



Avenue Scholars participate in hands-on activities during a Career Exploration event at the Fort Omaha Campus during the 2017-2018 school year.

## ASF initiates ‘industry alignment’ program

Avenue Scholars Foundation, in its 10<sup>th</sup> year of serving “students of hope and need through education/training and supportive relationships,” continues to make adjustments and improvements in how it delivers these services.

This school year, the Foundation is implementing an “industry alignment” concept at the post-secondary level. Terry Fischer, Director of Career Programs, says post-secondary coaches are specializing in one of five high-demand industries: health care, business, information technology (IT), automotive, and trades/labor.

Coaches’ assignments: Carnetta Hardin, Auto Technology; Terrence Gillian, Business; Catie Dagle and Tonya Fairgood, Healthcare; Marissa Marx, Trades/Construction; Mike Hughes, Human Services & Criminal Justice; Monica Wells, IT.

“Coaches will engage with industry leaders and visit job sites to become well-informed in their assigned industry and to understand what Omaha has to offer within

their high demand industry,” Fischer said. “The coaches’ caseload will consist of students pursuing careers in that one particular industry.”

The plan focuses on improving the vision students will have for their careers.

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“The goal is that our coaches can provide more targeted career coaching when working alongside our students,” she said. “Now we can be more intentional with helping students create practical career plans and provide them the exposure and access they need to launch their careers in a specific industry.”

Over the summer each coach was introduced to the ASF Workforce Advisory Board (WAB), and each industry-aligned coach met with the Workforce Advisory Committee member that works within his or her assigned field.

“The WAB member is helping our coach learn about the assigned industry, broker new relationships and ar-

# MEET THE PRINCIPALS



**GENE HAYNES**

Omaha North High School

Gene Haynes, “Mr. North High,” has been employed at Omaha North for 40 years, 18 as principal.

In all, Haynes has enjoyed being a teacher, coach and administrator in Omaha Public Schools for 52 years.

“I have been so impressed with the success of Avenue Scholars,” he says. “The retention rate has been great.”



**JERRY KALINA**

Papillion La Vista High School

Jerry Kalina, now in his eighth year as principal, says the community has welcomed the Avenue Scholars concept into the school system.

“It’s been a great experience having that program in our building,” he says. “Kids are able to see opportunities that maybe their parents did not have.”



**TOM LEE**

Omaha Northwest High School

Tom Lee, in his fifth year as principal, says everyone’s job at Northwest is “all about preparing kids for life.”

“Avenue Scholars gives students the opportunity to see what their fit might be through the field trips and career explorations,” Lee said. “It’s a tremendous program that provides tremendous opportunities.”



**JESSE TVRDY**

Ralston High School

Jesse Tvrdy, in her third year as principal at Ralston High School, says her mission is “to prepare students for lifelong learning and careers.”

“We want kids to see a future,” Tvrdy says. “Avenue Scholars provides a pathway — in the wraparound services — with mentoring, classes, college visits, and career explorations.”



**HEIDI WEAVER**

Millard South High School

Heidi Weaver, in her fifth year as principal, says Millard South is proud of having a “family atmosphere” throughout the school building.

“We love our partnership with Avenue Scholars,” Weaver says. “They immerse them [Scholars] in that environment of resources and then tell them ‘we’re going to get this done.’”



**TOM WAGNER**

Omaha Benson High School

Tom Wagner, in his second year as principal, says his staff “is ready to receive kids where they’re at and then push them from there.”

ASF assists that push. “Coaches are key. I tell freshmen you’re in charge of your education. Now, what are you going to do with it? Those coaches, like Jason [Boyd] reinforce that.”



**RUBEN CANO**

Omaha South High School

Ruben Cano, in his fourth year as principal, has been appreciative of how Avenue Scholars Foundation has provided more opportunity to his diverse student population.

“They provide another way of connecting students to resources as much as possible to ensure they will be successful,” Cano said.



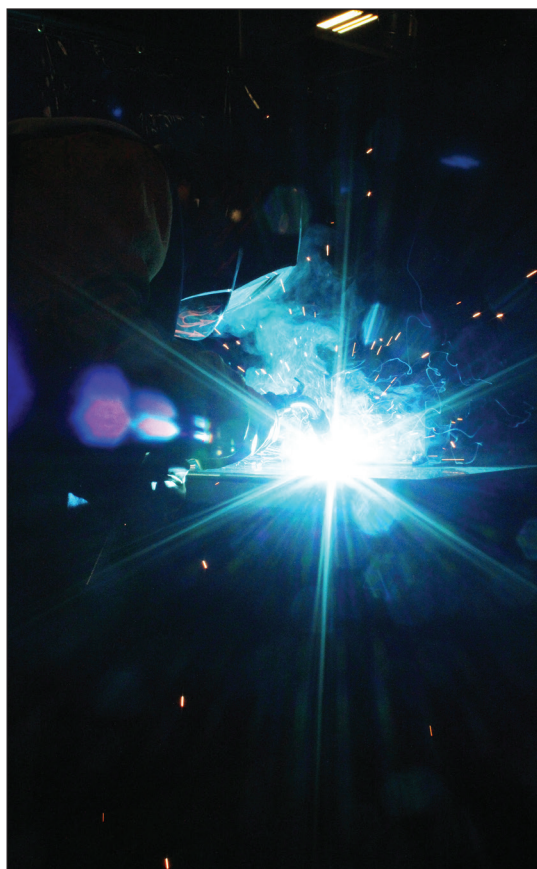
**ROBERT ARANDA**

Omaha Bryan High School

Starting his 10th year as principal, Robert Aranda says one of the most important pieces of the Avenue Scholars program is its focus on each student’s potential.

