



## Success Story

*Sharp pains in his back caused Carl to lose his job at a restaurant and miss time on the Vodec work floor. But after a doctor's diagnosis and treatment, Carl is out of his wheelchair and back working at Vodec — persevering beyond his physical hardships.*

## Consumer Perseveres Beyond Physical Hardships to Succeed

**T**he way one person defines success is probably different than how someone else defines it.

When thinking about what success means to me, Omaha consumer Carl Minton comes to mind.

Carl's story of how he became successful begins a few months ago when he was working as a dishwasher at Beacon Hills and also on the Vodec work floor.

During this time, Carl was experiencing severe back pain and was unable to complete his assigned tasks at his jobs. A visit to the doctor revealed he was experiencing kidney failure.

He spent the next few months in the hospital and needed regular dialysis to help his kidneys function

properly.

Carl's health problems caused him to become weak and led losing his ability to walk. He was placed in a wheelchair, and he said that he gave up hope and became depressed.

Not only was his health failing, but he lost his job at the restaurant and could not work at Vodec. He said he felt like his relationships with the people closest to him were falling apart.

It was hard for him to stay positive with all of these issues going on in his life.

Not long after, Carl started working with a physical therapist to regain his strength so that he could walk again without any assistance.

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## Vodec Consumers Give Back to the Community

**L**ike anyone else, Vodec's consumers have a desire to give of themselves by volunteering in their communities.

Not only does it provide them with a sense of accomplishment by doing something for others, but it helps develop skill sets that make them more employable.

On Mondays, consumers in the Urbandale, IA Cares program volunteer at New Hope, a consignment store in Perry, IA.

"They assist with pricing items, sorting merchandise, vacuuming and organizing," said Day Services Manager Sheila Stoneburner.

Similarly, a group of consumers in the Omaha, NE Cares program volunteers at Together Inc. every other Tuesday.

On opposite Tuesdays, they work together at the Stephen Center's Thrift Store.

"At Together Inc., consumers fill the shelves with a variety of pantry foods ranging from canned fruits or vegetables to bottles of juice, boxes of cereal or crackers and even fresh bread and pastry items," said Supported Employment Assistant Lindsay Frank.

Work at the pantry helps them develop skills and increases their employability.

"The pantry is designed like a small grocery store and has aisles,"

*(continued on back cover)*

# Vodec Rocks Spring Fling



Instead of the usual Valentine's Day Dance, this year Vodec consumers and staff enjoyed a Spring Fling in April at the Mid-American Center in Council Bluffs. Everyone had a great time! **Left:** Staff member Ty Garrett spins a mix of upbeat and slow songs for consumers and staff to dance and sing to. **Middle:** Nebraska Residential consumers Caitlyn Coco and Michele McIntosh take a moment to smile for a quick photo. **Right:** Consumer Adriana Espinoza enjoys a slow dance with Robert Fulton.

## Community Embraces Vodec During Pottawattamie Gives!

**F**riends, family and community partners of Vodec came through in a big way May 22 during Omaha and Pottawattamie Gives!

At the conclusion of the 24 hours of online community-wide giving, supporters donated \$1,700 to help fund programs and meet other needs.

A big **THANK YOU** to the following for their support: Jamie Roberson, David Poppert, Mia Schrieber, Brenda Moran, Universal Information Inc., Geri Rudloff, Larry Hutchinson, Shelley Whitcher, Gwen Dib, Julie Klemmensen, Dra Patten, Jana Benitez, Linda Steensland, Sandra and Edward Washa, Michael Watkins, Julie Wymore, Deborah Lottinville, Linda Gardels and Jim and Donna Kalar.

Heather Haas, Kenny Grey and Kaitlyn Richardson man the Vodec table during the Pottawattamie Gives! celebration in Bayliss Park May 22.



### Vodec Entrance Criteria:

- ▶ Be at least 16 years old for any employment training 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
- ▶ For in-home service, an applicant's home must meet basic health and safety requirements

For more information, or to apply for Vodec services, contact Daryn Richardson at [drichardson@vodec.org](mailto:drichardson@vodec.org) or call (712) 328-2638.

#### Vodec is certified by:

- Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services
- Iowa Department of Human Services
- Nebraska Department of Education
- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation Services



#### Vodec is affiliated with the following organizations:

- Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce (IA)
- Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC)
- Iowa Association of Community Providers (IACP)
- Iowa Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
- Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP)
- Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM)
- Omaha Chamber of Commerce (NE)
- Sarpy County Chamber of Commerce (NE)
- Urbandale Chamber of Commerce (IA)

#### Vodec is an authorized provider in the following:

- Iowa HealthLink networks:
- Amerigroup
- United Healthcare





# Consumers Shine at Special Olympics



Council Bluffs, IA Residential consumers enjoyed a spring day filled with games April 9 during Special Olympics at Iowa Western Community College. They gave it their very best effort and were rewarded with ribbons. **1.** Norma Hammers hurls the shot put to first-place. **2.** Lisa Lawson proudly displays her red ribbon. **3.** Brian Gress excels in the long jump to win a blue ribbon. **4.** Tony Kramer is very proud of the blue ribbon he won in the shot put. **5.** Thomas Brandenburg takes a break from the action for a quick photo with Supervisor Julie Fox.





# From the CEO's Desk:

Occasionally, I hear about a consumer who received Medicaid benefits until the consumer received inheritance directly.

Then the consumer's Medicaid benefits were stopped.

This included coverage from providers like Vodec for services from medical providers and other support services.

Several times, Vodec arranged for estate planning professionals to present to families appropriate planning strategies. In lieu of that, presently I offer the following information for your benefit.

When making estate plans involving a beneficiary who is someone with special needs, it is important to take steps which don't have unintended negative consequences to the person.

