



AVENUE SCHOLARS.
Your Foundation for Success



Newsletter Issue 4 Vol. 9 June 2021



Career Coach Amanda Lonergan (right) poses with MCC graduate Alberto Nolasco-Garcia.

Student Support Coordinator Janae Donaldson (left) and MCC Navigator Amanda Ponce (right) pose with MCC graduate Jessica Day.



Celebrations cap challenging school year



Brianna Jackson notes her MCC graduation status.



Career Coach Anthony Tate strikes a pose with MCC graduate Ian Porter.



MCC Navigator Racquel Henderson captures a happy image of a MCC graduate.

Avenue Scholars celebrated and recognized the achievements of post-secondary graduates at a May reception, held at the Old Mattress Factory.

According to Postsecondary Director Terry Fischer, AS had 53 Metropolitan Community College graduates this year.

"We had 45 scholars earn their Associates Degree (across all five industries)," Fischer said.

In addition, "We had eight scholars earn their Career Certificate of Achievement (in trades, auto and healthcare)," she said.

MCC hosts signing day for trades industry recruits

Typically, people expect to hear about football or basketball recruits when colleges announce a signing day event.

This spring many young men and women were recognized for being recruited as trades workers, including the signing day held at Metropolitan Community College's Fort Omaha campus May 26.

Donovan Cooper Phillips, a 2020 Millard North graduate enrolled in the Diesel Technology program at MCC, signed up with NMC CAT (Nebraska Caterpillar Dealer) and began working for NMC in June.

Phillips is studying to be a diesel mechanic.

"I have always been interested in anything to do with motors, and I always liked trucks," Phillips said.

Phillips is being paid \$15 per hour for his on-the-job training with NMC Caterpillar, with a guarantee



Donovan Phillips



Michael Adcock



Donovan Cooper Phillips signs his commitment to work for NMC CAT, a Nebraska Caterpillar Dealer during a signing day at Metropolitan Community College's Fort Omaha campus.

to be hired by NMC at the end of the internship provided Phillips completes all necessary requirements.

Michael Johnson, an Avenue Scholars Postsecondary Coach, was impressed with the signing day event and also enjoyed seeing

Michael Adcock, an Avenue Scholars student who just graduated this May from Millard North, sign to work with Sid Dillon Auto.

Adcock is pursuing an Associate's Degree in Automotive Technology at MCC.

Omaha South Scholars sign up for construction jobs

For two Omaha South Scholars, going to work at high-paying construction jobs just a few days after graduating this May, made for a perfect start to summer.

Luis Garcio-Orozco has been constructing handrails and installing new windows at the Henry Doorly Zoo the past few weeks while working for JeDunn Construction.

"I've always worked in hard labor jobs," Garcio-Orozco said. "I like working with my hands. I like to start working from nothing and making something."

Zach Farrow is working with E&K of Omaha on a construction crew doing drywall and finishing at the new Amazon Center.

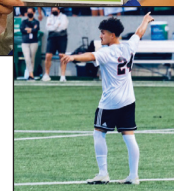
"I've always like building things myself," Farrow said. "After going through an orientation and seeing the money and pay potential in these job apprenticeships, I knew it was something I wanted to do."

Garcio-Orozco and Farrow signed up for their apprenticeships through the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters (a carpenters union), under the advisement of Omaha South Guidance Counselor Steven Carlson.

"Mr. Carlson needs to be given credit for making this



High School Career Coach Alejandra Soto-Suarez, helps Zach Farrow (left) and Luis Garcio-Orozco display their Career Signing Day Apprenticeship Contracts. Garcio-Orozco (right photo), was also a member of Omaha South's state championship soccer team.



