

The Vodec Voice

Realizing Potential

Vodec Consumers Star in "You're a good Man Charlie Brown"

OMAHA, NE -Vodec consumers from Omaha, Nebraska will star in the musical "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown" at the Alan J. Levine Performing Arts Theater located at the Omaha Jewish Community Center on March 9 and 11th at 7:00 pm and March 12th at 2:00 and 6:00 pm. The consumers will perform the opening act on March 9 and 11.

Vodec partnered with Circle Theatre, an Omaha independent theatre for actors with disabilities, to perform their own pre-show acts, which will take place immediately before the main stage production.



Above left to right: Courtney Cairncross, artist, is working on costume design with James.

Rehearsals started in January. Vodec direct support professionals transported consumers to rehearsals every Tuesday and Thursday at Circle Theatre. Consumers then received direction and guidance from Courtney Cairncross. Cairncross is an artist recognized by the Nebraska Arts Council. Cairncross' background is in inclusive theatre, dance, and music.

Guided by Cairncross, the consumers have written their own scripts and original song lyrics. "It has been nothing short of an absolute delight working with our Vodec actors! They created their costumes and props, and are ready to perform their lines," said Cairncross.



Above left to right: Stephen is rehearsing his lines while fellow performers Jon and Dean look on.

Cairncross acknowledges that for some consumers, this is their first time learning the process of how a stage production is brought together. For some other consumers, this is a creative outlet they have not experienced since high school.

"I can't even begin to describe the atmosphere of enthusiasm and excitement that has been in the rehearsal room since day one," says Cairncross, "especially because this has been such a collaborative process, it has been amazing to watch several of the actors really take ownership of their roles and of the show as a whole. Actors are helping their fellow actors run lines and highlight their scripts, along with remembering blocking and props and all of the fun of live theater!"

A props crew was brought in to help make props for the production, This is the same crew that made the props for the main stage production. The props crew and consumers enjoyed working together.

"It truly takes a village, and it has been a joy watching everyone including crew and actors become closer and more supportive of each other," says Cairncross, "I have seen a visible change in the actors in terms of confidence and pride in their performances."

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Charlie Brown continued from previous page

Everyone involved agrees that an overall sense of joy has been palpable throughout the process of creating the production. "It has been an opportunity to be seen and heard, and to be celebrated for everyone's individual talents," says Cairncross, "This is the epitome of what theater can do for all of us as a community." Vodec employees have witnessed positive results for consumers as well. "Consumers are excited to rehearse each day," states Kellie Katelman, Day Services Manager for Vodec in Omaha. "Men and women with intellectual disabilities

rarely get the chance to perform," adds Katelman, "this is a wonderful opportunity for consumers to proudly stand up and express themselves artistically, and creatively."

Vodec employees had to think creatively as well especially when it came to transportation. Many consumers do not have their own transportation, but they needed to be on stage each evening at the Alan J. Levine Performing Arts Theater. Vodec was able to help. "We were not about to let transportation be a barrier to this great opportunity for anyone who wanted to do it," states Katelman, "for those who need it, we have arranged trips for any participating consumers and their caregivers to each night of the production."

"You're a good Man Charlie Brown" Cast & Crew



Charlie Brown:
James Driscoll



Peppermint Patty:
Jon Nissen



Snoopy:
Steven Goodwin



Linus:
Dean Petersen



Sally/Marcie:
Josh Bartlett



Pigpen:
Jim Telshaw



Lucy:
Krystal Colon



Schroeder:
Michael Hernandez



Photographer:
Josh Foreman

Ticket Information

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit the Circle Theatre website at circletheatreomaha.org or their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/circletheatreomaha/>



Safely Addressing the Challenges of Winter Weather

-Steve Hodapp, Vodec CEO

The safety of our consumers is a paramount concern for us.

