Daryn at

drichardson@vodec.org or leave a message at (712) 328-2638.

Thank you!

To all of our valued supporters.

(This list reflects donations received 12/1/2015–1/15/2016)

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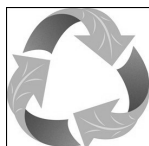
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Help us “go green”
And sign up for
the *Voice* online at
www.vodec.org

The mission of VODEC is to provide services to persons with disabilities in order that those persons may live, work and

VODEC asks for “One dime at a time”...



Imagine an act of conscience that allows you to help the environment AND Vodec at the same time.

Now ... grab your reusable shopping bags and head over to Whole Foods Market Omaha, because that fantasy is a reality!

From now until the end of March, VODEC is proud to announce a partnership with the grocery chain’s “One Dime at a Time” program.

Here’s how it works:

At checkout, the store will offer you a ten cent per bag discount for every reusable sack you use. Your cashier will ask if you would like that discount applied to your shopping bill, OR if you’d prefer to give the dimes to this quarter’s community organization.



Iowa CARES visits the pumpkin patch

— those dimes can add up pretty quickly. We plan to use these dona

tions toward our CARES programs in Nebraska and Iowa. As you are probably already aware, these are programs that help our consumers develop their social and creative skills by providing opportunities for interaction and participation in a wide range of activities and outings.

Every day we see breakthroughs and special moments in CARES. So we need you to fill up your trunk, backseat, and both arms with reusable grocery bags, and head off to Whole Foods for a healthy food shopping spree!

If you’re still used to choosing between paper and plastic, Whole Foods Market offers reusable bags in a variety of sizes. Prices start at 99 cents.

Whole Foods Market is at 10020 Regency Circle, Omaha, 68114.



Nebraska CARES designs Christmas cards