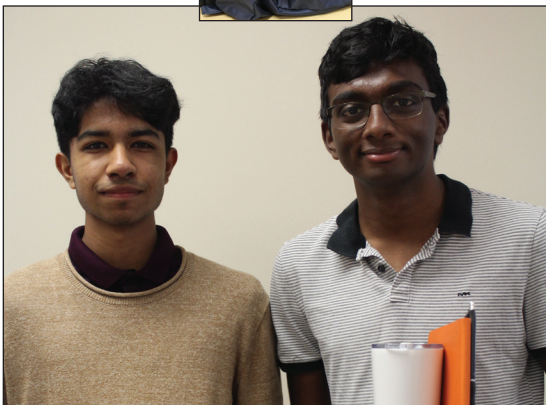
connection with the carpenters union," said Alejandra Soto-Suarez, High School Career Coach. "There is a great opportunity for upward mobility in these trades."

After four years working at their respective companies and completing all the certification requirements, these Scholars will attain Journeyman's licenses. In eight years they could reach the Master's level in their professions.



Karson Swartzbaugh of Omaha North (left) discusses his future with a guest. Swartzbaugh worked as an engineering intern with Kiewit's Building Group. He was accepted to the Raikes School of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Swartzbaugh is currently interning at the West Corporation and plans to continue his work into the fall while pursuing a degree in Computer Engineering.

Jacob Anzalone of Ralston High School and Allie Thompson, AS Internship Coordinator, enjoy a moment during a reception for 2020-2021 interns. Anzalone interned with RDO Trucking and is planning to pursue a degree in Prototype Design in the Fall at Metro Community College.



Varun Sivakumar (left) and Ashvin Tadiparthi graduated from Millard North. Sivakumar interned this year with Werner as a Shop Intern. He will attend the University of Illinois-Champaign in the Fall. Tadiparthi interned with Kiewit as a Purchasing Intern. He plans to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this Fall.

Intern Omaha students benefit from experience

Allie Thompson, Intern Omaha Coordinator, provided a summary of 2020-2021 and an outlook for 2021-2022.

Intern Omaha's 2020-21 cohort ended with 51 students with over half of students planning on continuing with their employer in some capacity.

Roughly 74% of students in the 2020-21 cohort plan to attend a Nebraska university/college or move straight into the Nebraska workforce.

100% of employers indicated the program was "good" or "extremely good" and felt over 85% of the candidates that applied to the program were well prepared for the internship.

Intern Omaha's 2021-22 cohort is starting with 104 interns and 57 employer partners. The 2021-22 program year began Monday, June 7.

AVENUE SCHOLARS

Staff

KEN BIRD

President/CEO

MIKE ALVANO

Chief Operation Officer/
Chief Financial Officer

KRIS VALENTIN

Senior Director of HR
and Administrative Services

JAMAR DORSEY, SR.

Director of Community
Engagement & High School
Partnerships

CATIE DAGLE

Director of Information
& Quality Assurance

BEVERLY HASS

Executive Assistant to CEO
& Events Coordinator

PENNY DARNELL

Accounting Manager

LAURIE MERTEN

Office & Staff Assistant

DOUG PIERSON

Special Projects Coordinator

Student Support:

KELLY BERNADT, Director
of Student Support; Janae
Donaldson, Stephanie Kellum,
Coordinators

Postsecondary Coaches:

TERRY FISCHER, Director
of Career Programs; Tonya
Fairgood, Amanda Lonergan,
Anthony Tate, Dan Corral,
Cane Rodriguez, Marcus
Manley

High School Coaches:

JASON BOYD, Director of High
School Programs; Michael John-
son, High School Programming
Coordinator; Taleya Broadway,
Terrence Gillian, Allison Goff,
Ashley Knott, Beth Leach,
Fred Starks, Kamina Lemons,
Alejandra Soto-Suarez,
Marquita Lambert

Business Outreach Team:

ANA LOPEZ SHALLA,
Director of Business Outreach;
Lindsay Decker, Kathy
McGauvran, Business
Outreach Coordinators; Jan
Benitez, Allie Thompson,
Intern Coordinators

ROD HOWE

Communications Consultant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SUSIE BUFFETT

Chair

JOHN SCOTT

JEFF SCHMID

CALVIN SISSON

KATIE WEITZ

Directors

WALTER SCOTT, JR.