Individuals with special needs who receive assets directly can lose valuable government benefits, because once they receive the inheritance directly, more than likely, they will own too many assets to qualify.

In such instances, it's preferable to create a Trust to be named as the beneficiary. The Trustee (who is in charge of the Trust) can claim and manage the asset for recipients for a period of time that takes into account each particular situation. (Some of this information came from *5 Critical Mistakes to Avoid*, [www.kiplinger.com/article/retirement/T021-C032-S014-beneficiary-designations-5-big-mistakes-to-avoid.html](http://www.kiplinger.com/article/retirement/T021-C032-S014-beneficiary-designations-5-big-mistakes-to-avoid.html))



**Steve Hodapp**  
Chief Executive Officer

## **Clock is Ticking on Non-Integrated Employment Services**

The extended date for the end of non-integrated employment services as set by CMS is March 17, 2022.

Without repeating background, the CMS settings rule focuses on a desired outcome of services for persons with developmental disabilities being provided in integrated settings within the community. In this instance, integrated means being alongside persons without disabilities.

This puts integrated employment settings into two options: supported employment and group worksites in business settings.

A third option for a consumer in our non-integrated employment service is to transition to our adult day habilitation service, which we call Cares. Vo-

dec has been offering all three options for many years.

The push for consumers to transition to one of them from non-integrated employment service began in earnest in 2016 when the initial CMS settings rule effective date was projected to be March 17, 2019.

Over the course of the next couple years, we'll continue to push to a transition to one of the three options.

Non-integrated employment service will also remain an option until the March 17, 2022, date.

At that time, Vodec and other providers still offering non-integrated employment service will not receive funding to continue doing so.

Vodec plans to continue offering non-integrated services as long as there is demand and funding for it. For consumers in this service, it means they will need to transition to another service option by March 17, 2022.

I want to be clear that ending this service is not Vodec's choice. It is imposed by CMS within this industry. Vodec's passion remains to offer diverse services and a bridge of sensible services leading to employment in the community.

Our passion will continue, but, there'll be a step out of the bridge — creating a challenging leap for some consumers to the employment goal.

Sincerely,

Steve Hodapp

# Thank you!

## *To all of our Valued Supporters\**

William Brummett

Donna Bush

Jeremy Dunkirk

Jacque Evans

Miles and Crystal Havekost

Steve Hodapp

Knights of Columbus

Maria Mabe

Robert Mathena

Sarah Miller

Constance and Jon Narmi

Andrea Smith

Nicole Wright

*\*Mid-March to Mid-May 2019*



# Interns Learn Valuable Work Skills at Vodec

At a typical job, employees check in and out daily, keeping track of their time.

They have areas that are theirs to keep clean. They greet co-workers with a handshake and hello. They perform tasks that may or may not be the same every day.

These are some of the skills students in the high school/transition special education programs in the Omaha Public Schools work on when they participate in the internship at Vodec's F Street location in Omaha.

When they arrive, they come into the work area and look for their name tags. Their name tags have a QR code on them so they sign in and out daily using an iPad.

In their assigned work areas, they begin their tasks, which may vary daily depending on the jobs assigned.

Weekly lessons about social skills in the work place like asking for help, asking for more work, advocating for their needs, determining what is appropriate to talk about at work and using the right volume when talking are given. Interns work on shaking hands and using eye contact.

These opportunities combined with job training skills will set the interns up for success in their future job endeavors.



## Vodec Consumers Enjoy an Active, Fun Spring

**1.** Urbandale, IA Cares consumers and staff — Torie Calhoun, Stephan Egger, Faith Engle, Sam Seratt, Megan Carr, Don Wood, Rita Ramirez, Karina McCarney, Austin Eilers, Stephanie Weed, Scott Livesay, Donna Hartwick and Lucas May — spoke with Iowa state legislators during Disabilities in Action Advocating for Change Day April 10. **2.** (l-r) Andrew Eppert, Josh Lundgren, Holly Davis, Robert Steffensen, Kelsey VanderMeulen, Tresa Soderberg and Lauren Strosahl of the Council Bluffs, IA Cares program enjoy a day at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo in May. **3.** Ky'Antre Compton, Elm staff, and Brandon Blesh find eggs during ELM's Easter Egg hunt.





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## Consumer Perseveres Beyond Hardships

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Although Carl was going through a rough time, he decided that he was not going to give up. With prayer, hard work and determination, he made a commitment to regain his strength and walk again.

Shortly after, Carl returned home, and it didn't take long for him to shed the wheelchair for a walker.

He returned to work at Vodec and in a short amount of time, he was able to transition from the walker to a cane until finally he was able to walk independently.

Carl says that he feels like he has a better attitude about his life, and he is happy with all of the progress he has made.

He continues to improve every day by eating a healthy diet and keeping his blood sugar levels in a healthy range.

He's lost almost 40 pounds by staying active and living a more healthy lifestyle.

Although it seems as though Carl has been on a rollercoaster ride with all of his health issues, he has overcome these obstacles by working hard, persevering, learning how to walk again and living healthy.

He is now happy with his life, and he loves what he is doing. This is what I believe makes him a success story."

— Submitted by Amber Beecher



*Omaha, NE Cares consumer Amber Block stocks shelves in the food pantry at Together, Inc.*

## Consumers Give Back

(continued from page 1)

Frank added. "The consumers have learned to stock the shelves while paying attention to how many rows of a certain item they need."

Join us on Social Media!



Help us "Go Green" by signing up for The Voice online at [www.vodec.org](http://www.vodec.org) or by emailing Mike at [mwatkins@vodec.org](mailto:mwatkins@vodec.org).

