



# Pathway Newsletter



Lindsay Decker, CEO (center)  
with Westside High School  
Scholars and Career Coach,  
Beth Leach (right)

## A Legacy Of Strong Leadership Lindsay Decker Steps Into Role As CEO

"How much time do you have?" Avenue Scholars' new CEO, Lindsay Decker said with a laugh when asked, "What makes you proud about working at Avenue Scholars?" Lindsay, pictured above with five Scholars at her alma mater, Westside High School, has been part of the Avenue Scholars team for five years, starting as a Business Outreach Coordinator, working in communications, development, and eventually as President & COO. What comes next? The role of CEO, which she took on September 1, 2024.

Throughout her tenure, Lindsay has been instrumental to the program's success. From creating and implementing the summer Boot Camp program, to securing funding for programming, Decker keeps in step with the growing need for Scholar support and community outreach.

Her hard work does not go unnoticed in the Omaha community. Jessica Pate, a supporter of Avenue Scholars, said, "Lindsay enters the role [of CEO] with great opportunity for continued growth and success. She brings knowledge of the organization, the industry, and its players. Her warmth and enthusiasm are infectious."

Omaha community donor, volunteer, and Avenue Scholars advocate, Mary Lopez says, "Lindsay believes in the vision and tells the story of Avenue Scholars so well, which is a large part of the role of CEO. She is willing to listen and learn and will build on the current foundation to grow and shape Avenue Scholars and its programs."

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## Avenue Scholars

### STAFF

**LINDSAY DECKER**

CEO

**CATIE DAGLE**

Chief Program & People Officer

**JOEY FELICI**

Vice President of Development

**RICK PAINTER**

Sr. Director of Career Services & Support

**MICHAEL JOHNSON**

Director of Program Initiatives

**TINA ACEVEDO**

Director of Communications

**KRISTY PREUSS**

Executive Assistant &

Administrative Services Manager

**SHEREE HAYNIE**

Program & Administrative

Services Coordinator

**ELIJAH MINTURN**

Intern

**ASHLEY KNOTT**

Community Resource Manager

**Career Services Team:**

\*TONYA FAIRGOOD, ANTHONY

TATE, DAN CORRAL, STEVE

JOHNSTON, TOM ROBERTSON

**High School Team:**

\*TERRENCE GILLIAN,\*MARCUS

MANLEY, JOSE ALMANZA,

KAILY BARBRE, ANTIONE

CURTIS, MARQUITA LAMBERT,

BETH LEACH, LAUREN LINTON,

LAUREN MCGLOHN, TOM

PRESCOTT, CANEI RODRIQUEZ,

JORDYN SMITH, FRED STARKS

**Business Outreach Team:**

\*AUDREY GUSTIN

**Avenue Shared Services:**

MIKE ALVANO

CFO of Avenue Scholars

PENNY DARNELL

Accounting Manager

AMY HERNANDEZ

Accounting

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

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MATT RAY

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Directors

Avenue Scholars  
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\*Team Lead



Above: Joey Felici and Rob Trebilcock Cox Senior Manager, Public Affairs celebrate the founding donation of the Career Education & Training Fund.

## Cox Donation Launches Career Education & Training Fund

Vice President of Development Joey Felici may be a new addition to Avenue Scholars, but his dedication to and sharing of the mission has already reaped major rewards through a new partnership with Cox.

The Avenue Scholars Career Education & Training Fund will cover costs associated with education, job training, certifications, and other programs that propel Scholars towards their career. In a recent meeting with Rob Trebilcock, Cox's Senior Manager of Public Affairs, Felici shared the benefits this fund brings to Scholars through providing the training and certifications employers desire.

Trebilcock says, "Our commitment to community impact mirrors yours, and we take pride in backing your organization. Your dedication to our community is remarkable, and we wholeheartedly appreciate your ongoing efforts. We eagerly anticipate hearing about your achievements throughout the year and offering our support every step of the way."

Thank you, Cox, for your founding contribution to the Career Education & Training Fund!



# Scholar Jacquie R. Banking On Success

As you enter Security National Bank, Scholar and Customer Service Representative II Jacquie R. greets you with a warm, professional demeanor that instills confidence. Her poise and attentiveness to customers reflect the career training she's received through Avenue Scholars and mentorship at Security National Bank. Jacquie's path to becoming a standout employee wasn't always clear-cut, but her curiosity, academic dedication, and willingness to learn from mentors and coaches have paved the way for her success in banking.