Chair Emeritus

Avenue Scholars
7101 Mercy Road, Suite 240
Omaha, NE 68106

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

Community Engagement

Avenue Scholars staff, students, and partners take positive mindset into Summer of Hope



JAMAR DORSEY, Ed.D.

Hello all and welcome to the fourth and final installment of the Community Engagement Corner for the 2020-21 calendar year. My name is Jamar Dorsey and as the Director of Community Engagement and High School Partnerships, I would like to report that our Avenue Scholars program educators are excited to engage students, staff, and the community this summer.

Avenue Scholars core values are integrity, innovation, collaboration, respect, and hope. This column will speak to the value of Hope. The definition of hope is “a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.” This summer our hope is that we can all be better people by being actively involved in our community. Avenue Scholars students and staff will engage in neighborhood cleanups, youth forums, leadership development, boot camps, and ethics building. These experiences will continue to build a foundation for everyone involved.

In May Avenue Scholars staff engaged in the “walking challenge.” The challenge encourages teams to change the environment they meet in and continues to celebrate the wellness strategies learned over the fall and winter months. The Prancercisers team members Laurie Merten, Catie Dagle, Alejandra Soto-Suarez, and Jason Boyd are the first place winners of a spa pass for this year’s competition.

The Avenue Scholars “Power Hour” segment in April featured a student panel. The panel had representation from our high school program, post secondary program, and current alums of the Avenue Scholars program. Panelists shared their experiences at school, home, and work over the last year. The students shared how Covid-19 has impacted their lives and the lessons they learned in the last year. The community would be proud to know that the young people we all serve are resilient and are not afraid to be great even in the current environment.

Avenue Scholars and the Do Right Right Now campaign have partnered to bring awareness to Covid vaccinations in the Omaha community. We encourage everyone to continue to practice social distancing and educate yourself on the benefits of getting the vaccination.

Lastly, I have enjoyed writing these columns for the Omaha community and appreciate the support of all of our stakeholders. The May 26 Power Hour gave CEO Ken Bird and me an opportunity to talk about my life experiences in America. In my time as an adult I have been faced with many roadblocks and obstacles. As a black man in the non-profit community, my job has presented me many opportunities to learn and grow. While our community is not where we want it to be, it is a place where we can all thrive. Every day I carry the responsibility of being the only one who looks like me in certain situations and places. I realize it is important for me to represent Omaha in the best possible way. While some might see this as a barrier, I see it as an opportunity to build bridges. Bridges create access; access creates opportunities. If you want to be a change agent, start building bridges in your current station in life. Continue to educate yourself and each other.

Until next time — don’t conform to the environment; make the environment conform to you.



Michael Johnson (left) is transitioning to the High School team. Marcus Manley (right) is replacing Johnson on the Postsecondary Career team. Johnson and Manley attended the MCC Signing Day for Donovan Phillips (center) at the Fort Omaha campus.

Manley joins AS staff

Marcus Manley joined the Avenue Scholars staff as a Postsecondary Career Coach in the Automotive Technology/Transportation sector, beginning May 24

Manley was previously employed as the Admissions Representative at the University of Nebraska Omaha. He also served as the Assistant Director of Play Production at Elmwood-Murdock High School.

He holds a bachelor’s degree in Spanish and International Studies from Doane University, and studied abroad in Argentina and Costa Rica as part of his coursework.

“We’re very excited to have Marcus join our team,” said Kris Valentin, Senior Director HR and Administrative Services.

Manley welcomes the opportunity to join the Avenue Scholars team.

“I am excited to be joining a high energy and student driven team, like Avenue Scholars,” he said. “The mission of committing to students through education and supportive relationships is clear, and after meeting with Terry Fischer and the rest of the Career Team, I am honored to have the opportunity to have an impact on students’ careers and education.”

