

# 2025 Impact Report



AVENUE  
SCHOLARS™



## OUR MISSION

Avenue Scholars, the leader in bridging the gap between education and business, guarantees careers for our youth of hope and need through supportive relationships, individualized coaching, education, and training.

## OUR VALUES

We operate by living out the following core values:

### *Hope*

We focus on strengths and opportunities rather than obstacles.

### *Respect*

We value others and promote their success.

### *Integrity*

We are consistent, dependable, and honest about who we are and what we do.

### *Innovation*

We implement dynamic programming that facilitates the growth and development of our Scholars and the community.

### *Collaboration*

We create a culture of mutual trust, open dialogue, and positive results.

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## Dear Friends of Avenue Scholars,

After a full year in my role as CEO, I've realized just how difficult it can be to answer a seemingly simple question.

What do you do at Avenue Scholars?

I could detail process: We embed ourselves in area high schools. We recruit passionate and willing Scholars in need of extra help to achieve their goals. We provide them with one-on-one coaching, education, and experiences to help them finish high school and move on to a fulfilling career.

I could talk about how, in this work, we strive to live out our core values: Hope, Respect, Integrity, Innovation, and Collaboration. I could list off highlights from our impact data, which you will see in the following pages, or tell inspiring stories of individual Scholars, like Caleb or Amrita, which you will also read.

All of this is an important and accurate reflection of what we do. But lately, I've found myself thinking about how it all contributes to a deeper and broader end goal:

At Avenue Scholars, we're working to build a stronger community – and a brighter future for us all.

We're committed to the individual success of each and every Scholar that enters our program. We believe everyone, regardless of circumstance, should have the opportunity to pursue a career of their choice that pays a livable wage, gives access to benefits, and offers upward mobility.

But by serving each of these individuals, we're hoping to fortify Omaha's social and economic future. We encourage Scholars to pursue careers in in-demand fields that are vital to our civic wellbeing – healthcare, the skilled trades, education, business, information technology, and transportation.

Woven together, these fields form the taut fabric to a healthy society. By lifting up each individual, we aim to give them the resources to one day give back – continuing a cycle of endless renewal and growth.

In the following pages, you'll see how we've done that over the past year. I look forward to continuing to build with you, and thank you for being part of our story.



With gratitude,

Lindsay Decker, CEO

## Serve the Scholar, Serve the Community



**AVENUE  
SCHOLARS™**

Avenue Scholars was created to remove barriers for young people to build careers filled with purpose and long-term stability.



# The Avenue Scholars Journey

From high school to career success, with support every step of the way.

## HIGH SCHOOL

Scholars are recruited as sophomores. In their junior and senior years, they take a for-credit class with Career Coaches and also engage in career planning, exploration, readiness training, and internships.

## CAREER TRAINING

After graduation, Scholars are matched with Career Services Coaches to pursue one of three paths to success: employment, professional training, or an associate's degree in their chosen field.

## CAREER ENTRY









Scholars receive ongoing support from their Career Services Coaches for up to six months after being hired, helping them transition successfully into the workplace.

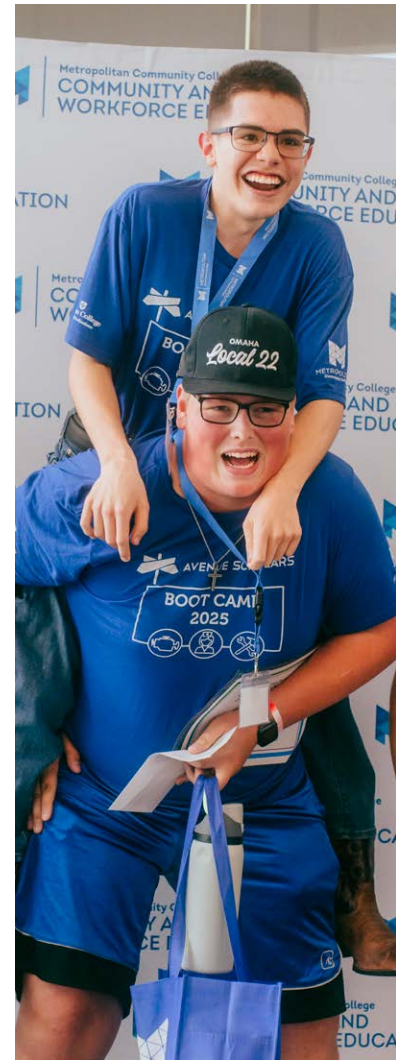
## ALUMNI

After six months in the workforce, Scholars may transition to Alumni status when they obtain in-demand employment that is full time (32+ hours per week), pays \$16+ per hour, includes benefits, and provides opportunities for advancement.