Jacquie, a 2023 graduate of Omaha South High School, is making strides in the Avenue Scholars program. Currently in her second year at Metropolitan Community College (MCC) pursuing an associate degree in business administration, Jacquie secured a valuable internship at Security National Bank.

The career exploration, coaching and training in the Avenue Scholars program have been a key aspect of Jacquie's experience, providing her with tools and support beginning in high school and during her post-secondary education. Tom Robertson, Jacquie's Avenue Scholars Career Services Coach, highlights the program's comprehensive approach: "Our Business Outreach Team does extensive work with Scholars to ensure they have updated resumes, professional references, and practice interviewing so they can present the best version of themselves throughout the application process."

Jacquie credits the program for her internship success, noting, "Avenue Scholars coaching helped me secure my internship by helping me prepare my resume as a high school student with little experience and also helping me practice possible interview questions." This preparation has paid off, as Jacquie has already been promoted in her workplace.

According to Tom Robertson, "The internship has been a perfect fit for Jacquie, allowing her to explore various

aspects of banking while developing crucial professional skills." Robertson observes, "Jacquie has expressed that she is becoming more self-confident and 'coming out of her shell' when it comes to handling her job responsibilities on her own." He also notes that the bank's flexibility has been key in helping Jacquie balance work, school, and her personal life.

Jacquie's experience exemplifies the long-term benefits of the Avenue Scholars program. She values the ongoing support



Above: Scholar Jacquie R. welcomes clients in her role as a Customer Service Representative II at Security National Bank.

from her coaches, stating, "The ways my Avenue Scholars coaches have impacted my experience working at Security National Bank would be always making sure everything is going well at my internship by either a quick message or coming to visit me at the branch."

Looking ahead, Jacquie plans to complete her associate degree by summer 2025 and take part in the Business Transfer program, enabling her to pursue a bachelor's degree in business administration at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her growing interest in mortgages, lending, and personal banking is shaping her career aspirations.

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## Scholar Jacquie R. Banking On Success, cont.

Jacquie's experience highlights the Avenue Scholars program's commitment to fostering long-term relationships and continuous support. As she puts it, "The relationships I have built through Avenue Scholars, whether with my mentors or my peers, are relationships that will last a lifetime."

Through the combination of educational support, career development, and internship experience, Avenue Scholars is empowering Scholars to build successful careers with job security in their futures. Jacquie's story offers a template for current and future Scholars, showcasing the transformative power of career coaching, on-the-job mentorship, and targeted career support.



From left: Reid Kathol, Jacquie's Security National Bank supervisor and liaison to Avenue Scholars, Scholar Jacquie R., and Career Services Coach Tom Robertson

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## A Legacy Of Strong Leadership Lindsay Decker Steps Into Role As CEO, cont.

There's so much to be proud of at Avenue Scholars, and Decker credits the team with the success, saying, "It's the team inside these four walls that are making this program work. We have such a wonderful group of people who have the biggest hearts, and I love them all so much." The feeling is mutual with that team. Tonya Fairgood, Career Services Coach said, "Her excitement and willingness to ensure

Scholars have what they need to pursue their desired careers inspires me. She can relate to many of our Scholars' stories. We have so many Scholars who face barriers, and her relation to, empathy for, and understanding of those barriers will allow her to be the best CEO she can be."

Vice President of Development Joey Felici says, "Lindsay is one of the most effective communicators I have been around. Her life story is a reflection of the youth we serve, and her passion for the work we do is evident in the way she approaches it by putting our Scholars first."

Decker's focus is, and always will be, the mission of Avenue Scholars. She says, "We use the word 'Scholars' to describe our students because they're not just students. They are brave, powerful, and they are wonderful. Seeing all of the things they are able to do...their stories can inspire and motivate people of all ages."



Above: Lindsay Decker visits Scholars at Westside High School, her alma mater.

# Same Mission, New Faces

## Welcoming Team Members



From left: Joey Felici, Tina Acevedo, Lauren McGlohn and Antione Curtis

Avenue Scholars welcomes four new staff members who bring fresh enthusiasm to our mission.

