



**AVENUE SCHOLARS**  
Your Foundation for Success



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(Right) During a Career Exploration Day, students tour the facilities at QLI, a rehabilitation center in North Omaha



**BRIAN IBARRA-AMEZQUITA**  
Legacy Homes Intern



## Business Outreach connects Scholars to internships

Business Outreach is a function of the Avenue Scholars Foundation Career Team dedicated to connecting students with area businesses through internships, leading to a high potential for jobs in high-demand markets.

Brittani Tanhucoco, Career Team member, is especially encouraged by a partnership formed with QLI (Quality Living, Inc.), a local institution whose mission is to deliver life-changing rehabilitation and care for individuals with brain injury, spinal cord injury, or other severe neurological disability.

QLI is hosting a CNA training program with Avenue Scholars Foundation, offering enrollment for up to 15 students. Thirteen Scholars are participating this spring.

“Instead of going to Senior Academy, these students will be going to QLI, getting classroom instruction and on-the-job training,” Tanhucoco said.

Students will attend these classes Monday through Friday for one semester. Upon completion of all classwork and training, students receive CNA certification.

“It’s all really exciting,” Tanhucoco said. “With this program, we don’t have to use scholarship money for CNA training. It’s something to be celebrated. QLI approached us to do this. It’s an example of what can happen when you have an engaged CEO, like QLI’s Pat Kearns.”

Tanhucoco said QLI is hoping students will come to love the experience and stay in the program.

Other internships added this school year include Mo-saic, Legacy Homes, and ENCOR.

Tanhucoco says the Career Team continues to build

on Blue Cross Blue Shield internships that have been in place for several years, and the team is continuing to work on additional internships as well.

Nineteen-year-old Brian Ibarra-Amezquita, an Omaha Bryan graduate, is enjoying his experience as an intern at Legacy Homes, a homebuilder company.

Ibarra-Amezquita, enrolled in Metropolitan Community College’s Construction Building Science department, plans to obtain his Construction Management Associate’s Degree in winter 2020.

As a construction management intern at Legacy Homes, Ibarra-Amezquita is learning what “it [the home construction industry] is all about.”

“I am able to use everything I learn at school and put it to work,” Ibarra-Amezquita said. “At school they teach you the process. At work, you experience the bumps you might not foresee that could delay the process.”

Ibarra-Amezquita is working 30 to 34 hours per week while attending school full time. His work duties include making phone calls; making a schedule, or list, of what has been done and what needs to be done on the job site; and assisting in final clean-up, or touch-up activity before signing off with the homeowners.

“I get to see the house construction process from start to finish,” he said.

Ibarra-Amezquita is excited about his future in home building.

“I would love to stay with Legacy and maybe in the future start my own remodeling company,” he said.



Omaha Bryan's Margarita Diaz answers a question during a mock interview with Jolene Schack of Security National Bank. Mock interviews were held Dec. 4-7.



Omaha Bryan's Berenice Cortes-Lopez responds to a question during a mock interview experience at Security National Bank.



Papillion LaVista Scholars and ASF staff pose staff at Security National Bank after a Mock Interview session.

## Scholars gain interviewing experience

Over a four-day period, Dec. 4-7, Avenue Scholars engaged in Mock Interviews with professionals at the City of Omaha offices, Security National Bank, and the OPS Teacher Administrative Center.

“The goal of ASF Mock interviews is to provide our students with an real life experience, with real interviewers, at real sites,” says Jamar Dorsey, Director of High School Programs. “ASF is committed to providing students access to opportunities they would not normally have access to, and mock interviews is just one small piece of the developing a work-ready young person.”

## Logan finds niche in welding field

Devyn Logan, a 21-year-old Native American of the Mohawk Nation, does not fit the profile of a typical welder in the work force.

A 2016 Omaha South graduate, Logan is working full time at Lozier Manufacturing, earning \$19.09 per hour as a robot welder. While still learning on the job, Logan's primary responsibilities include "making repairs on the parts and checking every part." She has learned to "program and calibrate" as part of the job requirements.

