



The Vodec Voice

July-August 2024

A Publication of the Vocational Development Center, Inc.

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Change is the Only Constant

Vodec's flexibility is not always very obvious. But the outcomes of that attribute are front and

center. We are always very much in our yoga practice, gaining strength and confidence in our ability to be of service. We continually stretch and adapt to remain a strong provider with continuity in what seems to be an ever-changing services climate.



Having said that, I'll offer some documentation. None of the services we provide today were we doing 30 years ago. No

service that we were doing 30 years ago are we still doing today. Again, the outcomes of our flexibility are obvious but the flexibility to get to them is not.

There's been a lot of flexibility required to remain relevant. We've had to pay attention to the services climate as it has changed through the years. That climate changed through the actions of advocates. The advocates' actions were inspired by real or perceived shortfalls of what were existing services and the projected benefits of new services.

In the last 30 years services have been introduced as being more meaningful than those before. In the same period, some of those 'more meaningful' services were ultimately replaced with the next model.

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Vodec Through the Years



(Left) Attendees of the first Elm parents meeting at JP Lord School in Omaha in place for a group photo. This group helped create the Elm program, Vodec's first program in Nebraska.

(Below left) Vodec CEO Steve Hodapp and Omaha Chamber of Commerce members attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Nebraska office at 7110 F Street in Omaha, Nebraska.

(Below) Vodec CEO Steve Hodapp, board member Linda Steensland, and Urbandale, Iowa Chamber of Commerce members, along with Vodec consumers and employees, attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Central Iowa office at 4406 114th St, Urbandale, IA



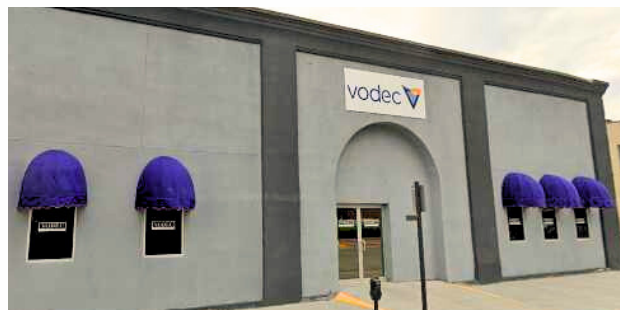
This industry, which supports people with developmental disabilities, is on the cusp of some more changes. These changes will be sourced from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) and from States' guidance around interpretations of what comes from CMS. Only time will tell if or when this next model gets replaced. So, what's coming?

Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments (HOME) is a project in Iowa that is working to improve and ensure that everyone has access to high-quality behavioral health, disability and aging services in their communities. HOME is spearheaded by the Iowa Dept. of Health and Human Services (DHHS). A major outcome is the consolidation of seven current Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers into two waivers for Children & Youth, ages 0 to 20, and for Adult & Aging, ages 21 plus. The elimination of the silo-effect of the current seven waivers is expected to enhance services' access for people eligible for the two waivers beginning in 2025.

Also, in Iowa there will be a transition from the current mental health and disability services system to a behavioral health service (BHS) system and a transfer of disability services to the division of aging and disability services of Iowa DHHS. There will be new BHS districts established, with new governing bodies, replacing the existing Mental Health and Disabilities Services (MHDS) regions. Some services offered by Vodec in Council

Bluffs, IA, are supported by the SWIA MHDS region. We'll have to see if the new BHS district will be as supportive as the transition is completed by July 1, 2025.

Meanwhile in Nebraska, there has been a growth spurt in the number of independent providers. The Nebraska Division of Development Disabilities (DDD) is focusing on independent providers which provide day services in their homes. This is something new. It may be impactful on traditional day services' providers, but time will tell here, as well.



(Above) Vodec's corporate office located in Council Bluffs.

There's also a recently announced plan to eliminate the waiting list for development disabilities services in Nebraska. A tool for this is being rolled out as a new Family Support Waiver. Eliminating the waiting list would be a good thing so long as it's accomplished in a reasonable and effective manner. Some people have been on the waiting list for years.

The point of all this is that change is the only constant. For Vodec to remain a viable provider, we will continue to be flexible. I'm going to get my yoga mat now.



2024 Vodec Days Summer Festival to include Food Trucks, Splash Pads, Tye Dye, and Games

Vodec Days is a week-long Summer Festival celebrating the work and dedication of consumers and our employees. “The festival started at the Omaha location in July 2020. This year, the Vodec Days are also taking place at our Council Bluffs location,” said Daryn Richardson, Services Development Director. “Vodec consumers and employees are proud of who they are and what they do.”

“We're excited to see the growth and enthusiasm surrounding Vodec Days,” Richardson continued. “It's a wonderful opportunity for everyone to unite, celebrate our disability community, and build lasting memories. We look forward to many more years of this Vodec tradition.”