*Avenue Scholars offers a variety of supports to help Scholars overcome barriers to their educational and employment success.*

-   
 Utility Assistance
-   
 Resource & Service Referrals
-   
 Car Repair Assistance
-   
 Savings Match
-   
 DMV Days
-   
 Childcare Arrangements
-   
 Scholarship Applications
-   
 Legal Services



# Program Guarantees

To ensure that Scholars are well-equipped for employment in their chosen industry, Avenue Scholars aspires to have each of its participants meet the following five "Program Guarantees" upon completing the program:

## EDUCATION/TRAINING

A committed Avenue Scholars participant graduates from high school, completes relevant career education or training, and is goal-oriented toward an Avenue Scholars approved pathway.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

A committed Avenue Scholars participant demonstrates a successful work history.

## WORK-READY SKILLS

A committed Avenue Scholars participant demonstrates work-ready habits and skills including responsibility, work ethic, communication, positive attitude, professionalism, teamwork, and problem solving.

## ATTENDANCE

A committed Avenue Scholars participant demonstrates consistent attendance at school, work, and Avenue Scholars engagements.

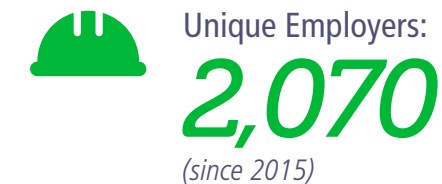
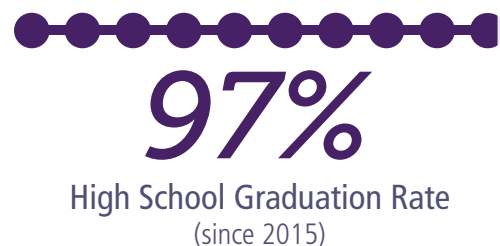
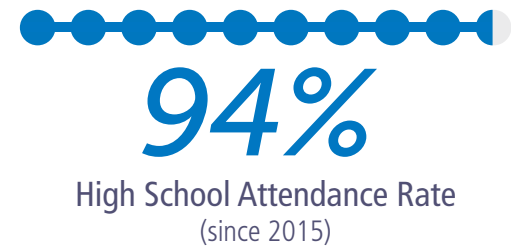
## FINANCIAL AND PERSONAL WELL-BEING

A committed Avenue Scholars participant demonstrates the ability to:

- Overcome barriers of all types including financial, physical, and mental, which may affect employment.
- Access community resources and services when necessary.