We have all sorts of checks to keep consumers safe. We do fire and tornado drills. We have OSHA and insurance consultants inspect property and equipment. And we have severe winter weather procedures. It's the winter weather procedures I'd like to touch on, especially after we experienced several days in January and February which caused us to activate our severe winter weather procedures.

When Council Bluffs Community Schools, Omaha Public Schools, and Urbandale school districts'

schedules are impacted by severe winter weather, Vodec development centers follow their lead. We do this because it makes sense.

For example, transportation is provided for most to all consumers who attend our day programs in the development centers. This is very much like the case of schools students. If winter weather creates unsafe challenges for students' transportation, our transportation provision faces those same challenges. Having our riders unnecessarily slip-sliding down the snowy or icy streets is a hazard to them.

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There's also the situation involving extreme cold. Many of our riders are extremely physically fragile. It's dangerous for them to be exposed to extreme cold while being loaded and unloaded, particularly for the time it takes for those in wheelchairs.

And there are staffing challenges created by severe winter weather. Employees would be absent because of the inability to report to work because of snow or ice. Some would be absent because they have children

in school who are home for the day and who couldn't be left alone. Short-staffing could impact our ability to safely provide services to consumers who would report.

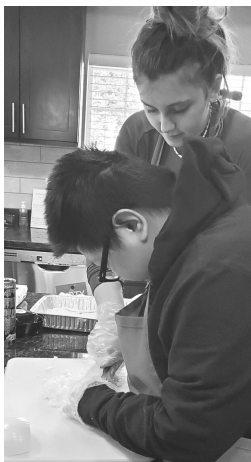
So when a Vodec development center's hours are impacted by those school districts' reaction to winter weather, please realize it's to keep consumers safe. Because keeping consumers safe is important to us. -Thank you.

Consumers Volunteer at Ronald McDonald House

URBANDALE, IA -Consumers in the Transition Focus program volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House. They prepare casseroles, clean common areas, and help wherever they can. "The purpose of the Transition Focus program is to teach skills that individuals will need as they grow their independence," stated Daryn Richardson, Services Development Director for Vodec. "The Ronald McDonald House provides a variety of opportunities for individuals to practice their skills, make connections, and help families struggling through a difficult time."

Day services coordinator Holly Adams connected with Ronald McDonald House to see if the volunteer opportunity would be a good experience for consumers in Transition Focus. "Consumers really like going to the Ronald McDonald House.

They look forward to making meals and cleaning," states Tina Hardy, Services Operations Director. "They especially liked preparing the casseroles." Weekly, consumers and Vodec employees choose which casserole they will prepare, and they then purchased the food and utensils. The consumers prepare the meals in the commercial-grade kitchen within the Ronald McDonald House facility. "The reason the consumers make casseroles is that they are easy for the families residing at the Ronald McDonald House. They put the ingredients together in a disposable foil pan which is then frozen. Ronald McDonald House employees reheat the casserole for the families as needed. "After a long day at the hospital, families look forward to a hot meal waiting for them," states the Ronald Mac Donald House Charities of Central Iowa website.



Above left: Day Services Assistant Mia Anderson assists Leon in preparing ingredients for a casserole.:



Above center: Gage, Katrina, and Jazzmin clean the hallway at the Ronald McDonald House.



Above right: Gage and Dustin work together to make croutons for a casserole.



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.

Vodec is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. Donations may be tax-deductible.

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Vodec is certified by:

- The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)



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

Vodec is affiliated with the following organizations:

- Council Bluffs, Iowa Chamber of Commerce
- 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)
- Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce

Vodec is an authorized provider in the following Iowa HealthLink networks:

- Amerigroup
- Iowa Total Care

Vodec is a contracted Community Rehabilitation Program with the Iowa Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Vodec Entrance Criteria:

- Be at least 16 years of age for employment services
- Have behavior that is not dangerous to self or others
- Have medical needs within Vodec's scope of service
- Have transportation needs within Vodec's capability to provide
- Have funding in place prior to service provision

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