Lauren McGlohn joins as a High School Career Coach, bringing her focus on student support. "What inspired me to join Avenue Scholars was the message of hope it sends to students," Lauren shares. Her approach focuses on addressing students' basic needs to allow them to concentrate on their future. Lauren emphasizes the importance of forming positive relationships, adding, "Everyone deserves a cheerleader!"

Antione Curtis, High School Program Assistant, hopes to impact youth. "The youth inspired me to join Avenue Scholars," Antione explains. He sees his role as a mentor, guiding students to become the best versions of themselves as they launch their career or college journey. Antione believes in the power of personalized coaching, noting, "As a coach, you are constantly learning, whether it's from the industry or from students."

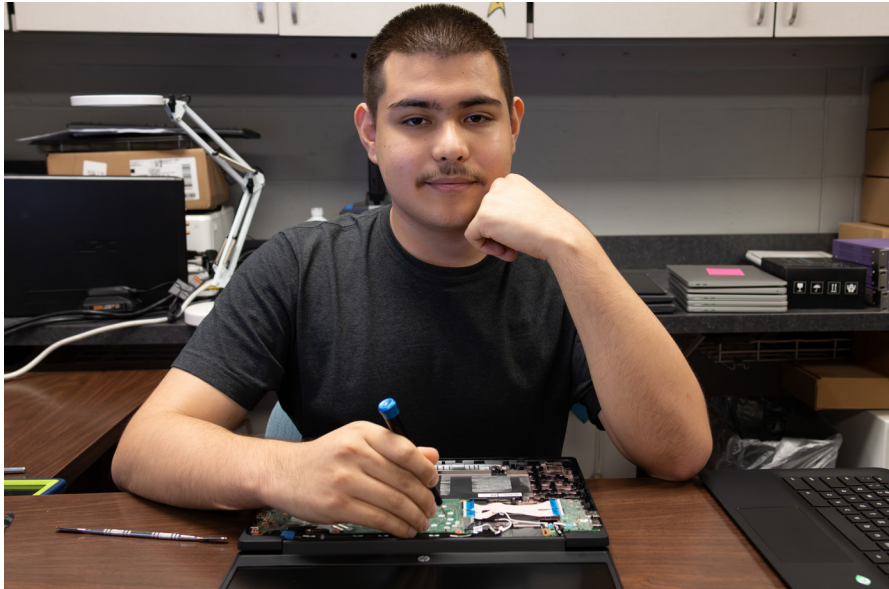
Joey Felici steps into the role of Vice President of Development, inspired by the organization's mission-focused work. "Within my role, I have the opportunity to play a part in helping our Scholars connect to the resources they need to ultimately find a career in their desired field!" Joey expresses excitement about raising funds to fulfill Scholars' needs, recognizing the obstacles many face.

Bringing firsthand experience of Avenue Scholars' impact from her previous work in public schools, Tina Acevedo joins as the new Director of Communications. "I've witnessed the light of hope flip on like a switch when Scholars found out they had a path to follow, an internship, job training, or a career waiting for them," Tina recalls. In her new role, she aims to spread awareness about Avenue Scholars' work, believing that "This program should be in all high schools across the nation!"

Our new team members share a common enthusiasm for Avenue Scholars' long-term approach to supporting Scholars. They recognize the value of providing continuous guidance from high school through career entry, and how this comprehensive support can transform individual lives and the greater Omaha community.

The team particularly values Avenue Scholars' unique offerings, such as Career Exploration events, Career Awareness visits, and internships. As Joey puts it, "You don't know what you don't know! Getting our Scholars out in the community to test their knowledge and skills is imperative when deciding what career path may interest them."

Lauren, Antione, Joey, and Tina are already contributing to Avenue Scholars' mission. Whether it's through personalized coaching, fundraising, or spreading awareness, each new team member is committed to making a difference in the lives of Scholars.