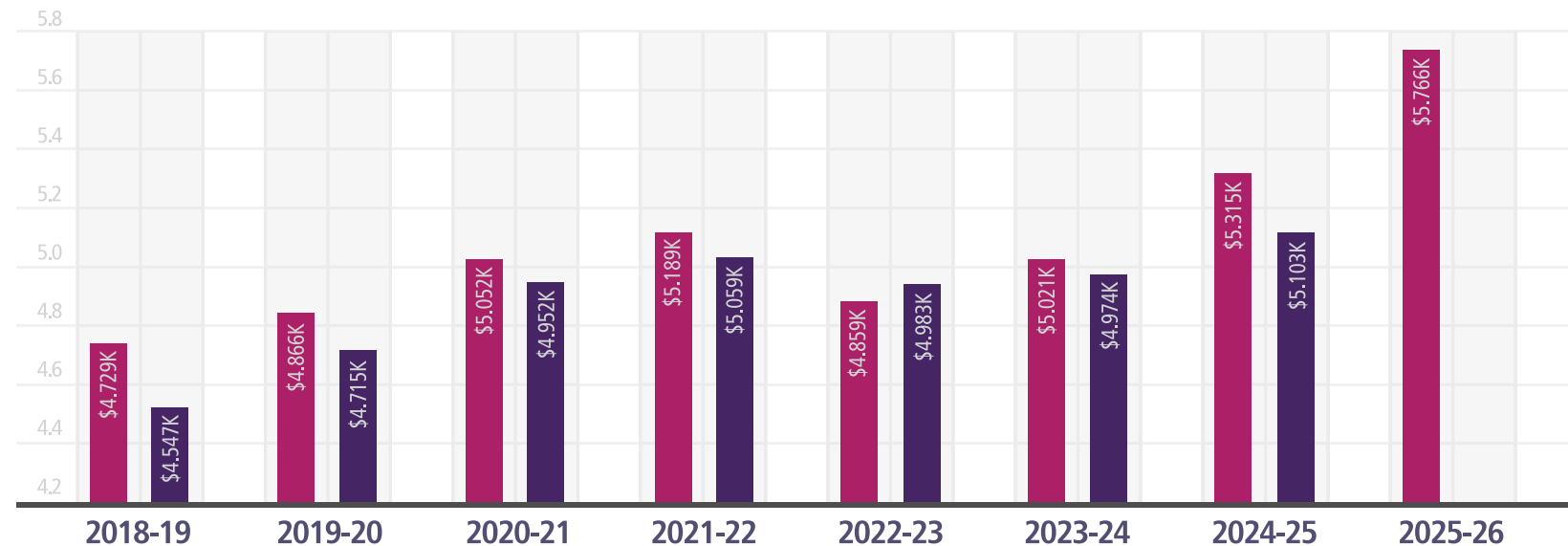
# Impact: By The Numbers

## HISTORICAL OUTCOMES



## BUDGET

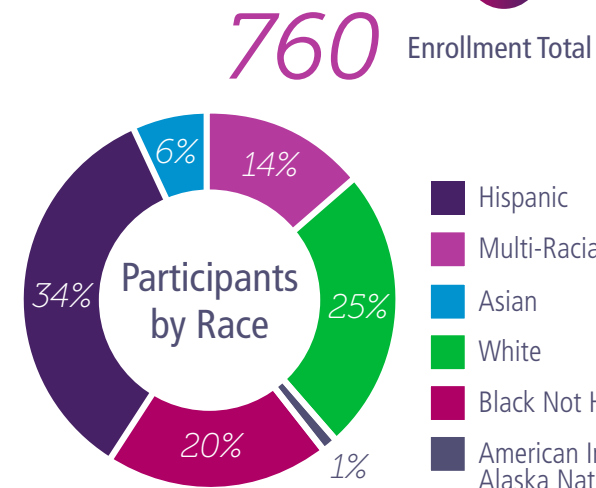
■ Budget ■ Actual



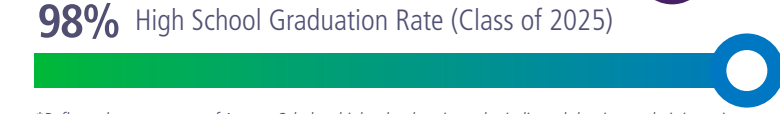
## PROGRAM GROWTH



## 2025-2026 PROGRAM YEAR



## 2024-2025 PROGRAM YEAR



\*Reflects the percentage of Avenue Scholars high school seniors who indicated that it was their intention to pursue postsecondary education following graduation, irrespective of continuation in the Avenue Scholars program.



