

James Hamilton
one of Vodec's founders



Upholding her Sister's Memory and her Father's Ideals

"Julie Wymore's family has been involved with Vodec from the very beginning. "My sister Susan (Hamilton) was involved in Vodec's services. When she sadly passed away because of COVID, my sister Margaret and her husband Michael (McCoy) set up a way for Vodec to receive money in memory of my father, James, and my sister, Susan." Julie donates to Vodec as well.

James Hamilton was involved in many organizations that helped people. "That was his education and helping people was his passion," adds Julie. James was one of the planners of Iowa Western Community College serving as its first director of adult education. After a successful career at Iowa Western, he retired and volunteered at the small business development center to counsel small businesses. In the 1960s he was part of a group of educators who fought for funding for vocational education.

In 1968, James was a member of the group of determined parents, advocates, educators, and elected officials who were determined to create a program where people with disabilities could reach their full potential.

According to his obituary, he was instrumental in finding property and funding for the Vocational Development Center (Vodec). Having a special needs daughter, it was natural for James to be involved in the creation of Vodec. "My father believed that people with disabilities should live their best lives," explains Julie.

Through their donations, Julie and Margaret continue to uphold their sister's memory and their father's ideals. Margaret has a type of retirement account that allows for regular donations to Vodec. Accounts like these are sometimes referred to as charitable giving accounts by some financial planners. The pandemic has created challenges for agencies like Vodec. Fortunately, donors are still giving. According to the latest Bank of America Study of Philanthropy, the generosity of individuals continued during the pandemic. In some ways, it has increased. Part of this rise in generosity is a result of the increase in the types of ways to give. There are several sustained charitable giving strategies designed to help Vodec's donors to direct their donations and support. Two of these strategies are listed in the examples below.

Two Unique Ways of Charitable Giving

Charitable IRA distributions

Eligible IRA owners can make qualified charitable distributions up to \$100,000 (\$200,000 for married couples) who each qualify separately from IRA's without having to pay federal income taxes and distribution. This allows IRA owners to support their favorite charity or cause and secure a legacy that lasts beyond their lifetime. There are several different ways you can direct your wealth to reflect your values and beliefs while meeting your personal goals and providing tax relief. IRA owners must be at least 70 1/2 years old at the time of distribution.

Charitable giving funds

A Charitable Giving Fund account provides the immediate ability to administer charitable giving and provide flexibility through online access and the ability to grow contributions to create that make a lasting charitable impact. A charitable giving fund account provides donors the ability to give to a charity on their own schedule. The owner of the fund can decide when to make grants, where to direct them, and how much to grant. Some owners have created a personalized account name much like a private foundation.

To find out more information about these and other ways of charitable giving please contact your personal wealth manager.

Understanding what Marlo Enjoys

Recently Marlo, who attends the Omaha cares program, and Kellie Katelman, Vodec's special education teacher, went to look at wedding dresses. Neither Marlo nor Kellie is getting married. The reason for the impromptu trip to the wedding dress shop is a clear example of a person-centered approach to helping someone with an intellectual disability.



"I wanted to get her mind off what she was going through."

Marlo was having a bad day. Because of her diagnosis, she was suffering emotionally. Kelly saw that Marlo was suffering and decided to do something to help. "I wanted to get her mind off what she was going through," stated Katelman. "Because of conversations I've had with Marlo's service coordinator, I know that she is fascinated with wedding dresses and wedding planning. I decided to take her to a local wedding dress shop to see if that would help."



"At the wedding dress shop, Marlo enjoyed herself," explained Katelman, "She looked at every dress from one end of the shop to the other. She relaxed and watched a young bride try on wedding dresses complimenting the bride on how pretty she was in the dresses."

What Kelly did for Marlo is referred to as a person-centered technique.", explains Daryn Richardson Services Development Director, "simply, this technique begins with understanding what each individual consumer enjoys.

This information helps our direct care staff members create a care plan based upon the strengths and interests of the individual consumer. In Marlo's case, her fascination with weddings and wedding planning was at the center of Kellie's strategy to ease her suffering.

Emergency Cell Phone Numbers Needed Now



We intend that guardians and designated family members for our consumers receive communication from Vodec about our COVID-19 response in a timely fashion. It's not feasible for us to send mail each time, and not everyone seems to have an email account. Yet some information is critical for you to have.

So, I am letting you know we'll be stepping up our efforts to make sure we have your current cell phone number. It's important for us to have your number so we can call you when necessary. But maybe, more importantly, it will enable us to text time-sensitive information to as many of you as possible and as quickly as possible. Please contact the Vodec center your consumer is affiliated with and leave your cell phone number.

**For Council Bluffs and
Atlantic, IA area
712-328-2638**

**For Urbandale, IA area
515-777-2114**

**For Omaha, NE area
402-455-4648T**

When Thrown a Curve-ball we still try to hit a Home Run.



Steve Hodapp, Vodec CEO

As this is written, the country is in the middle of another wave of COVID-19 positives and Omicron cases compounded by bouts with colds and flu typical for this time of year. Vodec is riding this wave with everybody else.

We continue to do what we can to mitigate exposures. In Omaha we are complying with the mask mandate issued by Douglas County's health director for Omaha on January 11, effective from January 12 for four weeks. In Nebraska post-mask mandate and in Iowa we are requiring employees, including consumers in employment training settings, to either be vaccinated or wear masks. Visitors are required to wear masks, regardless of vaccination status. I know this is not popular among the unvaccinated group, but I believe compliance may help. You may appreciate this effort if you have a consumer in a Vodec service. We're striving for continuity of services. Keeping as many people as possible healthy helps us avoid doing any more scaling back and may enable some consumers to return to service after sheltering at home. So, please be supportive of the policy.

There are only so many ways we can get creative about how we retain and recruit. Our resources are not easily adjustable. We don't get to arbitrarily set service rates, or prices, if you will, like a fast-food operation can with its hamburgers. We do what we can to reward employees for staying with us and to entice others to join us. So, you can help by referring applicants to us who you would want working with your family member.

We have made adjustments in some areas to reduce the impact of workforce challenges. For example, we have transitioned nearly all of our group home consumers to our alternative contracted settings with Iowa Host Homes and Nebraska Shared Living Providers. Group homes are labor-intense and the labor is just not available to safely staff group homes. Host Homes and Shared Living Providers are family settings in which the care and nurturing of consumers occurs. These settings actually provide a more natural environment than do group homes, and we find consumers in them flourish. So, maybe you'd consider becoming a Host Home or Shared Living Provider. Let us know.

As you can see, we continue being flexible around the circumstances laid at our feet. This is no different than what we've been doing for 54 years. When thrown a curve-ball we still try to hit a home run. Thank you for continuing to be supportive of us and our mission.

Join our Team.

Applicants can apply via [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)
Go to
(<https://www.indeed.com>)
keyword: Vodec





612 S. Main Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Our mission 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 is an equal opportunity employer. There is equal opportunity for services and for employment, retention and advancement without regard to race, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability and veteran status or any other classifications protected by state or federal law.



Our Offices & Locations:

Western Iowa
612 South Main Street
Council Bluffs, Iowa
51503
Phone: 712.328.2638
Fax: 712.328.8161

Central Iowa
4406 114th Street
Urbandale, Iowa
50322
Phone: 515.777.2114
Fax: 515.777.2921

Nebraska
7110 F Street
Omaha, NE 68117
Phone:
402.455.4648
Fax: 402.455.2542

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you!*

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