



The Vodec Voice

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Remodel Nears Completion in Omaha, Council Bluffs

Recently, some Vodec locations have undergone construction leading to improvements. Some of these improvements are being financed through grants awarded to Vodec. “The improvements will benefit consumers and employees,” said Micky Jackson, Services Operations Director for Nebraska. “Vodec is committed to creating inviting and accessible spaces,” adds Jackson.



Above left to right: Justin Moore, Maintenance Coordinator and April Krause, Production Director.

April Krause, Production Director, coordinates the construction projects. “The devil is in the details when it comes to remodeling on this scale. I work closely with Justin Moore, Building Maintenance Coordinator, and Lindale Construction. Lindale owner Dale Conrad has worked well with us for years. Dale and his employees provide reliable service with attention to



Above left to right: Lindell Construction Owner Dale Lindell and a construction worker remodeling the kitchen in the Cares program in Omaha.

detail. Dale can provide bids in time to meet deadlines for grant proposals sometimes with very little notice.” Krause meets with the regional Services Operations Directors to review the scope of work required and answer questions. Krause then oversees the completion of each.

“We take great care to make sure that we schedule each phase of the construction in sequential order so as not to disrupt services for our consumers,” adds Krause.



In the Omaha Cares program, the kitchen received a makeover with new cabinet faces, revamped cabinetry, and an island for expanded functionality. New flooring and toilets were added in the bathrooms, along with fresh paint. Furthermore, two office spaces were combined to create a larger sensory room by removing a dividing wall. New tables and chairs were added in multiple rooms.



Above: Workers replace the siding on the Vodec duplex in Council Bluffs.



Above: The Omaha Cares program kitchen before the remodel.



Above: New Transition Program in Urbandale.



Above: The Omaha cares program kitchen after the remodel.



Above: Addy learning how to prepare a meal by cooking in Center Chapel's kitchen in Indianola, Iowa.

Finally, at the duplex in Council Bluffs, exterior improvements include repainting the porches and installing new siding. The creation of a main-level common area involved the removal of walls to create a more spacious layout, with plans for future adaptations to better serve consumers' needs. Upgrades in progress also encompass new kitchen cabinets, and countertops, and new flooring for improved living quarters. The renovation also includes replacing walk-in

showers, plumbing updates, and concrete replacement in the parking lot.

Vodec CEO Steve Hodapp emphasized the positive impact these improvements have on all stakeholders. "The enhancements will not only benefit our consumers but also enhance the working environment for our employees," said Hodapp. "By focusing on creating welcoming and accessible spaces, Vodec is paving the way for a more inclusive and supportive community."





Steve Hodapp, CEO

Your input Helps to Provide Safe and Attractive Building Improvements

Pardon our dust. We've been doing some property improvements and expansion activities the past couple of months. One project may still be underway when you get this.

In Urbandale, IA, we've added for the second time in the past year to the original space for day programs and residential employees. Most recently, we opened a space for the Transition Focus and Adult Transition programs. The program's former space will enable the Cares day habilitation program to stretch out.

In Omaha, NE, an overhaul of the Cares day habilitation program space was completed in March. More about this project is available in this issue.

And in Council Bluffs, renovation of our duplex with two waiver homes is underway. On the exterior, the siding is being replaced, decks are power-washed and painted, and storm doors are being added. Inside, there's carpet replacements in residents' rooms, former office space is being converted to open common space, and bathrooms are being refurbished. This project is possible through a \$78,510 Iowa ARPA infrastructure grant received in February.

All this activity is due to two reasons. First, we listened to input about what would make the spaces nicer for consumers. Second, we take upkeep seriously and work hard to maintain our properties, whether owned or leased, to be attractive and safe.

Consumers Relish Rolled Ice Cream

Omaha Cares consumers recently stopped by Freezing Thai in Omaha, NE. to have a cup of Thai-rolled ice cream.



