

NORTH CAMPUS TEAM:

Right: Career Talent Advisors Monica Wells and Jermaine Jones pose with Campus Navigator Sheila Schoessler. Below: Wells and Jones review Avenue Scholars enrolled at the MCC North Campus.



Career Talent Advisors, Navigators join forces

For many teenagers born and raised in challenging environments, a little help goes a long way in achieving their career goals.

This April, the Avenue Scholars program began a collaborative effort with AKSARBEN and Metropolitan Community College to provide scholarships for ASF students. Avenue Scholars will offer programming and support for all of its students, while Aksarben/Horatio Alger and MCC will collaborate to provide scholarships up to \$4,000 a year for up to two years.

Each scholarship recipient is enrolled in the Avenue Scholars program, which provides Career Talent Advisors for the Scholars. Advisors provide connections to the Omaha business community, career training and career mentoring. In addition, MCC will assign each Scholar to a Campus Navigator, who will help Scholars adjust to the college system.

Lisa Richards, Metro's Assistant Di-

rector of Enrollment services, has been given the responsibility to supervise the Navigators. MCC Navigators are Tyler Cannon, Hector Martinez and Sheila Schoessler.

"Navigators will be the MCC contacts helping students navigate through the system," Richards said. "This includes helping them understand the financial aid process, monitoring their progress in class and connecting them with resources. The Navigator is their point of contact to whom they can go to for all their needs."

According to Richards, the Navigators program will help "free Talent Advisors to work more on 'life support.'"

Career Talent Advisors are Taleya Broadway-Mack, Bradley Ekwerekwu, Terrence Gillian, Jermaine Jones, Marissa Marx, Albert Varas and Monica Wells.

"I think that the joint venture with the MCC College Success Navigators will continue to prove noteworthy and

valuable during the school year," said Ekwerekwu, team leader of the Career Talent Advisors. "We (the Advisors) have had open, collaborative, and efficient dialogue with the College Success Navigators. We continue to exchange pertinent information concerning students and the various barriers to success that they may face."

Navigators and Advisors have been organized into three teams to cover the three campuses: North (Fort Omaha)-Schoessler, Jones and Wells; South-Martinez, Gillian, Marx and Varas; West (Elkhorn)-Cannon, Broadway Mack and Ekwerekwu.

"The Navigator has a unique role in leading the discussion in the academic tone, and the Talent Advisor follows that with the 'life' discussions. And vice versa. It is truly a village effort when it comes to student support for our students, and the amount of wrap-around support is really a 'step up'

(Advisors, Navigators continued on Page 3)

New staff

Talent advisors meet growing demand

Name: Taleya Broadway-Mack

Position: Career Talent Advisor

Duties: To ensure careers for students of hope and need through education and supportive relationships.

Education: Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Bellevue University, MAT-Master of Art in Teaching from College of Saint Mary

Job experience: I have worked in human services for over 20 years, from teaching to case management to program development. In my most recent position, I was the Program Coordinator with Lutheran Family Services North Omaha Center for Healthy Families. The mission of the Center was to educate teenage and young parents on how to be protective parents in an effort to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Comment: "I look forward to developing a strong, trusting relationship with young people to assist them in creating a solid career plan. I look forward to seeing success in the eyes of young people who thought they couldn't/wouldn't make it. I mostly look forward to helping students focus on and build on their strengths, which will create a positive learning environment as well as self-confidence."



Name: Kayla Gillian

Position: High School Talent Advisor at Omaha North

Duties: Provide intrusive support for students to be successful as students, employees, and citizens through relationships and lessons in the classroom. I help to support students, academically, emotionally, and socially to reach their goals. I am able to collaborate with other Talent Advisors, teachers, and the community to enhance the skills and abilities of our students.

Education: Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education in Natural Science with a Coaching Endorsement; Master of Sciences in Counseling with concentrations in Student Affairs and K-12 School Counseling from UNO in Spring 2017.