## PARTICIPANTS BY INDUSTRY SECTOR



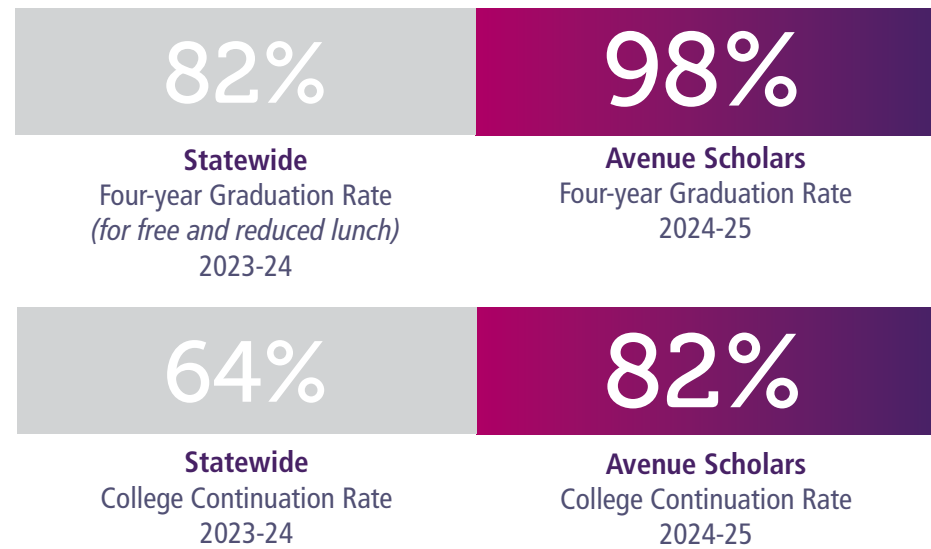
**EDUCATION PARTNERS THROUGHOUT THE METRO**

-  Bellevue West High School
-  Elkhorn High Schools
-  Millard North High School
-  Millard South High School
-  Omaha Benson High School
-  Omaha Bryan High School
-  Omaha North High School
-  Omaha Northwest High School
-  Omaha South High School
-  Omaha Westview High School
-  Papillion La Vista High School
-  Ralston High School
-  Westside High School

## Education Partnerships

Avenue Scholars partners with school districts across the Omaha metro. Scholars are selected for the program based on financial need (determined by eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunches or a federal Pell Grant), interest in pursuing a high-demand career field, and attendance at a partner high school.

Scholars are recruited their sophomore year and begin the program as juniors, taking a for-credit course with their Career Coaches. Scholars continue to receive support their senior year, past graduation, and through their first six months of employment.



Statewide Graduation Rate and College Continuation Rate data sourced from Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Avenue Scholars College Continuation rate is calculated by self reports of those who indicated it was their intention to pursue postsecondary education following graduation, irrespective of continuation in the Avenue Scholars program.



## Business Partnerships

In our last program year, Avenue Scholars partnered with more than 120 local businesses to provide Scholars with transformative career exploration experiences as well as employment opportunities. We're so grateful to our partners for providing:

### CAREER AWARENESS/EXPLORATION

Boot Camp and Career Awareness experiences provide Scholars with valuable opportunities to explore and learn about their desired career paths, develop essential skills, and connect with professionals in their fields of interest.

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Scholars are able to participate in mock interviews, job shadows, and other opportunities to gain career exposure and work-ready skills.

### REFERRALS

Partners often provide referrals for seasonal, part-time, or full-time job opportunities for Scholars during their program participation and after graduation.

### INTERNSHIPS

Partners offer meaningful internship opportunities that allow Scholars to gain valuable work experience within specific industries. Internships include dedicated mentorship, skill-building opportunities, and competitive pay.

*"Avenue Scholars helps us build the future of our workforce by connecting us with motivated young talent. Their students bring fresh perspectives, eagerness to learn, and a strong work ethic that strengthens our organization and the automotive industry as a whole."*

- The H+H Group

*"Avenue Scholars has been a joy to work with. They communicate well, and their programs are very organized. The staff is polite, caring, and informed. The programming they do for the Scholars is top-notch, and we are so glad to be a part of that."*

- North End Teleservices

*"Partnering with Avenue Scholars interns over the years has been an incredibly rewarding experience for our organization. Their curiosity, eagerness to learn, and passion for healthcare energize the teams they work alongside and serve as a powerful reminder of our own 'why.'"*

- Children's Nebraska



### SCHOLAR PROFILE

NAME **ADISON K.**  
 HIGH SCHOOL **BLAIR HIGH SCHOOL (ALUMNA)**  
 CAREER PATH **EDUCATION**

Adison K. joined Avenue Scholars during her junior year of high school in 2022-2023 and quickly found herself on a path toward a career in education. Through the program, she began taking college classes early, gaining valuable experience that set her apart from her peers.