Rollled ice cream is made using milk, cream, sugar, and other added ingredients to improve the flavor. The liquid mixture is stirred

on a frozen metal pan. The rolling process results in rolls of smooth, semi-solid ice cream. The rolls are placed vertically in an ice cream cup, topped off with various toppings and decorations, and eaten with a spoon.



Above: Kindra enjoying a cool treat at Freezing Thai

Freezing Thai has many flavor combinations. "Consumers had fun customizing their flavors," states Kellie Katelman, Day Services Manager, "the best part is when consumers watch them roll the ice cream and mix the flavors. It's amazing to watch."



Indianola, Iowa Open House

Vodec recently held an open house in Indianola, Iowa. The open house celebrated the creation of Vodec’s day program there. It highlighted what can be achieved through collaboration between agencies and individuals who share a common cause: the integration and skill development of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Last year, Vodec started meeting with family members of individuals with developmental disabilities in the Indianola area. These initial meetings involved people contacting Vodec, asking for an interactive and fun day program. “Once we decided we could help, our management team sprang into action,” says Daryn Richardson, Services Development Director. “Kylene Simpson, our Services Development Coordinator, started networking to find the location. Lana Hatten answered our call. Lana brought in Center Chapel representatives, who invited us to use their fellowship hall. Meanwhile, Tina Hardy Services Operations Director, started pulling



Above: Vodec Employees, Center Chapel church elders and community members pose for a group photo during the Open House.



Above: Center Chapel just west of Indianola, Iowa.



Above: Addy proudly holding chicken strips, which she made.

together resources and hiring direct support professionals,” adds Richardson. The program opened in December 2023 and is located at 8120 IA-92, Indianola, IA 50125

Creative and Clever Bird Feeders

Omaha Cares program consumers are making bird feeders. The feeders are simple in design, easy to create, biodegradable, and environmentally safe. Consumers swirled creamy peanut butter around an ice cream cone, then poured birdseed onto a paper plate and rolled the ice cream cone in the birdseed until all the peanut butter was covered. Next, they press the birdseed on the peanut butter to help it stick. Consumers hung the feeders outside to watch the birds feed, just in time for spring.



(Above) Ryan proudly displaying his new feeder



(Right) Justin getting ready to hang his new feeder.



Vodec Expands Transition Program in Urbandale, Iowa

The Adult Transition Program (ATP) and Transition Focus Program have expanded to support students and adults. Vodec rented additional space in response to the high demand for these programs, designed for students and adults to learn and develop daily living skills.

The new space is around the corner from Vodec's Urbandale office and Cares day habilitation program. "This space has a large common area and is brightly lit with ambient light from many large windows," states Tina Hardy, Services Operations Director. It has rooms for meetings, instruction, and demonstrations.



Above: the interior of the new space in Urbandale, Iowa

The ATP is tailored to students' Individual Education Program (IEP) goals. The Transition Focus program is geared towards adults who want to focus on developing daily living skills.

Wish List Items Needed

We are publishing a wish list starting with this issue of the Voice. Our wish list includes items we'll use to help our consumers reach their full potential. We have received donations of pots and pans, exercise equipment, clothing, office furniture, and arts and crafts items. As we increase our ability to support an increasing number of consumers, we know that we can count on your support so we can all reach our full potential.

First, we require pre-owned, gently-used office equipment, including desks, chairs, and cabinets. (If you know a business that re-purposes office furniture regularly, please let them know about us)



Other items on our current wish list are:

- A 5 or 7-shelf bookcase
- Aprons for Cooking Club (Any Color)
- Pots and Pans Set (Nonstick)
- Baking Dishes (Muffin Pans, bread pans, and casserole dishes.)
- Fitness equipment (Misc)
- Art Supplies (paints, brushes, markers, clay and craft kits)
- Amazon Echo "Alexa"
- Board Games

If you can donate items please contact Kaylee Brinson at 712-328-2638



Indianola, Iowa Consumers Explore

Consumers in Vodec’s Indianola, Iowa Cares program have been exploring their community with the support of Vodec’s direct support professional staff. The consumers have visited local parks, the Iowa Science Center, and local restaurants. They have also participated in volunteer opportunities, and monthly shopping trips.

