The Vodec Voice

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Voter Empowerment Day Encourages Civic Engagement in Council Bluffs

On September 24, Vodec welcomed consumers, students, community leaders, and elected officials to our Council Bluffs Development Center for Voter Empowerment Day. The event that focused on promoting civic engagement, voting education, and the accessibility options that are provided for consumers. The event was designed to help consumers and students at Vodec learn more about the voting process and understand the important role their voices play in shaping their communities.



Above: Daryn Richardson, Vodec's Services Development Director, goes through accessibility materials provided to consumers attending the event
Below: County Supervisor Keith Jones, answers questions from the attendees



Vodec was honored to welcome John Norwood, Margaret Hicks, Keith Jones, and Susan Miller. All community leaders who took time to engage with attendees and participate in discussions about civic involvement and community issues. Each leader took time out of their day to answer questions from consumers on issues they may have as well as explaining process when voting.

Voter Empowerment Day reflects Vodec's commitment to ensuring our consumers have access to the information and resources needed to fully participate in the democratic process. The event finished with a lunch, giving attendees and guests additional opportunities to connect with and continue their conversations.

Through open dialogue and education, Voter Empowerment Day helped reinforce an important message. Every voice matters and every voter deserves the opportunity to be informed, empowered, and help reinforce the important message that every voice matters.



Left: Susan Miller, Pottawattamie County Supervisor, spoke with consumers about voter rights, providing valuable information on the voting process and the importance of participating in elections.

Creating Opportunities Through Partnerships

Every meaningful job starts with an opportunity, and helping create those opportunities is a key part of Chad Thomas's role as Vodec's Business Development Representative. Working throughout the Omaha and Council Bluffs communities, Chad focuses on building relationships with businesses in the community that may have production or operational work that Vodec can support. The goal is simple, develop partnerships that help local businesses succeed while creating meaningful production opportunities for our consumers here at Vodec.

A typical day for Chad includes meeting with business leaders and learning about their operations, identifying ways Vodec can help meet their employment training needs. By building strong partnerships, he helps bring in a variety of work opportunities that allow consumers to learn new skills, stay engaged, contribute to a team, and earn a paycheck.

Vodec currently partners with businesses on a wide range of projects, including packaging, assembly, labeling, kitting, sorting, inspection, and other light production tasks. These partnerships provide consumers with real world work experiences while helping businesses complete important projects efficiently and reliably.

According to Chad, what makes these partnerships especially meaningful is that the work being done is truly needed by local businesses. Consumers have the opportunity to contribute to their community and gain valuable job skills as well as having the pride that comes from being part of a team.

Businesses also benefit from partnering with Vodec. Our production program offers reliable workforce solutions, flexible support, consistent results, and a single point of

contact to help streamline projects. At the same time, each partnership creates a positive impact by providing meaningful opportunities for our consumers.

If your business has production, assembly, packaging, or other operational needs, Chad would welcome the opportunity to discuss how Vodec can help. As he puts it, "Vodec gets work done and creates an impact while doing it."

Chad Thomas

Business Development Representative

712-328-2638 ext. 125

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Celebrating Our DSPs During DSP Week

September 13th through the 19th was Direct Support Professional (DSP) Week, Vodec proudly celebrated the week, recognizing the dedication from team members who make a difference in the lives of our consumers. DSPs play a vital role in supporting independence and helping consumers achieve their goals, and DSP Week gave us an extra opportunity to show our appreciation for all they do.

Our teams celebrated with a week of special treats and activities, including dirty sodas, a pretzel bar, candy, goody bags, jewelry, BBQ lunches, and a build your own potato bar. Throughout the week, team members had opportunities to relax, connect with coworkers, feel recognized for the work they do every day, and enjoy a few well-deserved thanks.

While the treats and activities were a fun way to celebrate, the true focus of DSP Week was recognizing the incredible impact our Direct Support Professionals have on the lives of the consumers we support. Their dedication helps create opportunities and strengthens our mission every day.

To all of our DSPs, thank you for your patience, kindness, empathy, and commitment. We are grateful for everything you do and proud to celebrate you during DSP Week and throughout the year.

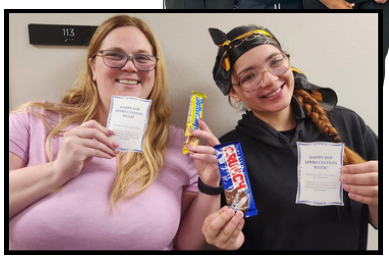


Above: Omaha DSPs enjoying pretzels

Below: Omaha DSPs celebrating with candy



Above: Omaha DSPs enjoying the potato bar





Bottom Left: Urbandale DSPs show off the sweet treats that was given to them
Bottom Right: Urbandale DSPs showcase their goody bags and boba drinks

A Fall Adventure at Vala's Pumpkin Patch

Consumers from Vodec's Omaha and Council Bluffs locations enjoyed an amazing, fun-filled fall outing to Vala's Pumpkin Patch, making memories while taking in everything that Vala's has to offer.

The trip gave consumers the opportunity to spend time with friends, explore the attractions, try all the fall food, and experience one of the area's most popular fall destinations. From enjoying the beautiful autumn scenery to visiting the patch and seasonal attractions, there was something for everyone to enjoy throughout the day.



Above: Council Bluffs consumers, Dante, Josh, and Aaron ride and attraction at Vala's
Below: Council Bluffs consumers enjoyed a day of seasonal fun and captured the moment with a group photo alongside friends



The visit offered consumers a chance to practice community engagement skills while enjoying a day away from their usual routines. Experiences like these help build confidence, encourage independence, explore new areas, and provide opportunities to try new things in a supportive environment.