“What helped me was being able to take college classes at the beginning of my senior year instead of having to wait until I graduated,” Adison said. “It gave me a step up.”

Encouraged by her mother’s career in education and her own natural connection with children, Adison decided to see if teaching was the right fit for her and discovered that it was. Today, she is a full-time paraprofessional at an elementary school and is preparing to transition into a teaching role for 2-year-olds at the Professor’s Learning Academy in Elkhorn. At the same time, she is completing her liberal arts academic transfer degree at Metropolitan Community College, which she expects to finish in the winter.

Adison credits Avenue Scholars with helping her at every step. “They’ve helped financially, they’ve helped me grow and get my classes planned, and they’ve helped me get into education,” she explained. She also points to staff for helping her through career choices and coursework.

Looking ahead, Adison’s ultimate goal is to become a full-time teacher at the age level she enjoys most. Reflecting on her experience, she is eager to share the benefits of Avenue Scholars with others.

“I would 100% recommend it,” she said. “It has been one of the best things that has happened to me.”

***“It has been one of the best things that has happened to me.”***

### SCHOLAR PROFILE

NAME **RAMTEIN M.**  
 HIGH SCHOOL **MILLARD NORTH HIGH SCHOOL (ALUMNUS)**  
 CAREER PATH **TRANSPORTATION**

With three words, Ramtein M. can make one thing clear: He has a cool job.

“I paint firetrucks,” he said.

A 2024 graduate of Millard North High School, Ramtein recently accepted a job with Smeal Fire Apparatus, based in Snyder, Nebraska. There, he works to sand, prime, and paint the iconic red fire engines that help save lives in communities all over the country.

***“Honestly, I owe a lot to y’all.”***

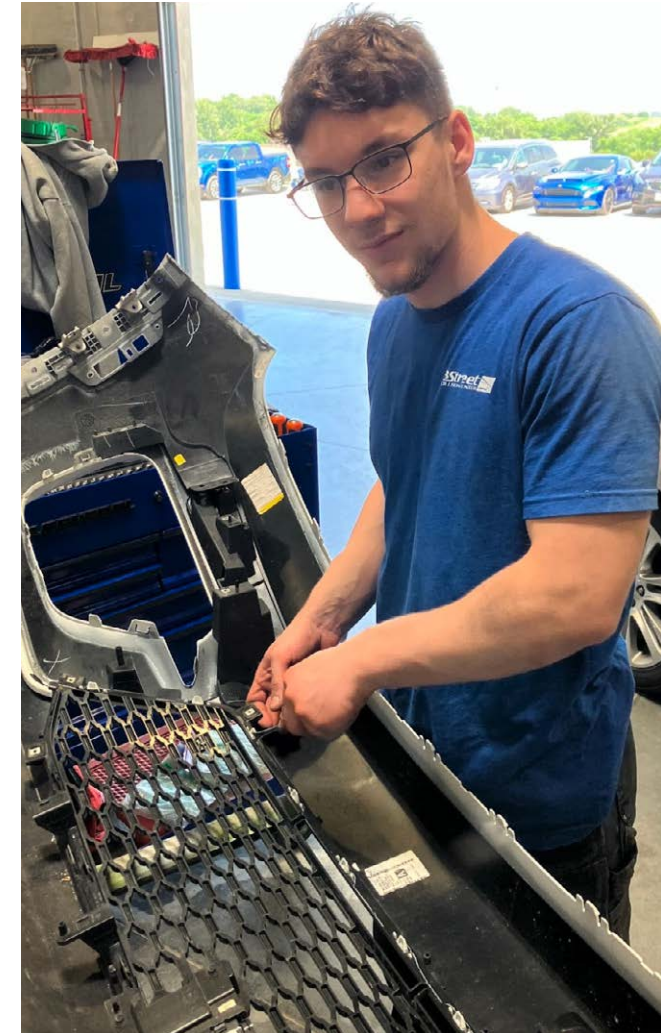
Ramtein credits his experience with Avenue Scholars with giving him the tools to pursue his new career – in particular the Savings Program, which helps select Scholars save to buy a vehicle and provides a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$3,000.

