

Mayor Jeremy Farmer
Lawrence City Commission
6 East 6th Street
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

April 28, 2015

Dear Mayor Farmer and Commissioners,

For 18 years, Van Go Inc. has provided hundreds of jobs to at-risk, Lawrence teens (110 annually) and since 2005, the City of Lawrence has funded Van Go Inc. through the Social Service category of the general fund. **This year, we respectfully request that \$50,000 be awarded to Van Go Inc. through the Vendor category of the general fund.**

The largest employer of at-risk teens and young adults in the region, Van Go has provided in-depth employment and job-training to a population that, without our help, might be the *recipients* of valuable City resources. Instead, teens 14-21 “earn while they learn” the life and job skills necessary to become productive, *contributing* members of the workforce and the community. Van Go’s youth payroll of \$100,000 per year has generated \$1,600,000 in salaries to the Lawrence community, while fostering self-sufficient, future Lawrence citizens.

For example, last year, after 800 hours (12 months) of employment and intensive wrap-around services (see attached), 100% of VG youth, 18-21, achieved permanent employment and stable housing—the truest measure of successful adulthood. These young people entered the program adrift: no jobs, no direction, no hope. But with individualized mental health support services, life skills training, and stable employment, gradual, permanent change happened.

At Van Go, we don’t work miracles; but unlike mainstream employers, we are well-equipped to handle the myriad of challenges our teens bring “to the table.” Van Go’s 2 Licensed Master social workers and Masters level clinical psychologist/program director, adeptly handle teens with multiple barriers to success. Teens with these challenges are specifically recruited:

- 81% have a mental health diagnosis
- 39% have I.E.P.’s in school
- 70% live in poverty

We are very grateful to our long term referring partners, Bert Nash MHC and USD #497. Their recognition of the crucial part Van Go Inc. plays in the social safety net of our community, has been intrinsic to our agency’s success.

Yours truly,

Lynne Green, Executive Director Van Go Inc.