

Vodec's Development Centers Prepare for Fall Celebrations

Fall has finally arrived at Vodec, ushering in cooler temperatures, and festive celebrations. This year, plans are in the works at all three of our Development Centers. Each of these celebrations are exciting and fun, but also serve a deeper need for some consumers.

In Vodec's Urbandale Development Center, plans are underway for trips to a variety of area pumpkin patches, apple orchards and consumers are invited to a Halloween Costume Party. Vodec's Omaha Development Center will be hosting a fall festival. Vodec consumers who attend the festival will enjoy chili, apple cider, pumpkin decorating, face painting, a dance, and a costume contest. Also, throughout the month Omaha consumers may participate in day trips to pumpkin patches, hayrack rides, and haunted attractions. And finally, the Annual Vodec Halloween Dance returns for its 27th year at the Council Bluffs Development Center. Vodec consumers in all three regions will be receiving details on these upcoming events.

"These seasonal celebrations are fun but also serve a deeper purpose. Some consumers struggle with the winter blues, seasonal affective disorder, depression, or isolation



Above: James, Krystal and Shauna at the Omaha Halloween Dance in 2023

Right: Greg, Collette, James, Annabel, Ryan and Kennedy on the Hayrack ride at Bellevue Berry Farm in 2023



that comes from spending most of their time indoors," states Steve Hodapp, "research shows that events like our dances and celebrations provide the activity needed for self-care during the darker months of the year."

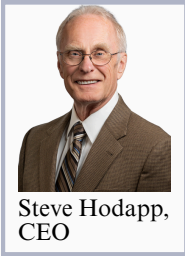
Hodapp's statement is backed by many online articles. According to an article published by UC Davis Health in November 2023, recommended self-care for the winter blues and the more serious seasonal affective disorder includes getting out and moving around. Any movement offers physical stimulation, and exercising with a group or class provides both physical and social benefits. "Our dances and celebrations are fun with an intention of wellness," adds Hodapp.



Right: CEO Steve Hodapp at a Halloween Dance in 2014



Let's Make Every Week a DSP Appreciation Week



Steve Hodapp, CEO

During the week of September 9, Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) were recognized across the country in DSP Recognition Week.

In this industry, where care and service directed to people supported by services and programs, such as those offered by Vodec, are in the forefront of our minds, we have to remember who is serving in the front lines.

DSPs are those employees who are the primary and regular points of contact with people in services. They are the ones who hear the stories, implement service plans, do the seemingly unending documentation, and so much more.

Another way our DSPs are recognized is with advancement opportunities. Being able to promote from within provides Vodec a knowledgeable base of supervisors and managers and directors. Many of our leadership team started as a DSP or similar position, including me.

Congratulations to Lisa and Greg!

Lisa and Greg celebrated their commitment to each other recently. Their Vodec Host Home providers hosted the ceremony. Lisa and Greg are consumers who met each other at the Council Bluffs Development Center. Surrounded by family and friends, they committed their lives to each other in an outdoor ceremony. Join us in wishing them the best!

Right: Lisa and Greg



Above: Safety Coordinator Drew Morgan show the gifts he received as part of DSP week.

Left: Governor Kim Reynolds' (Iowa) 2024 DSP Proclamation.

But we who are not DSPs, including any of you who are consumer family members, need to remember that DSP recognition week is really 52 weeks a year. A pat on the back once a year is not adequate. Let's make an intention to say something nice and encouraging more than annually to any DSP you run across.

Circle Theatre and Vodec for Future Performance in Omaha

In November, Vodec consumers from the Omaha Development Center are participating in a performance of "Capture the Moon" as part of a dance ensemble. The performance is taking place at the Alan J. Levine Performing Arts Theatre (JCC Omaha), located at 333 S. 132nd Street, Omaha, NE 68154.

To prepare for their performance, Vodec consumers are attending a series of workshops in October. Consumers will learn about the behind-the-scenes rehearsal process of being in a performance. "These workshops will mostly be music and dance, they (consumers) will join us on stage for



the big song and dance numbers,” states Courtney Cairncross, workshop instructor for Circle Theatre. Cairncross is listed on the Nebraska Arts Council’s Artist Roster, and is recognized for her work in theatre, dance, and music.

“This will be our third production working with Circle Theatre and Courtney. She has a unique ability to gently guide the consumers as they explore the performing arts. She provides a wealth of experience and knowledge as a performing artist. We are so lucky to be partnering with her and Circle Theatre,” states



Kellie Katelman, Vodec Day Services Manager. “After the November performance has concluded, we will be looking forward to returning to the stage with Courtney and Circle Theatre next spring to perform the Wizard of Oz.”

DSP Appreciation Week Celebrated Across Vodec

National Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week was celebrated September 8–14, 2024. During this week, Vodec’s leaders hosted a series of events and provided gifts to recognize the important work of Vodec’s DSPs, who provide essential care and guided support to consumers served by Vodec and others. Since 2008, National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week has been celebrated annually in September.

This year, DSP’s received key chains, cooler-style Vodec lunch bags and meals were provided. Some of the gifts include personalized messages of appreciation. At all three development centers DSPs were encouraged to reflect with pride on their impact on the lives of consumers. “We cannot overstate the importance of these hard working and caring individuals,” states Daryn Richardson Services Development Director. “As a parent of a man with an intellectual disability, I cannot imagine what his life would be like without them.”



Above, left to right: Cale, Ashley, Sherman Campbell, Days Services Assistant, and Holly Adams, Day Services Coordinator, prepare breakfast for DSP Appreciation Week in Urbandale.



Above left to right: Madison Marshall, Day Services Coordinator; Sophia Taylor, Day Services Coordinator; Danika Goun, Day Services Assistant; Priscilla Zadina, Day Services Assistant; Julie Gompert, Day Services Assistant; Gesele Murillo, Day Services Assistant; Mary Benak, Transportation Coordinator; Maddisson Harrington, Day Services Assistant; and Danyelle Grimes, Day Services Assistant holding their “Chip-Chip-Hooray” prizes in Omaha





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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).

Wish List

The wish list is working! Last month we received pencils, crayons, colored pencils, markers, stickers, foam flooring. and more!

Your generous contributions help us enhance our services. Thank you for your kindness and support.

- Pumpkins- big and small
- Haybales
- Apple Cider
- Grocery store gift cards
- Halloween decorations
- Costumes



We are thankful for these generous donors.

Donna Bush
Dianna Chaloupka

Jeremy Dunkirk
Miles and Crystal Havekost

Steve Hodapp
Andrea Smith

thank you

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 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.

Vodec 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 employments services;
Be between 13 and 19 years of age for the youth services program



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