“It helped me get my first car,” Ramtein said. “Honestly, I owe a lot to y’all.”

Ramtein initially considered pursuing a career as a mechanic before transitioning to auto body. He’s currently pursuing a degree at Metropolitan Community College and first learned about the possibility of working with Smeal after they came to visit campus.

His day begins early – often before 6 a.m. Ramtein said he gets a sense of pride out of the work.

“It’s just fun,” he said. “I just enjoy painting, seeing the product that you make come out. I also like being able to say I paint firetrucks and help put them together. That’s just kind of cool.”



## SCHOLAR PROFILE

NAME                    **CALEB R.**  
HIGH SCHOOL        **WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL**  
CAREER PATH         **SKILLED TRADES**

Ask Caleb R. why he likes welding, and you'll get a quick answer.

"To be honest – the fire," he said. "The colors, the flames, the explosion of it."

Caleb, a senior at Westside High School, has excelled at welding ever since he first picked up a torch. His skill earned him a position as a lab tech in the Westside welding lab where he recently repaired an ATV trailer hitch for the school resource officer.

Caleb recently completed an internship at Kawasaki where he worked on several projects including building frames and creating bumpers for golf carts. He credits his Avenue Scholars Career Coach with telling him about the internship and encouraging him to apply. This fall, he's also working as a mechanic and welder at Vala's Pumpkin Patch and Apple Orchard in Gretna, Nebraska.

The practical work experience, he said, has been a boost to his professional journey.

"That's a huge thing on my resumé," he said. "I've learned that from seeing how jobs I've applied to respond to it. I get way better responses now than I would with just classes."

In the long-term, Caleb wants to become an underwater pipeline welder and own his own business. He enjoys his work, he said – especially the experience of completing a big project and seeing the finished product.

"I've never been able to really sit still – I always need to use my hands to make stuff," he said. "I took a lot of things apart when I was a kid and got in trouble for it. Now I know how to put them back together."

***"I get way better responses now than I would with just classes."***



## SCHOLAR PROFILE

NAME                    **JACKY R.**  
HIGH SCHOOL        **OMAHA SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL (ALUMNA)**  
CAREER PATH         **BUSINESS**

Like many young people just starting out in their careers, Jacky R. was initially nervous about the daily interactions – phone calls, conversations with strangers – required in the modern workplace.

But she had an advantage: her experience with Avenue Scholars.

"I think those mock interviews really helped me when I went into banking," she said.

A graduate of Omaha South High School, Jacky now works as a senior client services representative for Security National Bank. She began with Security National as an intern, was hired on full-time in 2023, and received a promotion in March.

In her role, she works with clients face-to-face, helping them navigate their banking questions.

"I always knew I wanted to do something with business and numbers," she said. "I like helping people."

Jacky credits her Avenue Scholars Career Services Coach with helping her prepare for the workforce. She met with him regularly, she said, to discuss her career goals and practice phone calls, interviews, and customer interactions.

In the long-term, she wants to stay in banking. She said she appreciates the opportunities Security National offers to explore different parts of the field.

Her advice to new Scholars: "Take the risk."

"Try and do everything while they're still in high school, and it will really pave the way as they grow up," she said. "Connections are really important."

***"Take the risk."***



## SCHOLAR PROFILE

NAME **AMRITA G.**  
HIGH SCHOOL **BENSON HIGH SCHOOL (ALUMNA)**  
CAREER PATH **HEALTHCARE**

Amrita G., a student at Metropolitan Community College, is on a path to a career in nursing. She credits Avenue Scholars with academic and career support that are helping her on her way.

When she first joined the program, Amrita was struggling with math. The Avenue Scholars for-credit high school course provided an opportunity for her to connect with both career and academic resources, including her high school's math center.

"Because of that," she said, "I passed pre-algebra and intermediate algebra." It was an important step toward her academic goals.