Job experience: Omaha Burke High Science Teacher from 2009-2014, Substitute Teacher for Millard Public Schools 2014-2015; UNO Educational Assistant in the Athletic Department in 2015.

Comment: "I look forward to developing relationships with the students and being able to impact them with knowledge gained in teaching and in my counseling program, so they can be successful in their high school, college, and career experiences."



Name: Terrence Gillian

Position: Career Talent Advisor

Duties: To ensure careers for students of hope and need through education and supportive relationships.

Education: Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration & Minor in Communication from Concordia University, Seward, NE

Job experience: Recruiter-Aerotek Staffing & Recruiting; Assistant Store Manager/Operations Manager at WalMart

Comment: "I look forward to the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of our students."



Name: Ashley Knott

Position: High School Talent Advisor at Papillion LaVista High School and Papillion LaVista South High School

Duties: Recruit and build a high school program in both of the above-mentioned buildings. Become an integrated member of each of these building settings while also remaining an active member of the ASF staff. Help students identify their own strengths and explore career fields that align with those strengths. Provide intrusive academic, social, and emotional support to students

Education: Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education w/English endorsement (7-12) from UNL; Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction from Doane College

Job experience: English teacher at Westside High School

Comment: "As a traditional classroom teacher, I found that although I was typically able to help my students find success within my own classroom, I often struggled with helping them transfer their positive academic behaviors to other settings to make wide-spanning, lasting change. This was discouraging to me. So, when I came across ASF and found out about the longevity and breadth of services this organization offers to students to support their academic, social, and emotional success, I was sold. I couldn't be happier to be a part of this awesome group of professionals."



Name: Marissa Marx

Position: Career Talent Advisor

Duties: To ensure careers for students of hope and need through education and supportive relationships.

Education: Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from University of South Dakota. Master of Science in Criminal Justice from University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Job experience: Training and Specialist Projects Manager at Nebraska Families Collaborative.

Comment: "I am passionate about working with teenagers and providing supportive services to help them be successful."



Name: Monica R. Wells

Position: Career Talent Advisor

Duties: To ensure careers for students of hope and need through education and supportive relationships.

Education: Bachelor of Science, Midland University, Fremont, NE

Job experience: School Administrative Manager (SAM) Council Bluffs Community School District

Comment: "Anytime you have the opportunity to assist the youth in your community in reaching their full potential for a living is definitely a career that I want to be part of. I am super excited about my position with the Avenue Scholars Foundation. I am glad to be part of such an AMAZING team."



Advisors, Navigators focus on students

(Advisors, Navigators continued from Page 1)
from anything we've had in the past."

In many cases, an Avenue Scholar will be the first person in his or her family to attend college. Such is the case for Alexis McCoy, a 2015 Omaha Northwest graduate, and Marvin Diaz, a 2015 Bellevue West graduate.

"The ASF program and AK Career Scholarship have given me the opportunity to pursue my ultimate goal, which is to become a registered nurse," said McCoy, who completed the CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) program in April. "It makes me so happy, so proud. I was worried about paying for college."

Diaz is also looking forward to attending college on a scholarship.

"It means a lot to me," he said. "It means I don't have to put all the [financial] burden on my parents."

The path has not been easy for Diaz, who plans to eventually obtain a bachelor's degree,

focusing on automotive technology.

"I have dealt with a lot of issues," he says, "but it has only made me a better, stronger person."

Ekwerekwu believes the collaborative effort of Career Talent Advisors and College Success Navigators will continue to boost the students' level of confidence as they seek college degrees and meaningful employment.

"We continue to see positive strides in communication from student to College Success Navigator to Career Talent Advisor," he said. "That is truly the name of the game — speedy and comprehensive information sharing, in real time, to be able to accurately and fully support the students we serve."

The scholarship review committee, composed of personnel from Aksarben, Avenue Scholars, and Metropolitan Community College plans to

increase the number of scholarships in the next two years, perhaps doubling the total.