(Above) Vodec consumers in line at one of the Food trucks available during last years Vodec Days in Omaha

At both Omaha and Council Bluffs locations, Vodec Days include various events designed to engage and entertain, and to create a sense of community and appreciation. Although both the Omaha and Council Bluffs locations celebrate Vodec days during the same week, each celebration will have different events and structures. The differences are the result of input received



Scenes from Vodec Days Past

(Above) Elian and Day Services Coordinator Makaela Clemons drawing with sidewalk chalk.

(Left) Lauren sings during karaoke contest.

from consumers and conforms to consumers' interests and abilities in each location. Many similarities exist as well. Each festival is created exclusively for consumers enrolled in Vodec's day programs. Each will use a variety of community resources.

Each Vodec Days Festival is made possible through the work of Vodec employees, the support of Vodec's senior management, and, in part, through contributions. “We have a list of items people can purchase and drop off at one of our locations. Additionally, we invite people to make a cash donation. We use this money to augment our services for our consumers. It's also a great way to show support for our consumers, employees, and mission,” adds Richardson. (continued on page 4)

(Left) the 712 Initiative's Block Party trailer to be used during the Council Bluffs Vodec Days. The trailer is packed full of games, and other fun surprises for consumers.



To make a cash donation or donate an item from our wish list, (found on page 7) contact Kaylee Brinson at 712-328-2638.



Omaha Vodec Days Calendar of Events July 22- July 26, 2024

The schedule of events for each day is to the right. Consumers who want to purchase food from the food trucks should bring (\$20.00) on Wednesday. Menus are sent home to consumers a week before the event. Otherwise, these fun activities are free of charge. Attendees must participate in Cares, Elm, or Employment Training services.

Contact Kellie Katelman at 402-455-4648 for more information.

MONDAY	July 22	9-11AM: Outside Yard Games & Face Paint 1:00 PM: Ice Cream Stand (sugar free available)
TUESDAY	July 23	10:00 AM: Tye-Dye Shirts 1:00 PM: Sip & Paint
WEDNESDAY	July 24	9-11AM: Department Activities 11:00 AM: Food Trucks
THURSDAY	July 25	9:00 AM: Movie & Popcorn (outside & inside option) 1:00 PM: Dance Party (Wear Tye-Dye)
FRIDAY	July 26	9:30 AM: Field Day at Cimarron Park 11:00 AM: Kickball Game / Splashpad 12-1:45 PM: Water Balloons

Council Bluffs Vodec Days Calendar of Events July 22- July 26, 2024

To the right is the schedule of events for each day. These fun activities are free of charge. However, only Cares, ATP, or Specialised Youth services consumers may attend.

Contact Gina Greco at 712-328-2635 for more information.

MONDAY	July 22	V All Day Event "V" is for vacation!
TUESDAY	July 23	O All Day Event "O" is for orange, the color of developmental disability awareness.
WEDNESDAY	July 24	D All Day Event "D" is for department.
THURSDAY	July 25	E All Day Event "E" is for eats!
FRIDAY	July 26	C All Day Event "C" is for candy!



Vodec Omaha Day Consumers form Activity Clubs

Vodec Day program consumers in Omaha can choose various activity clubs based on their goals and interests. Vodec employees created the clubs based on consumer suggestions. “The consumers enjoy the clubs and have fun,” states Kellie Katelman, Vodec Day Services Manager. “It is also a cool way for them to develop various skills.”

There are 5 clubs that cover a wide range of interests. From cooking to crafts and board games, there is something for every consumer. Most clubs do not require a fee to participate, with the only exception being the cooking club. The cooking club has a nominal fee to cover cooking materials. “All the clubs will work on a variety of skills. We have shown that providing a menu of clubs to choose from helps the consumers realize that they have a choice in how they spend their day and teaches them some level of self-advocacy,” says Katelman. “Self-advocacy is important for all of us, especially individuals with Developmental disabilities. Consumers with solid self-advocacy skills are less likely to be exploited, have greater confidence, and are motivated to make healthy choices.”



(Above) Kourtney getting ready to hit a home run during Exercise Club.

Fun and Games Club

Consumers engage in various recreational activities, encompassing a diverse array of games. Indoor games such as card and board games are popular. While these games offer enjoyment, they also contribute to developing various skills. Board games, for instance, can facilitate the refinement of fine motor skills. Additionally, games promote sportsmanship and foster positive personal interactions.



(Right) Ryan showing his ice cream cone bird feed he made in Arts and Crafts club.



Above, left to right: Tiffany, Asia, Jennifer, Lauren, Jon, and Michael participate in Cooking Club, making beef enchiladas and other delicious meals.

Arts and Crafts Club

In the arts and crafts club, consumers participate in various craft projects. Some involve painting, sculpting, and using household items in new and decorative ways. Consumers create various works of art and practical items such as ice cream cone bird feeders. (above)

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Cooking Club

The cooking club offers consumers opportunities to select recipes, gather ingredients, and engage in culinary activities. Club members choose from a list of recipes, review their chosen recipes, purchase necessary ingredients from the store, prepare the meal together during lunchtime, and collectively participate in post-cooking cleanup duties.