Logan earned an Associate's Degree in Welding from Metropolitan Community College in May 2018. She was able to graduate from MCC debt-free, thanks to obtaining a full-ride Aksarben scholarship during her senior year at Omaha South.

Logan said she "had no idea" what she wanted to do after high school before taking a metal-smithing class at Omaha South. A guest speaker told the students about a



career in welding — "how we could get a degree (or training) without as much debt, could travel, and make things with our hands."

The scholarship, combined with the guidance of an MCC Navigator, "helped take a lot of stress out of going to college. I could focus on my studies and not have to worry about paying off debt."

One of Logan's goals, inspired by having a good-paying job, is to save enough money for a trip to Japan.

"I like Anime and their culture," Logan said. "Also, one of my mom's friends worked there for a few years."

Logan sees her welding job as a stepping-stone to another career.

"I don't think I will be able to weld forever. It's hard on the body," she said. "I am thinking of pursuing a business degree. With a business degree, I could be a supervisor."

## Ramirez enjoys stable career as diesel mechanic

From "basically sleeping in class" and being satisfied "with just passing the classes" in high school, Leandro Ramirez — through the mentorship, guidance, and support of Avenue Scholars Foundation — finds himself in a rewarding diesel mechanic career with Amirt Fleet Solutions, earning \$25 per hour.

Ramirez admits it took the guidance of his High School Career Coach at Omaha Bryan to wake him up to the realities of a future career.

The big step in finding that pathway to a real-world career was obtaining his Diesel Technician Associate's Degree from Metropolitan Community College in 2016.

Ramirez's interest in automobile mechanics started when he took an Engine Motor Sports class at Bryan during his senior year.

"We rebuilt small engines and worked on a go-kart project," Ramirez said.

Also during his senior year, Ramirez obtained a part-time job at OFC Schmidt/Barto, a liquid trucking company based in Platts-mouth, mostly washing tanks after school



and on weekends.

By the time he started classes at MCC, Ramirez started working as a mechanic at OFC, working 35 hours a week while attending school full-time. About a month into the school year, he left OFC to work as a mechanic for the James Skinner Factory.

Upon graduation from MCC, Ramirez secured a job with Amirt Fleet Solutions, a trucking company with major clients including Pepsi and Century Link. Ramirez's responsibilities include "maintenance, anything that breaks down. I am the only diesel guy in the morning."

Ramirez has seen his wages rise from \$12 per hour at OFC, to \$16 per hour at Skinner, to his present \$25 per hour income at Amirt. With a stable career in hand, Ramirez is in the process of buying a house.

"I appreciate a lot what Avenue Scholars has done for me," he said. "Without them, I would not be where I'm at now. My coach helped immensely. If I had questions, I could always get answers."

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

(BELOW) Millard South Scholar Madison Suski works with some heavy machinery during Career Exploration Day. Businesses represented included Drake Williams Steel, Wells Fargo, OJEATC (electrical union), Turner Construction, and CARSTAR.



(LEFT) Papillion-LaVista Scholar Geronimo Sanchez carefully removes a block from the stack during a team-building exercise at Career Exploration Day 2018. Businesses included CHI Health Center, Methodist Healthcare, and American National Bank.

## MCC hosts Career Exploration Day for Scholars



(LEFT) Scholars Estrellita Garibo, Samar Lopez-Garcia, Brianna Colvin and Kaelynne Elliott enjoy the experience of trying to provide proper ventilation to a baby. Besides exploring careers in the healthcare field, students explored careers in auto/transportation and information technology — thanks to representatives from Baxter Auto, Werner Enterprises, Five Nines, Mutual of Omaha, and Blue Cross Blue Shield.

(RIGHT) Scholar Caleb Osborn helps demonstrate the proper setup of a harness to be used during an EMT situation.

