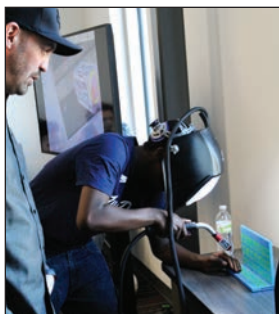


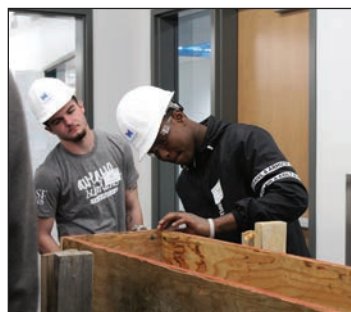
Scholars explore construction careers at MCC



Above, Business Outreach Coordinator Ana Lopez Shalla hands out hard hats as Scholars arrive for the career exploration event at the MCC Construction Education Center. Below, a Scholar uses a simulator to practice welding.



In the two photos at right, Scholars help build a form for pouring a concrete wall.



Fifty-five students from several of the Avenue Scholars Foundation program schools attended an exploration in various trades — HVAC, carpentry, welding, civic engineering, heavy equipment, and electrical — at the Construction Education Center, located on the Metropolitan Community College Fort Omaha campus.

During the March 2 event, stations provided hands-on experiences, such as operating a mini-excavator.

"I am so proud of myself," said Omaha North junior Itzel Jimenez, after using the excavator's bucket to successfully drop a basketball in a trash barrel positioned on the north parking lot of the Education Center (see photo at left).

Experts in various trades were utilized to provide instruction and talk about job opportunities.

"We brought in business partners from various companies to lead students in activities related to particular career paths," said Brittani Tanhucio, Business Outreach Coordinator.



Career Coach Carnetta Hardin visits with Scholar Ismael Castillo about his job at Completely Kids. Castillo, who helps coordinate the kids' after-school activities, plans to become a physical education teacher.



Career Coach Marissa Marx (above left) listens in as Scholar Kathy Narravo-Vallin (center) reviews her work with a supervisor at the Latino Center of the Midlands. Marx says Narravo-Vallin is exceeding her employer's expectations.

Job site review program connects staff to employers

A new program introduced this school year to more consistently collect employer feedback on Avenue Scholars is paying dividends.

The 2017-2018 marks "the first year Career Coaches have been responsible to gather employer feedback that align with the revision of our Mission," says Career Coach Marissa Marx.

According to Career Coach Carnetta Hardin, all Avenue Scholars Foundation students are required to have part-time jobs. In high school, students are required to work a minimum of 150 hours over the duration of their junior and senior years in the ASF program. Post-secondary students are required to earn at least \$1,500 each year while in college. In post-secondary, it's preferred that students work in their area of career interest. All Career Coaches, both high school and post-secondary, are expected to complete an Employer Feedback Form (EFF) and review for each student on their caseloads.

"Students are encouraged but not required to give their employers a heads-up that their Career Coaches will be in contact to set up a meeting to discuss the student's behavior at work," Hardin said. "Career coaches then show up in person, call, email, or send an electronic copy of the EFF to create a relationship with the employer and discuss the questions listed on the form that require feedback. Those questions are on how well students communicate and demonstrate responsibility, work ethic,

positive attitude, professionalism, teamwork, etc."

Goals focus on strengthening the relationship between Avenue Scholars Foundation students, staff and employers.

"One goal is to get feedback on how the students are doing and coach them on any skill development that is needed," Marx said. "Another goal is to create relationships with the employer to contact us in the future about any successes or needs of the student. These reviews can also open up new employer connections for other students."

Hardin likes to focus on learning new ways to "coach up" her students.

"My goal is to learn another side of the students I serve; to learn how they work and function independently outside of the ASF program," she said. "As a Career Coach, for those students who perform well on their jobs, I can continue to uplift and support them to remain in good standing. For those students who are performing sub-par, I can 'coach' them up and redirect their behaviors and provide them with coping skills and work resolution skills to overcome barriers."

Ismael Castillo, a 2016 Ralston High School graduate, is one of those highly motivated employees for whom Hardin continues to "uplift" with high praise. Castillo is presently working part-time for Completely Kids while

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South Scholars earn \$300 grant

Omaha South High School Coach Allison Goff notes, "Juniors are excited to announce that they have been awarded a student-written grant to renovate and renew the flowerbed in front of South High School." The grant is for \$300; the monies will be used to purchase flowers and mulch for the flower bed this spring. The Avenue Scholars students will start this project when the weather permits.

Scholars attend leadership event

About 75 Scholars attended the fourth annual Youth Frontier Leadership Conference at the NorthStar Foundation in January.

High school juniors from across the Metro were invited to the day-long retreat designed to teach teens how to become leaders within their community. Participants were brought in by programs such as College Possible and Avenue Scholars Foundation.



Millard South Scholars give back

High School Career Coach Courtland Olson spoke to students at Millard Central Middle School in January about their plans for the future and the opportunities available in the Avenue Scholars Foundation program.

At the “University Day” event, seventh graders heard from different colleges and organizations about the prospects for their futures.

“My job was to present about Avenue Scholars and to let them know there’s an awesome program waiting for them at Millard South,” Olson said.

Former Millard Central students Viviana Molina and Jaslyn Melgar, currently seniors at Millard South High School, also attended to offer their insights into the Avenue Scholars Foundation program. Both have goals to work in the medical field in the future.



Millard South seniors Viviana Molina and Jaslyn Melgar speak to Millard Central Middle School students about the benefits of the Avenue Scholars Foundation program. Both Scholars plan to attend MCC next fall.

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



Scholar Maddie Gigoroa working with the Kids Network organization at Reeder Elementary School.

Job Reviews continued from Page 2

attending Metropolitan Community College. After completing his general studies at MCC, he plans to attend the University of Nebraska-Omaha en route to becoming a physical education teacher.

"Ismael is always positive, pleasant, and peaceful," Hardin says. "I know for sure he is always doing exactly what is expected of him."

Maddie Gigoroa, a 2017 Millard West graduate, is attending MCC and majoring in Human Services. Presently, she is working part-time for Kids Network.

"My experience with Kids Network has gotten me experience with kids, handling situations that I may not expect, and how to deal with them," Gigoroa said.

Hardin has appreciated getting to know employers more intimately.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed being out in the community meeting and speaking with employers who hired our students," she said. "Overall, there has been confirmation that what the Career Coaches and the ASF program provide on a day-to-day basis supporting students is paying off."

SWEETHEARTS

2018 Heart and Stroke Association Ball



ABOVE: Millard South senior Jaslyn Melgar with her escort, was honored as a 2018 American Heart Association Sweetheart at their annual event, held Feb. 3 at Embassy Suites-LaVista. The Omaha event raised \$800,000. In 2017, the Heart Ball campaign raised over \$71 million nationwide to fund life-saving research and prevention campaigns in the Omaha community and across the country.



Ralston senior Leslie Rivera, with her escort, was also honored as a Sweetheart at the Heart & Stroke Ball.