Wellness and Nutrition

Our wellness and nutrition club designates a specific topic for each week. Tuesdays are reserved for discussions related to the weekly theme, ranging from mental health topics like depression to exercise routines and stress management techniques. On Thursdays, our focus shifts to practical application with cooking sessions where participants prepare and enjoy a nutritious snack together.



(Above) Mary showing a nutritious snack she made during Wellness and Nutrition Club.

Exercise

Engaging in various exercises is a popular activity. One that consumers particularly enjoy is karate/kickboxing. Employees use tutorial videos for karate sessions on platforms like YouTube, which provide a structured approach to learning new skills. Additionally, outdoor walks are incorporated into the routine. Another fun exercise we partake in is an “UNO workout.” This entails drawing an UNO card where the color determines the exercise, such as red indicating jumping jacks and the number indicating the repetitions.

Vodec Disseminates Important Severe Weather Resource Information and Guidance

This spring and summer so far have seen some pretty severe weather events including tornadoes and flooding. These events have impacted some of our employees, contractors and the people we serve. The impact spans from travel inconveniences to wet basements. To any of you who have been impacted by these events, our best wishes go out to you.

To support our employees, we have provided updated information in June which we developed during the 2011 and 2019 floods. This includes information about flood preparedness, accessing disaster leave, and contacts for our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Safety tips for before, during



and after flooding have also been provided. We’ve also communicated appropriate information to the people we serve and our contractors.

We hope that no one is more adversely impacted as such events continue through the summer. But this is the Midwest and we’re likely to see another tornado or two, and maybe some high water. Please be safe.



Iowa Fair Days Planned for August in Urbandale

Vodec consumers in Urbandale, Iowa, look forward to Vodec's annual Iowa State Fair Days. As in years past, the event will coincide with the Iowa State Fair, August 12-16, 2024. Last year, consumers enjoyed games, food, crafts, and carnival games, including a dunk tank.

The 2024 schedule will be emailed to consumers and their caregivers in late July.



(Above) Brittany with Day Services Assistant Sarah Meyer at the 2023 Iowa Fair days in Urbandale Iowa.

Vodec Wishlist

In the last issue of the Voice, we published a wish list of items we use to support consumers. Our readers responded enthusiastically. We have received donations of art supplies, office furniture, and arts and crafts items. We continue to invite you to support our ability to serve by donating some of these items or making a cash donation.

To deliver a wish list item or to make a cash donation, contact Kaylee Brinson at 712-328-2638 or email Kaylee at kbrinson@vodec.org.



Adjustable Standing Desk

Office and Other Supplies

- Adjustable Standing Desk Sit to Stand Riser Converter
- 1080P Bluetooth Mini Projector with Speaker
- Analog clock
- Digital Clock
- Christmas lights (for year-round and holiday decor)
- Wheelchairs



Projector with Speaker

Fitness Equipment

- 2, 3, 5, 8, and 10 Pound Neoprene Dumbbell Free Hand Weight Set
- Reusable Squeeze Sports Water Bottles (22 oz. or 32 oz.)
- Bocce Ball Sets
- Soccer Balls, Basket Balls, and Bases (For Kickball)
- Fitness DVD's (Workout, Yoga, Thai-Bo, etc.)
- Pickleball Set with Net for Outdoor Including Set of 4 Paddles and Outdoor Pickleballs,
- Basketball hoop (over the door kind)

Art Supplies

- Air dry modeling clay
- Paint brushes
- Paintbrush holders
- Brush Pens
- Tempera paint
- Colored beads
- Pipe cleaners
- Pencils
- Various craft kits
- Aprons
- Gel Pens



Pickleball Set with Net

Kitchen Supplies

- Kitchen utensil set including spatulas, kitchen scissors can openers. Silicone
- Microwave Oven
- Kitchen towels
- kitchen knife set
- Kitchen floormats
- Mixing bowls
- Cooking thermometers
- Olive oil sprayer (mister) 200 milliliters
- Washable Placemats
- Handheld heat-resistant smasher for ground beef

Handheld heat-resistant smasher





Realizing Potential

612 S. Main Street

www.vodec.org Council Bluffs, IA 51503

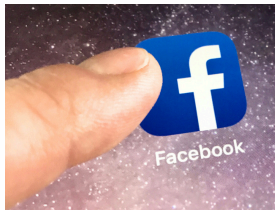
Our mission is to provide services to persons with disabilities in order that those persons may live, work and participate in the community in the least restrictive environment to achieve their full potential.

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?

Thank you

We are thankful for these generous donors.

Donna Bush

Miles and Crystal Havekost

Steve Hodapp

Andrea Smith

In Memory of Christopher Hill

Carol Alexander

David and Peggy Forret

Carolyn and Bud Lyons

Cheryl and Roy Riggs

Karen Criss

Verlin and Susan Kraft

John and Jeanne Mac Donald

Denny & Connie Vanderpol and Family

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

For additional information about Vodec, contact Daryn Richardson at drichardson@vodec.org or call (712) 328-2638.

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 Specialised Youth Services