DIAZ



McCOY

NOTES & NEWS

ASF BABY BOOM

PARENTS: Jennifer & Chris Bisignano
Vincent Timothy Bisignano
Born May 18, 2015
8 pounds, 6.6 ounces, 20 inches
Also have 2-year-old daughter, Olivia

PARENTS: Brad & Lindsey Ekwerekwu
Vincent O'Neal Ekwerekwu
Born June 19, 2015
7 pounds, 5 ounces, 20 inches

PARENTS: Terrence & Kayla Gillian
Saniya Noni Gillian
Born April 4, 2015
8 pounds, 3 ounces, 20 inches
Also have a 2-year-old son, Andre Jamaul Gillian

PARENTS: Albert & Valerie Varas
Isabella Sophia Varas
Born April 28, 2015
9 pounds, 8 ounces, 21 inches.

GRANDPARENTS: Doug & Suzi Pierson
Parents: Emily (Pierson) and Sachit Patel
Vaylen Patel
Born June 9, 2015
Grandchild No. 4 (2 for the Patels+2 for Nick & Laura Pierson)

SCHOLARS ENJOY MOVIE NIGHTS

This summer Courtland Olson, Talent Advisor at Omaha Benson High School, coordinated free movie nights for Avenue Scholars students.

"All ASF students (and recent Aksarben Scholarship winners) were able to come down to Aksarben Cinema and see a movie for free," Olson said. "Students were provided three to four options to choose from and were also provided with a free drink and popcorn."

For first movie night, 109 students attended. *Jurassic World* and *Inside Out* were the two most popular movies that night since both were released a few days before.

"Our second movie night saw 106 students come through, with *Minions* and *Ant-Man* as the most popular choices," Olson said. "The movie nights allow for us as Talent Advisors to see some faces and for the kids to get out and have a fun night at the movies."

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Team Leader; Taleya Broadway-Mack, Terrence Gillian, Jermaine Jones, Marissa Marx, Albert Varas, Monica Wells

High School Talent Advisors:

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Juan Cangas, Emily Christensen, Evan Feezell, Kayla Gillian, Ashley Knott, Courtland Olson, Amy Rector, Marcus Wagstaff

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



Wheels keep on turning for Avenue Scholar

“Lord, won’t you buy me a Mercedes Benz?”

Kelli Kalskett may not be familiar with that classic line from the classic Janis Joplin song, but she is familiar with the allure of driving a Mercedes Benz.

Kalskett, a sophomore Metropolitan Community College student, has been working in the Service department at Mercedes-Benz of Omaha for the past two months, averaging about 46 hours per week.

“My job is to drive Mercedes [cars] around, greet customers, park cars, deliver cars ... whatever they have me do; I drive a lot,” Kalskett says. “I love it. I love to drive. It’s a blast.”

After the abrupt loss of a previous job at Aetna, Kalskett’s connections with Avenue Scholars Foundation helped her land the job at Mercedes Benz.

“I was under a temporary contract at Aetna; they wouldn’t work around my school schedule like they said they would, so after six months they let me go,” she said. “I found this job posted online. I did not know it at the time, but it turns out Avenue Scholars

partners with them.”

With the AFS background on her resume, Kalskett was hired within a couple of hours of submitting her application.



Kelli Kalskett, a sophomore at Metropolitan Community College, poses with Service Manager Larry Ortegren during a break from work at Mercedes-Benz of Omaha.

Kalskett is a 2014 graduate of Millard South. She plans to major in Child Psychology at UNO after completing the Liberal Arts Transfer Degree program at Metro.

Kalskett, who is adopted, credits her father, Robert, and Avenue Scholars Foundation, with providing the support she needs to navigate her highway to success.

“My mom (adoptive mom) left me when I was 6,” she says. “I don’t know my real dad. Robert has been all I’ve ever known. He’s also been my best friend.”

Avenue Scholars Foundation — especially her “go-to” Advisors Brad Ewkwerekwu and Terry Fischer — has provided the extra guidance she needs to stay focused and confident.

“They have all helped out a lot,” Kalskett says of her association with the Avenue Scholars staff.