“This program looks at kids ‘at promise’ rather than ‘at risk,’” he said. “If we can change everyone’s mindset to kids being ‘at promise,’ I think it elevates the game.”

# High demand industries seek Scholars



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range job shadows,” Fischer said.

Scholars will have the opportunity to explore all five high demand industries. Then, students are expected to articulate career pathways in one of the five industries. Coaches help students create practical career plans and set short term and long term goals “oriented around industry-informed benchmarks.”

Avenue Scholars Foundation works with businesses to provide students the chance to explore potential career pathways in high demand industries. Sept. 28, all juniors explored all five industries during a Career Exploration Day on the Fort Omaha Campus. Fifteen businesses representing all five industries participated by delivering a series of workshops, with students rotating through the workshops throughout the day.

“By spring, the goal is to have high school students narrow down their industry of choice onsite at different business locations,” Fischer said. “At the post-secondary level, career exploration is more informal and on-demand, based on the individual needs and goals of the student.”

## MEET NEW STAFF

**Fred Starks**  
Career Coach  
Omaha North



**Duties:** Prepare students for high skill/high demand careers  
**Education:** Bachelor’s degree in Business & Sports Management, Bellevue University; Pursuing Master’s degree in Health & Physical Science  
**Previous Work Experience:** Case Manager, Omaha School for Boys; Talent Development Specialist, Urban League of Nebraska  
**On Working at ASF:** I am excited to be part of organization that is providing students with an opportunity to achieve their career and academic goals.

**Tonya Fairgood**  
Career Coach  
Post Secondary



**Duties:** To ensure careers for students of hope and need through education and supportive relationships  
**Education:** Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice, (minor in Psychology and Black Studies), University of Nebraska at Omaha; Master’s degree in Human Services, Bellevue University  
**Previous Work Experience:** Community Service Member, AmeriCorps; Mentor, Facilitator, Behavior Interventionist in various roles  
**On Working at ASF:** Avenue Scholars is an organization focused on making sure we are preparing our youth for the workforce, and assisting individuals in recognizing their true potential. I am grateful to say that I work for an organization such as this.

**Janae Donaldson**  
Student Support Coordinator



**Duties:** Assess needs and coordinate referrals to community resources. Provide short term counseling to support social/emotional skill building  
**Education:** Certificate in Human Services-Chemical Dependency; Bachelor’s degree in Behavioral Science, University of Nebraska at Omaha; Pursuing Master’s degree at UNO  
**Previous Work Experience:** Ralston Public Schools; Girls Incorporated of Omaha; PromiseShip; Nebraska Children’s Home Society  
**On Working at ASF:** What excites me most about my position at Avenue Scholars is being able to help youth gain life skills that are necessary to overcome barriers, which is imperative to their success in the future.

### AVENUE SCHOLARS FOUNDATION

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- KEN BIRD**  
President/CEO
- MIKE ALVANO**  
Chief Operation Officer/  
Chief Financial Officer
- DOUG PIERSON**  
Vice-President  
of Programming
- KRIS VALENTIN**  
Director of Human Resources  
and Partnerships
- JENNIFER BISIGNANO**  
Director of Information  
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- ANA LOPEZ SHALLA**  
Program Coordinator
- BEVERLY HASS**  
Executive Assistant to CEO  
& Events Coordinator
- PENNY DARNELL**  
Accounting Manager
- JENN FRANCIS**  
Office & Staff Assistant
- KELLY BERNADT**  
Director of Student Support
- KRISTIN WALSH**  
Student Support Coordinator
- JANAE DONALDSON**  
Student Support Coordinator

#### Post-Secondary Coaches:

TERRY FISCHER,  
Director of Career Programs;  
Catie Dagle, Tonya Fairgood,  
Terrence Gillian, Carnetta Har-  
din, Michael Hughes, Marissa  
Marx, Monica Wells

#### High School Coaches:

JAMAR DORSEY  
Director of High School Programs;  
Jason Boyd, Taleya Broadway,  
Kayla Gillian, Allison Goff,  
Ashley Knott, Beth Leach,  
Courtland Olson, Fred Starks

**Business Outreach  
Coordinator:** Brittani  
Tanhueco

#### ROD HOWE

Communications Consultant  
**SHARLENE KARBOWSKI**  
Technology Consultant  
**NANCY MITCHELL**  
LEAP Consultant

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Directors

Avenue Scholars Foundation  
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Omaha, NE 68106

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



## Scholars kick off exploration of careers



The annual Career Kick Off was held Aug. 28-29 at the Fort Omaha Campus of Metropolitan Community College.

Workshops covered Team Building, Keys to Success-Program Guarantees-How to Achieve Them, and Congratulations on ASF Participation+Scholarship Overview.

The schools participating Aug. 28 were Omaha South, Omaha Benson, Ralston, and Millard South. On Aug. 29, Papillion-La Vista, Omaha Northwest, Omaha North, and Omaha Bryan participated in the activities.