On the left: Scholar Masurjon N., a Tech Support Specialist at Ralston Public Schools, explains the functions of Chromebook parts. Below: Masurjon with Career Services Coach, Dan Corral



## Building Skills For Tomorrow

# How Masurjon N. Is Shaping His IT Career

In an office humming with computer activity, Masurjon N. examines Chromebook hardware spread across his desk. He explains each part's function, holding them up for inspection. Through an internship with Ralston Public Schools, Masurjon repairs and evaluates Chromebooks - essential tools for students' coursework and communication with teachers. According to Masurjon, he has worked on "multiple generations of Chromebooks, MacBooks, and Dell PCs, which has greatly expanded my technical expertise. I also learned how to use Active Directory in Windows and address security issues."

Masurjon credits Avenue Scholars for preparing him to apply for the internship. "Avenue Scholars played a pivotal role in helping me understand how real jobs work." He continues, "Direct guidance I received in resume building and interview techniques gave me the confidence to apply for the IT internship at Ralston Public Schools."

Dan Corral, Masurjon's Career Services Coach, sees the internship as an excellent opportunity. "It gives Masurjon the experience he's looking for and the space to challenge himself and continue to grow in the IT industry."

Masurjon, a 2022 graduate from Ralston High School, is interning while working toward an associate degree in applied science in information technology at Metropolitan Community College. In addition, he completed his web programming career certificate. Beyond the focus on educational training of the Avenue Scholars program, Masurjon values the

relationships he's built. "My mentor has been instrumental in my growth, both personally and academically," he shares, emphasizing the program's guidance.

Corral observes Masurjon's dedication: "Masurjon's commitment to his goals and his willingness to learn make him an ideal participant in our career development program." This proactive approach to learning is preparing Masurjon for a successful career. Corral adds, "He's already miles ahead."

Networking events play a crucial role in the Avenue Scholars program, allowing students to meet face-to-face with local business partners. Masurjon explains, "The networking events organized by the program are invaluable in helping me understand various industries and make important connections." These connections make a difference as he charts his path in IT.

Professional presentation coaching encourages Scholars to attend career fairs and teaches resume preparation. Corral, who evaluates Scholars' resumes, praises Masurjon's efforts, "Masurjon's resume may have needed tweaking, but it was very well done. His resume is a sample resume that I use to guide other Scholars."

Equipped with experience Masurjon has hope in his future. "The skills and confidence I'm gaining through this program will benefit me throughout my future career."

# The H+H Group Scores Big For Avenue Scholars



From left: Avenue Scholars staff, Tonya Fairgood, Joey Felici with H+H Foundation Director, Lindsey Hinchcliff-Crotty, Audrey Gustin, Marcus Manley, Ashley Knott and Terrence Gillian

On Sunday, July 21, The H+H Group organized the H+H Cornhole Tournament Fundraiser at the All Chevy & MOPAR Show held at Jeep Dodge Ram, with 100% of the proceeds benefiting Avenue Scholars.

Lindsey Hinchcliff-Crotty, H+H Foundation Director, shared her excitement about the event: "We had a great turnout for both events we hosted. A total of 34 cornhole teams participated in both events."

"The cornhole tournament drew an impressive crowd and raised \$705 for Avenue Scholars," according to Hinchcliff-Crotty. The H+H Group hosted a separate cornhole tournament for associates, bringing in an additional \$1,240. Altogether, the events raised \$1,945 for Avenue Scholars.

The fun-filled tournaments not only raised funds, they also generated awareness about our mission to connect teens and young adults with educational training, career exploration, and job placement opportunities.

The H+H Group hosted a Career Awareness event in early October and many Scholars attended. This type of hands-on industry experience is key to helping Scholars explore potential high demand career paths.

The H+H Group's longtime support extends beyond Career Awareness events. They also connect Scholars with internships and job opportunities, showing their active

investment in the next generation of automotive professionals.

We extend our gratitude to The H+H Group for their generosity and for making a difference in our community!



Above: Participants in The H+H Group Cornhole Tournament Fundraiser at the All Chevy & MOPAR Show. Photo credit: The H+H Group

# Career Awareness Events Spark Scholar Exploration



In September, Scholars attended the Equipment Rodeo at Valley Corporation where they played games, asked questions, and took part in career-specific activities related to skilled trades.



Scholars attended a Career Awareness event at the Bricklayers Union Local 15 Chapter 1 this October where they discovered benefits of the industry and tested their skills with trowels and laying bricks.

Learn more about business partnerships.  
Scan the QR code or email  
[businessoutreach@avescholars.org](mailto:businessoutreach@avescholars.org)



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