

CLOCKWISE, FROM Right:

Kelly Bernadt wraps a present at Barnes & Noble; Staff members Carnetta Hardin, Marissa Marx, Brad Ekwerekwu, Kristin Walsh, Terrence Gillian, and Bernadt at Barnes & Noble, 74th & Dodge; Bernadt and Walsh work together to wrap a customer's present; Ekwerekwu demonstrates his wrapping skills; Marx, Catie Dagle, and Hardin prepare a set of gifts for a family living near the Metropolitan Community College South Campus.



Avenue Scholars staff give back to community

Avenue Scholars Foundation encourages students and clients to volunteer and give back to the community, so the Post-Secondary Team decided to lead by example in the 2017 holiday season. Under the leadership of Carnetta Hardin, the Post Secondary Team and Avenue Scholars employees engaged in two opportunities to give back and engage with the community in December.

"I feel that our staff is so blessed to be a part of the Avenue Scholars family and it is important for us to give the love and support we get every day back into the community," Hardin said. "It has also been amazing to meet with new people, discover new doors we can open for our students, and learn about new opportunities for support in the community that we can access for our students."

In their first project, the Post-Secondary Team put together boxes of everyday foodstuffs, holiday meal fixings, and gifts for a mother, her two children and grandparents living near the South Omaha Metropolitan

Community College campus.

In the second project, Avenue Scholars employees volunteered at Barnes and Noble, wrapping gifts for goodwill donations. This event raised money for Avenue Scholars students and spread the word about ASF with members of the community.

"It was a fun experience to meet with people, talk about our program, get positive feedback on our mission, and hear about wonderful programs others participate in all over the city to make Omaha a better place for everyone," Catie Dagle said.

All goodwill donations received from this project will be used to purchase cold weather gear and other identified needs for post-secondary students to access. Hardin looks forward to expanding community involvement opportunities for staff in 2018.

"I am excited to continue building the Avenue Scholars Foundation's community engagement and collaborating with all ASF staff to do more next year," she said.

Career Exploration continues making impact on Scholars

Career Exploration posts have been a key element of the Avenue Scholars Foundation mission since the fall of 2013.

Over 30 companies, or businesses, have opened their doors to students seeking hands-on insight to meaningful careers.

"When I was directed to help design the curriculum of the Career Exploration program, I wanted to try making it as hands-on as possible," said Terry Fischer, Director of Business Outreach.

In addition, the basis on which business partners are targeted has changed.

"Previously, it was student-driven, based on student interests," Fischer said. "Now, it's market-driven. We want to expose students to businesses where the jobs are."

Students are required to attend two Career Exploration posts during their junior year.

"We give them 12 to 13 choices per semester," she said. "Once we create the menu, students choose which posts to attend."

Fischer believes the program has been successful.

"It's a great opportunity, one of the first chances for Scholars to see that Avenue Scholars Foundation is much more than just what happens in their ASF classroom," she said. "For them, it's exciting. It makes everything they're learning more meaningful. They can see whether this is a career that might or might not be a good fit for them. They see 'what do I need to do now' [to achieve a career in the desired field]."

Despite all the success, Fischer sees room for growth.

"We want to offer and require more," Fischer said. "What we do with juniors is having a high impact, but it's not enough. We want to continue the explorations into their senior year and post-secondary as well."



ABOVE (from left) Omaha Benson Scholar Jaclynn Monaco and Millard South Scholar Fiona Walker try their hand at properly folding napkins.



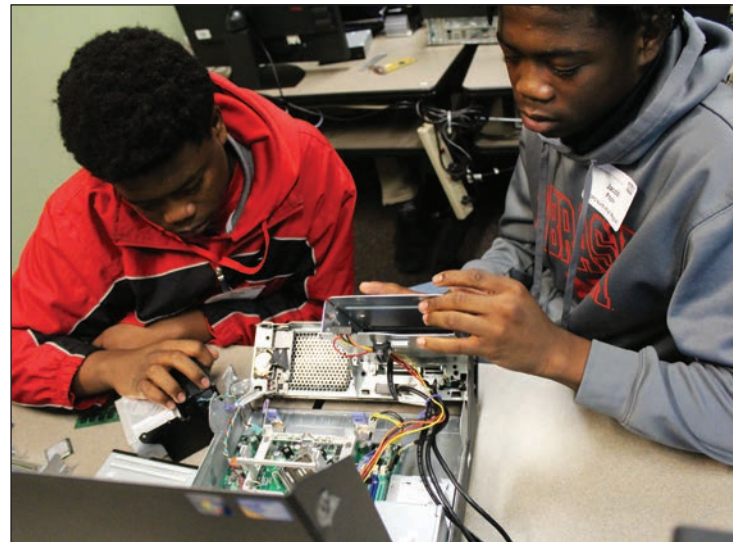
ABOVE: Ralston Scholars (from left) Dustin Mascarello, Juan Guerrero Franco, and Logan Davis get some hands-on training at Crave restaurant.



RIGHT: Omaha North Scholars Raven Ventri-Hollingsworth and Kyrri Richardson participate in an ice breaker activity.



LEFT, Omaha Benson Scholar Deshawn Brown shares an amusing anecdote with Omaha North Scholar Imani Stafford during an ice breaker activity at Crave restaurant. In the background (left) Crave owner/brand ambassador Jacqelle Lane and Millard South Scholar Sharon Pelep also participate. BELOW, Millard South Scholars Damarcus Bruce, Cayne Kauphusman and Caila Ware work together on breaking down the components of a computer's mother board before reconstructing it.



ABOVE, Omaha North Scholars Jakobe and Jacob Pope carefully check the connections as they reconstruct key components of a computer during a Mutual of Omaha Career Exploration post.

LEFT, Papillion Scholars (left to right) Ayo Oludipe and Tyla Hansen listen a Mutual of Omaha technician explain a component as they reconstruct the mother board of a computer.

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"Our mission is to ensure careers for committed students of hope and need through education/training and supportive relationships."



First annual Job Fair event draws 47 Scholars

By all measures, Avenue Scholars Foundation's first Job Fair, held Nov. 15 at the Avenue Scholars Foundation Career Center, was a huge success.

"We had 47 students — post-secondary and high school — attend," said Britanni Tanhueco, Business Outreach Coordinator. "Several students are already in talks with employers regarding potential job opportunities."

Businesses who had representatives at the job fair: Target, Baxter, Quik Trip, BJM Kids, Home Depot, Chick-Fil-A, Jimmy Johns, Baker's, Gallup, and Oriental Trading Company.

Tanhueco said ASF is planning to host another career fair April 20, 2018, at the South Omaha campus of Metropolitan Community College.



TOP PHOTO. Omaha Bryan Scholars Xitlally Velasco and Nely Rojas listen to an Omaha employer talk about job opportunities at her business during the first Avenue Scholars Foundation Job Fair. CLOCKWISE, from above, several other Avenue Scholars approach various employers to discuss job opportunities.