The visit to Vala's was a wonderful reminder of the importance of community experiences and the joy that comes from spending time with friends. We are grateful to the employees who helped make the trip possible and look forward to many more adventures ahead.



Left: Omaha Consumers enjoying a day at Vala's Pumpkin Patch, they took the time to take a group picture in front of the giant swing

Turning the Page: Urbandale's New Reading Corner

A new reading corner at Vodec's Urbandale location is helping consumers discover the joy of reading in a welcoming and comfortable space. Designed to encourage relaxation, learning, independence, and exploration, the area has quickly become a popular spot for consumers looking to enjoy a good book.

According to Angela Marshall, Services Operations Director of our Central Iowa Region, the reading corner has had a positive impact by encouraging more consumers to spend time reading. The dedicated space provides a quiet, inviting environment where consumers can engage with books at their own pace and explore topics that interest them.

The success of the reading corner is a reminder that small changes can have a meaningful impact. By creating a comfortable place to read and learn, Urbandale is helping foster a lifelong appreciation for learning.





The Urbandale Reading Corner has become a favorite spot for consumers to unwind

You Can Help Make an Impact



Steve Hodapp
CEO

As we enter the final quarter of 2026, we can look back and evaluate what sort of year it was for us personally. Did we achieve our financial goals? Is there anything left in our financial plan to donate before the end of the year to designated eligible non-profit organizations? How can we prioritize such donations?

I can help you with that last question. Vodec is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization as recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). That means a donation to Vodec may be eligible for a tax deduction for you. Whether it is depends on your personal situation. I'm not an income tax expert so I would recommend talking to one about donations and what they mean to you.

Vodec doesn't ask for your financial help very often. I do now ask. I invite you to do what I and some other Vodec employees do, and that is to donate to Vodec. Do a lump sum or donate regularly, but you doing something would be appreciated very much.

What would we use a donation for? The list could be long but here are some ideas.

- Support for community integrated activities. This could be entrance fees, meal support, etc.
- Materials for arts and crafts which many consumers thoroughly enjoy.
- Funding of food and kitchen supplies to teach consumers about meal prep and planning as well as cooking and clean-up.
- Sponsorship of special activities for consumers, such as holiday dances and entertainment opportunities.
- Or a "you pick" . . you can designate what a donation can be for, and if we can honor the request then we will.

For those of you who are not aware, Vodec receives service fees, most of which source from Medicaid and are administered directly or indirectly by the States we operate in. Sad to report, not all the fees can be directed to services. There is an unreal administrative burden on us in various aspects of what we do. This necessarily diverts some money from the fees we receive. What's in the administrative burden?

Off the top we have to cover the cost of business operations. There is a cost to providing oversight of fiscal, compliance, human resources, development, etc. to keep us running. There is also a cost to doing all the documentation of the services provided to consumers (sometimes it feels we document what we documented, it seems so redundant) so we can receive the service fees.

So, yes, I am asking for your donation, to be direct about it. Those who do donate regularly, thank you. Those who will join them, thank you. All are welcome to be supporters of Vodec's mission.

Help Share the Vodec Difference

Everyday, Vodec's consumers, families, employees, and community partners experience moments that make a difference. Whether it's achieving goals, building new skills, finding meaningful opportunities in the community, creating friendships, or receiving support in whatever it may be, these stories help showcase the impact of Vodec's mission.

Vodec is looking for testimonials and personal stories that highlight the positive experiences you've had with Vodec. Your highlights not only help us celebrate successes but also allow us to share meaningful work happening across our programs with other families, employees, supporters, and community partners.

If you would like to share a testimonial, experience, success story, or highlight with Vodec, we'd love to hear from you. Please send them to Vodec's Communication Director, Jonathan Rothe, at jrothe@vodec.org.

Thank you for helping us share the stories that make Vodec such a special community.

vodec
612 S. Main Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
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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 committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, genetic information, military or veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law. We adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws. This commitment extends to all aspects of employment, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, and compensation.

Vodec is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. Donations may be tax-deductible (consult your tax preparer for specific information about this).

We appreciate these generous donors so far in 2026.

- **Miles and Crystal Havekost**
- **Blair Meat Locker**
- **Rotella's Italian Bakery**
- **Knights of Columbus**
- **Associated Bank**
- **CAF America**
- **Jeremy Dunkirk**
- **Steve Hodapp**
- **Andrea Smith**
- **Fidelity Charitable**
- **IA West Foundation**
- **Jim and Nancy Miller**
- **Bank of America**
- **Daron Kruse**
- **Leslie & John Southard**
- **Mike and Nikki Alford**
- **Availa Bank**
- **Laurie Thies**
- **Robert Livingston**
- **Emmanuel Lutheran Church**
- **Donna and Jim Kalar**
- **Pat Nekuda**
- **Bloom Works**
- **Phillip Meyer**
- **Bob Morgan**

Wish List

We invite you to contribute to our Wish List. Your donations will play a vital role in nurturing creativity among those we serve. For more information call 712-328-2638 Ext 113

- Art Supplies
- Craft Kits
- Board Games/Puzzles
- Baking Supplies
- Outdoor Games
- Journaling or mindful kits
- Movie Night Supplies
- DVD's

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:
Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC)
Iowa Association of Community Providers (IACP)
Iowa Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
Iowa DD Council
Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP)
For additional information about Vodec, please get in touch with Daryn Richardson at drichardson@vodec.org or call (712) 328-2638 Ext 113.

Vodec is an authorized provider in the following Iowa HealthLink networks:
Wellpoint
Iowa Total Care
Molina Healthcare

Vodec Entrance Criteria
Must not have behavior that is dangerous to themselves or others.
Medical needs must be something Vodec can safely support.
Transportation needs must be something Vodec can provide.
Must have funding in place before services begin.
Minimum age requirements may be different depending on the Vodec program.