

Issue 4, August 2009

#### Events

<b>August 12 &amp; 17</b>	High School Avenue Scholar Classes Began Ralston, Omaha Northwest & Benson
<b>August 29</b>	First Day of Fall Metro Sessions
<b>September</b>	Community Advisory Board Meeting  Board of Directors Meeting

#### Metro Avenue Scholars Summer Program

**Giovanni Jones, College Talent Advisor**  
**Wayne D. Brown, J.D., Director of HR & Workforce Development**

The Bright Futures Foundation is designed to support students of talent and need through high school, college, and into the workforce. Seventeen students began the Metro Avenue Scholars Program on June 7, 2009. All 17 students checked into the dorms at the Ft. Omaha campus with eager anticipation for classes to begin. They were extremely excited about receiving their MacBooks and book bags. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, the students celebrated their first five weeks as residents on Metro's campus. During their first session, students attended classes Monday—Thursday and completed two courses: Employability Skills and College Success Strategies.

#### METRO STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Metro Avenue Scholars had much to celebrate this summer, compiling a 3.2 grade average and 12 credits at Metropolitan Community College. Metro students completed their second five-week Human Relation Skills course and are gearing up for fall sessions.

#### More Opportunities . . .

"Dream It. Do It.," a workforce development organization, hosted our scholars each Friday during the summer session. The students received a first-hand look at the many career opportunities that are available to them in the region. They were also introduced to Catherine Lang, Commissioner of *(continued on Page 2)*



*Talent Advisor, Giovanni Jones, and one class of Metro Avenue Scholars already on the "road to success."*

### Off to A Great Start 2009-2010

I am pleased to report that after a fast-paced and challenging start-up year, the Bright Futures Foundation Avenue Scholars Program is off to a great start for the 2009-2010 academic year. Once again I must commend our outstanding staff for a job well done.

As we look forward, building a strong program that will meet the diverse needs of our students is our number one priority. We have many challenges before us. A few of our priorities for the 2009-2010 academic year include:

- Providing appropriate student housing for our postsecondary scholars
- Assuring all scholars have quality and affordable healthcare services
- Implementing a relevant financial literacy program
- Developing an efficient and effective system of supporting the transportation needs of our scholars in the community
- Continuing refinement of our Five Cs curriculum used by our Talent Advisors (Cognition, Choices, College Access, Career Entry, Community)
- Establishing an accountability dashboard on our website

In addition, we are also working with partnering school districts to refine our current programming model and to select three new partner high schools for involvement in the Avenue Scholars Program beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year.

I firmly believe that one of the keys to success for Bright Futures Foundation will be our ability to work with other community organizations. During the upcoming year we will begin the process of establishing Partnership Agreements with key organizations across the community.

I am pleased to announce the signing of a Letter of Agreement with the University of Nebraska at Omaha Counseling Department. The Counseling Department will be supporting counseling needs of our scholars and training needs of our staff. Dr. Paul Barnes, Chair of the Counseling Department, has been a real champion in helping bring this partnership together. We also are looking forward to Ginny Owens, UNO Counseling Department Graduate Assistant, joining our team. Ginny will be working to support our scholars and organize our new partnership.

Lastly, I ask each of you to join me in congratulating Randy Schmailzl with his appointment as President of Metro Community College. Randy's leadership has been critical to Bright Futures Foundation's work at Metro Community College. We look forward to continuing our positive and productive work with him. Randy will do a great job leading Metro Community College. Our congratulations to Randy!



**Dr. Ken Bird**  
**President/CEO**

**Metro Avenue Scholars Program (cont'd)**

the Nebraska Department of Labor; Tony Raimondo, Chairman of Behlen Manufacturing Company; Dwayne Probyn, Executive Director NAMC; and Ron DeBord, representative of "Dream It. Do It." John Pierce, Associate Vice President for Affirmative Action and Diversity Outreach, also celebrated the students on Creighton University's campus. The collaborative effort shown by these organizations was the key to a successful summer.

**Metro Students Weekend Volunteer Experiences . . .**

The Scholars also participated in weekend volunteer experiences. The Avenue Scholars worked in conjunction with the Omaha Food Bank at the LaVista, Papillion, and Elkhorn parades. They went on to win a second place trophy for best walking group in the Elkhorn parade.



**Welcome New Talent Advisors**

Bright Futures Foundation is proud to announce three new additions to the staff. Yano Jones, Aprille Phillips, and Dedrick Bell are the new Talent Advisors at Omaha Northwest, Ralston, and Benson high schools. Yano Jones is the former Assistant Director of Recruitment at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Aprille Phillips is a former Omaha Public Schools teacher from Omaha Bryan, and Dedrick Bell is the former director of Trio at Iowa Western Community College.



**Yano Jones  
(Northwest)**



**Aprille Phillips  
(Ralston)**



**Dedrick Bell  
(Benson)**

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**2009-10 At-A-Glance**

We are looking forward to our first full year of operation with our students in 2009-2010, and we encourage you to watch our newsletter and website for the progress of the Avenue Scholars as we share stories and data about their success. We will be closely monitoring academic improvement, graduation and promotion, behavior and attitude, and eventually, employment success. Each of the measurable goals will be shared with the public as we genuinely desire to be accountable for student success.

The Talent Advisors are in place at each of our partner schools: Metropolitan Community College (Giovanni Jones), Ralston High School (Aprille Phillips), Northwest High School (Yano Jones), and Benson Magnet High School (Dedrick Bell). The Talent Advisors have had a busy summer working with the students and preparing for the 2009-10 school year. They will be working with Avenue Scholars in the curriculum areas of cognition (helping students think about and understand academic content), college access (preparing for college entry and success), career access (preparing for a successful career), community (working in a positive peer culture with other Avenue Scholars), and choice (understanding strengths and setting personal and professional goals). We are also looking forward to the use of the Student Center on weekends and evenings as we expand our work with students outside of the school day and open our doors to other students who need help or groups who might want to access the space to work with students or parents.

During the fall, we will be seeking three new high school partners for the 2010 school year, increasing the number of Avenue Scholars to well over 300 high school and college students.

**Dr. Jef Johnston, Chief Operating Officer**



**Summer Programming . . .**

The yellow bus rumbled past the green expanse of country and into the maze of Omaha streets returning students to their school sites. Inside, the bus buzzed with voices and laughter rising above the diesel engine. "This year is going to be so great!" one student exclaimed, as another launched into a goofy camp song.

The summer began with a retreat at Camp Carol Joy Holling located outside of Ashland, Nebraska. With a great turnout of high school students from Benson, Northwest, and Ralston, we were able to begin building the vision and steps necessary to create a future of success for over 150 students in the program.



The two-day retreat included team building, goal setting and good old summer fun. Students completed Gallup's Strength Finder and began to understand their unique combination of strengths and how they could use their strengths to propel them into successful lives and careers. Students also completed seminars with the Conference for Inclusive Communities and MK Mueller's "8 to Great" life skills program.



The retreat provided a great opportunity for the kids to get to know one another while developing positive relationships with the new staff. It is truly an amazing group of kids that will be a part of this first cohort of Secondary Avenue Scholars.

**Aprille Phillips & Yano Jones  
High School Talent Advisors**