



Career Awareness Program benefits students

High school juniors in the Avenue Scholars program have benefitted from a busy fall of exploring careers. This year, Avenue Scholars, through its Career Awareness program, has partnered with 19 different businesses/organizations to offer a total of 26 events.

Businesses/organizations new to Career Awareness were Munroe-Meyer's Autism Care for Toddlers Clinic, AIM Institute, Werner Technology, Steamfitters Union, Sheppard's Business Interiors (SBI), Elman Print, Scott Data Center, Cornhusker International, No More Empty Pots, Hilton Garden, Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo, ACCESS-Bank, and McGill Gotsdiner Workman & Lepp.

Returning partners: Woodhouse Auto, Baxter Auto, CarStar, Fulton Homes, Quality Career Pathways, and QLI.

"Businesses truly understand the value of Career Awareness experiences. Thankfully, our business partners have been willing to partner with us to offer in-person experiences this year," said Lindsay Decker, Career Exploration Coordinator.

Although the continuing Coronavirus Pandemic has limited the number of students who can attend each event, Avenue Scholars has been creative in providing ample opportunities for every student who wishes to participate.

"In an effort to honor business health guidelines and to keep our students as safe as possible, we've collaborated with businesses to offer multiple sessions of their event so that we can serve as many students as possible who might have an interest in their particular industry,"

Decker said.

The overall goal of the Career Awareness program is to enable students to be better informed of their potential career pathways and what steps they will need to take in pursuing those careers. The program has made a difference in students' success in finding careers that fit their interests.

"Our business partners are truly skilled in understanding how to expose students to their industry — it's really an exciting thing to witness; business and education merging together," Decker said. "For example, I loved watching our culinary students cook a meal and learn various culinary techniques with No More Empty Pots. It's funny because I typically spend months planning these events, so it's always special to watch a students' faces light up when they're having fun and connecting with a business partner—that's how you know a seed was planted in a student's mind."

Decker sees every event as a successful experience for students.

"Career Awareness gives students a chance to experience an industry through their senses. A student can take in what they've learned and see if they can imagine themselves in a similar role," she says. "I always joke that whatever the outcome with a Career Awareness event, it's always a win to me. If a student didn't like the event, that's a win. If they *did* like the event, that's a win, too! Regardless of the outcome, they're getting close to discovering what's important to them when it comes to imagining themselves at work."

Senior aspires to IT career

Kevin Diguez, an Outstanding Senior Scholar at Omaha Bryan High School, is interested in Information Technology opportunities.

Kevin, currently employed at Walmart, has a strong work ethic.

"Kevin is working hard to complete Explore 1000 and is typically the first student to submit his assignment well before the due date," Coach Kamina Lemons said. "One cool fact about Kevin is his father trains Terrence Crawford."



Kevin's long-term goal is to attend a four-year university for Information Technology. Kevin is ready to participate in Senior Academy at Metro Community College in the Spring.

Junior balances work, school, life

Daphney Valadez, an Outstanding Junior Scholar at Omaha Bryan High School, is a talented student who does not rest on her laurels.

She has participated in the MLK competition where she did a speech on immigration and took third place during her freshman year. She recently passed her HIPAA online exam for confidentiality in Healthcare.

In addition, Daphney is employed at Sam's Leon which is a family owned Mexican restaurant as a waitress/hostess. Daphney aspires to be a Nurse in the NICU and is currently taking CNA classes at the TAC building in the Career Center and will complete her CNA in May.



Career Coach Kamina Lemons admires Daphne's drive.

"In addition to working, Daphney is a clear demonstration of work, school and life balance as she tackles AP/Honors classes, working and completing her CNA," Coach Lemons said. "Daphney likes to work and go shopping. Her little nephews and niece inspire her to be great."

Daphney recognizes that Avenue Scholars helps her with school and other needs.

"They're there to help and mentor me," she said.

Daphney also just recently passed her driving test at the DMV after participating in the DMV day experience.

UPDATE

Bryan Bears are working hard this fall to meet Avenue Scholars program guarantees (education and training, work experience, work ready skills, attendance, financial and personal well-being), while completing the Junior Curriculum and Explore 1000 at Metro Community College.



Avenue Scholars is providing individualized support to each student including the completion of Fall Career Plans and SMART goals reviews. Overall, we are excited at Bryan for what has already been accomplished this school year. Students have started after school Avenue Scholars tutoring sessions with me and other Bryan High School staff. Stephanie Kellum has been coming to both our junior and senior classes weekly, providing students with the necessary personal support they need and they get excited to see her in the building. Multiple Scholars have obtained their driving permits and licenses with the help of Ms. Kellum.

Seniors are fired up and working to complete Metro Community College's Explore 1000 course online. Thus far they have created Goals PowerPoints, and engaged in "one on one" Career Plan meetings to identify their educational and career goals, as well as reflected on their transcripts and established individual study plans.

The junior class is working to meet program guarantees, completing assignments that will make them aware of their employability skills, such as Gallup Strengths. They are becoming more self aware as they work on Avenue Scholars curriculum in Canvas. Juniors have set career and SMART goals, created resumes and have begun Career Exploration activities. They have each met with me for one on one Career Planning meetings and are preparing for Intern Omaha.

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