



The Vodec Voice

Realizing **Potential**

Vodec adds Youth Services for Youth with Disabilities

Council Bluffs, Iowa-

Vodec is adding Youth Services to its list of services for persons with disabilities starting in July 2023. "A service like this has been needed for a long time," reports Jeremy Dunkirk, Services Operations Director in Council Bluffs. "Our program is unique in that it serves youth with developmental disabilities from the ages of 13 to 19." The new program will be inside the Vodec facility at 612 South Main in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Vodec employees developed the program with guidance from the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Finding adequate youth services is a struggle for many parents of youth with developmental disabilities who have additional challenges regarding care. Because of those challenges, these youth still need daily care after they age out of childcare. Parents of youth with developmental disabilities have very few choices other than to stay home and provide the care themselves or rely on family members. This negatively impacts careers and household income. Vodec believes it has developed a solution for these families.

The Vodec Youth Services program is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. "Our program is perfect for days when school is not an option," says Steve Hodapp, CEO. "Anytime school is not in session: teacher development days, holidays, winter breaks, spring breaks, and of course, summer break, we'll be there to help," adds Hodapp. "We've created a program that will support families year-round."

The program uses a curriculum developed by Vodec. Youth enrolled in the program will have the opportunity to develop useful skills: cooking, household cleaning, acceptable social skills, engagement with peers, exploring the community, and enjoying interesting activities. "We did not want this to be a typical youth services program,"



Above: left to right: Dani, Katrina, Dustin, Gage, and Jazzmin are learning to make paper mache.

said Dunkirk, "Because of our experience and qualifications, we have been able to design activities and curricula which will help the youth begin their journey to adulthood. The core of this program is our direct support professionals and a fun and interesting learning experience for those youth enrolled. As always, our direct support professionals are rigorously trained and vetted."

Parents pay Vodec for the days that their youth is in attendance. Because Vodec's Youth Services program is approved by the Iowa Department of Human Services, eligible parents can receive payment assistance from the Iowa Childcare Assistance Program (CCA). Parents can contact the centralized childcare assistance unit by calling 866-448-4805 for information about CCA to determine eligibility.

"We believe that youth with developmental disabilities should have access to services designed for them, services that are safe and reliable," added Hodapp.

Interested parents are asked to contact Daryn Richardson, Services Development Director, for an application and information on daily rates. Richardson can be reached at 712-328-2638 or they can e-mail Richardson at daryn@vodec.org.

Pride and Self-Esteem on Display at Vodec Fashion Show

Omaha, Nebraska-

In June, Vodec in Omaha held a fashion show that featured consumers who were on the runway displaying their taste in fashion. Parents, guardians, and Shared Living Providers were invited and in attendance. "For people with developmental disabilities, lack of self-esteem often results in a poor self-image becomes a barrier to confidence in independence for many," said Micky Jackson, Services Operations Director in Nebraska. The fashion show was open to all of Vodec's Day Program consumers.

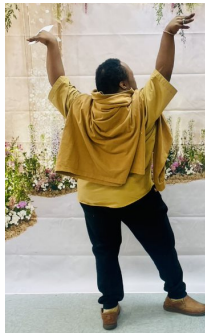
"Our direct support professionals developed the idea," added Jackson. "The consumers excitedly looked forward to participating. I cannot describe the sense of pride I felt from the consumers. It was glamorous."

Right: Some of the fashion show participants display their fashion sense while they pose for the camera.

Lori



Denzel



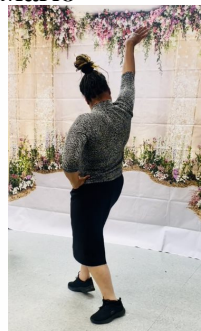
James



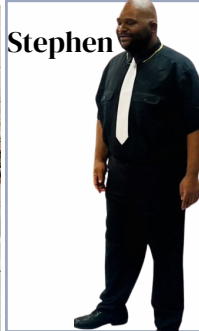
Tim and David



Marlo



Stephen



Thomas



Vodec Expands Student Services in Urbandale

Urbandale, Iowa-

Next fall, students from five school districts in central Iowa will attend Vodec's Transition Focus program. "Eligible students may receive additional schooling beyond high school up to the age of 21," said Tina Hardy Services Operations Director in Urbandale, "This eligibility is based on disability and other factors. The students will learn skills that they will need as they enter adulthood." Collaboration agreements with each participating school district made the transition-focused program possible. The school districts developed the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student, then Vodec's direct support

professionals use the IEP as a guide to target areas of development for each student.

The program is created to help districts without their own transition program. "Some smaller districts may not have enough students that need a transition program, but may have a few who would benefit," said Kylene Simpson, Vodec's Special Education Teacher in Urbandale. "Vodec is in a perfect position to help those transition students from smaller districts. We have the education, staff, and resources to provide a solid learning experience."

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As they attend the Urbandale Vodec location, students will be focusing on developing cooking skills, household cleaning skills, and safety skills for home and in the community, social skills

development, and peer-to-peer interactions, and will be creating an inventory of community resources that they may need once they exit the program.

To learn more about our education program for transition-age students in Urbandale, please contact:

Kylene Simpson, Vodec's Special Education Teacher, at email: ksimpson@vodec.org



Consumers Have a Major Voice in Planning

Steve Hodapp, Vodec CEO

If you or someone you know participates in any of our day programs, then you know there are any number of off-site activities available to consumers. Every day there are choices available for off-site activities. These activities are a major part of our strategy to achieve community integration.

Community integration is one of the requirements of the settings rule for consumers participating in Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). The settings rule comes out of the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). CMS monitors HCBS providers to see if community integration is happening. Vodec is an HCBS provider and is successful in meeting the settings rule.

The success comes from choices involving off-site activities available. Choice involves having several activities available at any one time and consumers can choose an activity. And, integral to Vodec's strategy in meeting the intent of the settings rule, Vodec's consumers have a major voice in creating the choices of off-site activities. Consumers offer input both individually and informally as a group.



Above: Services Operations Director, Micky Jackson, helps Marlo plan her activities.

And community integration occurs in environments that are not institutional in nature and where other people enjoying those environments don't have developmental disabilities. Examples of these environments and the activities in them are grocery stores and shopping for food for the week, or a movie theatre and watching a movie. Our consumers have input into the choice of a grocery store and what makes it on a shopping list, and which theatre and movie to watch.

Vodec worked towards achieving consumer choice and community integration before the CMS settings rule became effective in March 2023. But with the rule Vodec has to achieve those goals for any consumer in an HCBS service funded by Medicaid. Vodec chooses to do the same for any consumer regardless of the funding source.

So, yes, it may seem like our consumers are on the go a lot. It's by choice.



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www.vodec.org

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.

We are thankful for these generous donors.

Donna Bush
Jeremy Dunkirk

Miles and Crystal Havekost
Jacque Evans
Steve Hodapp

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In Memory of Mary Ellen Kruse

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Deetta and Douglas Schmierer
Nanci Schnitker
Joan Stotts
Karen Wahl
Marcia Winchester

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

Daryn Richardson at drichardson@vodec.org or call (712) 328-2638.

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

- Amerigroup
- Iowa Total Care
- Molina Healthcare

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