“Our consumers have fun exploring the community and participating in the walking club by walking around nearby Gray’s Lake Park and other local trails. For those who choose to stay on-site, they enjoy many amazing activities we have planned together,” states Molly Roling, Day Services Coordinator. Roling says that consumers



Above, on top: Ashley; on the right: Addy; on the bottom: Tanji; on the left: Maria. Having fun at the park.

enjoy creating art, such as tape painting, bean art, and scratch art. The consumers also enjoy cooking utilizing the Chapels’ amazing kitchen. Consumers have been learning how to make tater tot casserole, breakfast sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, and, most importantly, how to clean the kitchen thoroughly when the cooking's done.

The program is open five days a week. Each day, consumers arrive at 8:30 in the morning. Activities are planned with a lot of consumer input. “A big part of community integration is choice and budgeting how much each activity will cost,” states Roling. Consumers and their families receive a monthly activity calendar so that they can decide in which activities to participate. “Watching the consumers explore their community and realize their potential is the best part of this job,” adds Roling.

Far left, left to right: Taji and Ashley experimenting at the Iowa Science Center.

Left: Taji “getting a lift” while learning about weights and pullies



Left: Addy learning to use a drill at the Iowa Science Center.



Magical Mayhem in Council Bluffs

Recently, a locally-famous magician performed at the Council Bluffs location. Neil Babel of Magic by Neil performed for consumers in the Cares day habilitation program. This is Neil's second performance in front of a Vodec audience. "Neil was here last year and provided an amazing performance," states Tommie Neighbors, Day Services Supervisor. Neil caters his performances to people with disabilities. Instead of performing on the stage, Neil walks around and engages participants in his magic," Neighbors adds.

Neil taught himself magic while serving our country. "I served on active duty in the Air Force for 23 years and worked for the airlines for six years. In both jobs, I honed my magic skills. I have been practicing magic for fifteen years," says Neil. Neil performs for birthday parties, senior centers, and outdoor fairs.



Above: Magician Neil shows Mike a card trick

Many consumers volunteered to come forward to participate in various magic tricks. The magic tricks varied from simple card tricks to complex sleight-of-hand tricks. Consumers laughed and clapped enthusiastically throughout the performance. "Everyone clearly enjoyed the show" states Neighbors. "We can't wait for next year's performance."



Mesmerized by the show (Left), back row, left to right: Dani, Para Leah, Bethany, and Aaron. Front row, left to right: Nicholas, Megan, Amanda and Chris



612 S. Main Street

www.vodec.org 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 (consult your tax preparer for specific information about this).

Like our page today and help us make a difference!

www.facebook.com/vodec,inc/



We are committed to creating a supportive and inclusive community that empowers individuals to achieve their full potential. By liking our Facebook page, you'll stay up-to-date on our latest news, events, and initiatives. You'll also be joining a community of people who share our vision of a more inclusive world. So what are you waiting for?

We are thankful for these generous donors.

Donna Bush
Jeremy Dunkirk
Miles and Crystal Havekost

Steve Hodapp
Phil and Jeanie Killion

Daryn and Angie Richardson
Cody Seaman
Andrea Smith

Vodec is accredited by:

- The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

Vodec is certified by:

- 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 licensed by the Iowa Department of Human Services as a Child Care Assistance Provider

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

- Wellpoint
- Iowa Total Care
- Molina Healthcare

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

Our Entrance Criteria:

- Have behavior which 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;
- Be at least 16 years of age for employment services;
- Be between 13 and 19 years of age for the Iowa childcare assistance program.

For additional information about Vodec, please get in touch with Daryn Richardson at drichardson@vodec.org or call (712) 328-2638.

