

A Publication of the Vocational Development Center, Inc - November 2024

Vodec Consumers Enjoy October Dances, Festivals



Above: Sandy with her Panda Costume

Vodec consumers attended a variety of festivals and dances to celebrate the Halloween season. Consumers played games and enjoyed delicious food,

were disguised in amazing costumes, and had fun together with their direct support professionals (DSP's).

In Omaha, consumers enjoyed a photo booth, participated in games such as a pumpkin ring toss, tic tac toes, and loved the pumpkin painting contest. "The weather was absolutely perfect" states Patricia Sheffield, Administrative Assistant. Our staff members did an excellent job finding decorations and pumpkins."

In Council Bluffs, consumers danced the night away dressed in costumes. In Council Bluffs there was also a photo booth and a haunted hallway. The hallway featured an amazing black light experience with glowing decorations and had a special room with extra haunts. Consumers and DSPs alike screamed with delight as they went through the haunted hall.

In Urbandale, consumers participated in the Halloween party which had an amazing pot-luck, sweet treats, a haunted hallway, played games such as "Doughnut on a String", and everyone competed in a costume contest.

"Overall, the Halloween parties were a resounding success, bringing our employees and consumers together for a day of fun, food, and friendship," said Daryn Richardson, Services Development Director, "It is a day that everyone will remember fondly."



Left: Day Services Supervisor Kay Akomolafe, Production Director April Krouse, pose with Mike

Right: Megan and Matt in costume at the Dance



Above: Day Services Supervisor Kay Akomolafe at the Pumpkin Painting booth

Right: Martez in costume



THE LITTLE ACORN



Steve Hodapp,
CEO

Once upon a time, an acorn was laying on the ground. It had been blown away from an aging oak tree in a nearby field.

Along came a gentleman who saw the acorn. He picked it up and examined it. He thought it looked like a treasure, so he took it to show some friends.

His friends were like-minded in that they also thought the acorn looked valuable. They discussed what to do with it. There were various ideas. They settled on the idea that it should be planted. But where? And who should plant it? And who should tend it?

After more discussion they settled on the location: a patch of fertile ground close to them. But the ground was owned by someone outside this little group. After sharing their idea with the ground's owner, the owner said they could plant the acorn in his ground.

The little group planted the acorn together in a little ceremony which was fitting as the acorn was little and so was the patch of ground in which it went. The little group next hatched a plan about who would tend the acorn. The little group had a small number of people who were knowledgeable about such things, and they agreed to tend the acorn.

Time passed. The acorn sprouted. It began to grow slowly towards the sky which seemed limitless. But there were dangers. The seedling was exposed to the elements. Wind tried to blow it over and break it. Dry times threatened it. Hard rains moved the dirt above its roots. Fast-growing grass and weeds tried to hide it from the sun's warmth.



And there was the little group of people who had agreed to tend it in the beginning. They protected the seedling from all the weather dangers. They watered it during drought. They repacked soil around its base. They pulled away the grass and weeds.

Now, an oak is a slow-growing tree. It takes its time to establish a powerful root system. As it got taller, it got stronger, and its trunk became denser. The elements became less impactful on it.

Over decades, what started as an acorn grew into a large tree. The tree provided support to those who shared its space. It became a model for others who thought planting an acorn would be a good thing. The people who tended it earlier were replaced over time by others who agreed to continue to tend to the tree.

In time the group's purpose became less about the tree itself but more about what the tree meant to the people it supported. And as the tree grew, so did the number of people on and under its branches and in its shade. And that tree, which started from a small acorn and was tended by a small group of people, continues to grow and to be important to those it supports.

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So, we all enjoy a fable. As with many fables, there's a kernel of truth in each, as well as lesson. The above is a fable about the origins of The Vocational Development Center Inc. which we commonly refer to as Vodec. In 1968, around this time of year, the acorn which was to become Vodec was planted. It has survived changes in leaders who tend it. It

Vodec Opens Day Hab and School Services in Glenwood Iowa

In October, Vodec opened a new location in Glenwood, Iowa. This site will serve as the hub for the local Adult Transition Program (ATP) and the Cares program and is on the second floor of the Glenwood Community Schools Administration Building, 103 Central Street in Glenwood.

Last June, Vodec was invited to establish an adult transition program specifically for Glenwood students and students from surrounding communities. These students will benefit from Vodec's adult transition services, which are currently offered to various school districts in Southwest and Central Iowa. Vodec has also implemented a paid work experience

program for the students. “We are noticing a growing need for vocational education, particularly in the realm of work experience,” states Jeremy Dunkirk, Vodec's Services Operations Director. “We facilitate work experiences in the community at local businesses, or on-site at Vodec.” Dunkirk develops relationships with businesses in Glenwood. These businesses open their doors to help Vodec provide a place to gain real work experience. “The work experience program complements the adult transition program to ensure students receive comprehensive experience,” adds Dunkirk.

Three Vodec Consumers to Bowl in State Competition

Three members of Vodec's Special Olympics bowling team from Council Bluffs have successfully qualified for the state competition after participating in a recent bowling tournament at Maple Lanes in Omaha. Robert Renshaw, Day Services Coordinator, states, “Janet, Anita, and Tommy, are excited to be moving on. Everyone enjoys the exercise and the friendly competition.” Renshaw, along with Residential Services Supervisors Sherry Abels and Summer Covey, support the consumers by organizing practice schedules and coordinating with Special Olympics.

“We are planning to introduce additional Special Olympic sports, such as basketball,” adds Renshaw. The State Competition will be November 22 at Maplewood Lanes.



Above, back row left to right: Tommy (B), Sarah, Day Services Coordinator Robert Renshaw, and Residential Supervisor Summer Covey

Above front row left to right: Anita, Greg and Adrianna.



Right, left to right: Special Olympic Champions: Tommy (P), Janet and Anita.





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www.vodec.org

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



Once again, we asked, and you answered! We have received donations of televisions and office furniture. Please continue to support our ability to serve by donating some of these items or making a cash donation.

- Air dry modeling clay
- Paint brushes
- Paintbrush holders
- Tempera paint
- Pencils
- Aprons
- Microwave Oven
- Kitchen floormates
- Mixing bowls
- Fitness DVD's
- Neoprene Dumbbell Weight Set

We are thankful for these generous donors.

Donna Bush

Dianna Chaloupka

Jeremy Dunkirk

Miles and Crystal Havekost

Steve Hodapp

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Donna and Jim Kalar

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 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 employment services;
 Be between 13 and 19 years of age for the youth services program;
 Have addiction, homelessness and/or mental health challenges for the Aspire IPS 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.

