

# — CARF ACCREDITATION —

Village Northwest Unlimited is pleased to announce that we have been accredited for a period of three years by CARF International. This accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization. There are over 1,000 standards that Village Northwest Unlimited must meet or exceed to maintain CARF accreditation. An organization receiving a Three-Year Accreditation has put itself through a rigorous peer review process. It has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit its commitment to offering programs and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality.

The CARF report stated, "VNU is mission driven. The organization's mission of Purpose, Privacy, and Dignity appears to be the first step in the development of any policy or action. Virtually every conversation during the course of the survey touched upon the mission statement in some manner."



VNU client, Marla, shows off a project she started working on in the art room at the VNU Summit building.

Keep up-to-date with all of the Village events and Panther athletics on our brand new website at [www.villagenorthwest.org](http://www.villagenorthwest.org)



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VILLAGE NORTHWEST UNLIMITED // Winter 2018/2019

# VILLAGE VOICE



## — EAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL —

This year from October through December, 2nd graders from East Elementary School in Sheldon spent Friday afternoons at the VNU Wansink Center. The students helped VNU consumers with craft projects and enjoyed life-sized games in the gym. During January and February, the roles will be reversed and a group of consumers who chose to be a part of the Volunteering All Around curriculum will be visiting the 2nd graders at East Elementary along with doing other volunteer opportunities around the Sheldon area.

Ken Ven Huizen, ICF/ID Program Supervisor, said, "We so enjoyed interacting with the second graders from East Elementary! The consumers looked forward to them coming and enjoyed doing things with them. When their time was done each Friday, many consumers said they wished the students could stay longer. What a great interaction between the youth in our community and our consumers."

Deb Haning, 2nd grade teacher at East Elementary said, "Our students have loved coming to volunteer at the Village. They usually can't wait until the next time they can come. They have learned how to help others out and how to work with others. We've enjoyed the experience."



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## 40 YEARS

In October VNU celebrated 40 year anniversaries for Becky Klemme and Judy Menage. Both ladies started their VNU careers in 1978 n on-campus homes that are now torn down. Beck is currently working in a waiver home and Judy works at the VNU Summit building. "The dedication and devotion to the Village and the individuals served demonstrated by Becky and Judy's 40 years of service is unparalleled in today's employment environment. We are so grateful and honored that they have chosen to be part of fulfilling the mission of the VNU for so many years. They serve as incredible role models for other staff members." said Brian Robyn, Director of Human Resources.



## ESD

An Exercise Sports Development (ESD) class had the chance to meet the Northwestern Football head coach, Matt McCarty. Coach McCarty showed the group around the locker room and let everyone try on the team's gear. Another ESD group met the Dordt Blades hockey team head coach, Nate Van Niejenhuis, and forward for the team Seth Vandergugten. The group toured the locker room and watched Seth as he showed them a few moves on the ice. These opportunities mean a lot to the individuals VNU serves. Thank you to Northwestern Football and Dordt Hockey for taking the time to meet with our ESD classes.



## FALL FESTIVAL

Every October for the past six years VNU has held a Fall Festival. This year, the festival was held on Halloween day just outside of the Summit building. Staff and consumers put on their creative hats and made all kinds of pumpkins and scarecrows and entered them into contests in an effort to take home the top prize in each division. In fact, a class taking the Scarecrow curriculum spent October creating larger than life scarecrows to enter into the contest. After the judging took place, VNU Music instructor, Amanda Van Otterloo led all in attendance with a "Scary Sing a Long." It didn't hurt that this year it was an incredible 59 degrees outside! Everyone enjoyed the time spent together.



## CHRISTMAS PARTY

On December 7th VNU celebrated the holidays with its employees at the Crossroads Pavilion Event Center in Sheldon. An acting company from Minneapolis led VNU staff through a night of twists and turns as everyone attempted to uncover clues that would lead their table to the answer of who was the murderer at the party. As everyone arrived a few VNU staff were picked to be a part of the evenings cast and were given new identities. In the end, it was VNU's Abby Vanden Bosch who turned out to be the night's killer. To go along with the fun entertainment staff were encouraged to wear their tackiest Christmas sweater and awards were handed out to the ugliest of them all.



## OUTSTANDING STAFF OF THE YEAR

During the annual VNU Staff Christmas Party on December 6, 2018, Bob Riemersma was honored as the Outstanding Staff of the Year. The Outstanding Staff of the Year Award is the highest honor awarded to a staff member of VNU. Recipients are nominated by their peers for this annual award.

Bob Riemersma began his career with Village Northwest Unlimited on November 6, 1979, after spending 4 years in the Air Force. Bob was hired to supervise the woods area at Northwest Enterprises, which today is known as the Summit. Later, Bob became the supervisor of Packaging Specialist. Packaging Specialist was located in the Futures (now the Autism Community Transition Center) building and packaged candy for Sather's Company of Round Lake, Minnesota. During his many years at VNU, Bob has spent time supervising various production areas within NWE and Futures. As part of the transition to Village 2.0, Bob has become a Community Program Instructor / Job coach. In 2019, Bob will celebrate his 40th Anniversary as a staff member of Village Northwest Unlimited.

We congratulate Bob on this honor.



## HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

VNU celebrated the holiday season with Thanksgiving and Christmas programs. The Thanksgiving program allowed staff and consumers alike to reflect on and Thank God for all we have been given. There is no doubt we have an awful lot to be thankful for here at VNU. The Christmas program was a campus celebration of the birth of Christ, and this year had a special performance by a consumer bell choir. The bell choir consisted of members of the Music and Movement class who got to put into practice what they have been learning.