Amrita also credits her Avenue Scholars Career Coach, who has guided her through her career journey. She began working as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at CHI Health Immanuel, a role she prepared for through Benson High School's CNA program. Through Avenue Scholars, Amrita has had hands-on opportunities to build her skills, including learning CPR and patient care for children and infants.

She has worked at Immanuel for more than a year, and during that time, Amrita has discovered that she wants to focus on working with children. Her Career Coach has encouraged her to pursue that interest.

"He's always there for me," Amrita said. "He's awesome." Amrita is now working toward a position that will allow her to explore pediatric care.

Today, Amrita is excelling in school and looking ahead to her future. She plans to continue her education in healthcare, with her sights set on becoming a nurse. Her persistence paired with continued participation in the Avenue Scholars program, Amrita is well on her way to achieving her dream of caring for children in a medical setting.



***"(My Career Coach) is always there for me. He's awesome."***

## SCHOLAR PROFILE

NAME **COLIN S.**  
HIGH SCHOOL **MILLARD NORTH HIGH SCHOOL (ALUMNUS)**  
CAREER PATH **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**

Colin S. feels like he never had to *decide* on a career in IT.

"It was just something I was already good at," he said.

An avid gamer, Colin has built three different PCs for himself. Growing up, he helped his family troubleshoot IT-related problems, and his older brother pursued a career in computer science.

So, while he was trying to figure out what he wanted to do in high school, he gravitated to what he knew best. But it took a few detours, with support from Avenue Scholars, before he discovered what he liked best in the field.

"(My Career Coach) found me three separate jobs, and I tried them all," Colin said. He ultimately realized that, rather than computer programming, he likes maintaining physical devices and working with people to troubleshoot problems.

Colin now works in IT at Werner Enterprises where he helps manage the lifecycles of different devices in the company, replacing them when they become outdated. He also handles general IT-related problems for other employees.

"I just like interacting with people," he said. "I like fixing problems – it gives me satisfaction ... It's nice when people appreciate the help desk kind of work."

Colin is currently pursuing a degree in business analytics at Bellevue University. Ultimately, he wants to become a product manager within IT, researching new technologies and helping companies decide on which ones to purchase.

"In IT, it's ever-changing, so you're going to have to have an adaptable mindset," he said. "I went into computer programming and came out of it doing hardware-related stuff. It's OK to switch ideas and careers mid-way through. It's all going to be valuable regardless."



***"It's OK to switch ideas and careers mid-way through. It's all going to be valuable regardless."***



# Board of Directors & Staff

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Calvin Sisson**  
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**Lindsay Decker**  
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**Taren Newman**  
*Program & Admin Services Coordinator*

**Amy Hernandez**  
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*Director of High School Programs*

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*Program Manager*

**Beth Leach**  
*Team Lead Westside Career Coach*

**Marcus Manley**  
*Team Lead Millard North Career Coach*

**Cindy Alcaraz Dubon**  
*Ralston Career Coach*

**José Almanza**  
*Omaha Bryan Career Coach*

**Kaily Barbre**  
*Elkhorn Career Coach*

**Antione Curtis**  
*Omaha Westview Career Coach*

**Jenny Gruber**  
*High School Career Coach*

**Jenni Gutierrez**  
*Omaha South Career Coach*

**Alea Hattix**  
*Omaha Northwest Career Coach*

**Faith Kauzlarich**  
*Bellevue West Career Coach*

**Marquita Lambert**  
*Millard South Career Coach*

**Lauren McGlohn**  
*Papillion La Vista Career Coach*

**Regina Rains**  
*High School Career Coach*

**Canei Rodriguez**  
*Omaha Benson Career Coach*

**Fred Starks**  
*Omaha North Career Coach*

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*Director of Career Services*

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*Team Lead Career Services Coach*

**Dan Corral**  
*Career Services Coach*

**Steve Johnston**  
*Career Services Coach*

**Anthony Tate**  
*Career Services Coach*

## BUSINESS OUTREACH TEAM

**Audrey Gustin**  
*Director of Business Outreach*

**Bayly Wise**  
*Business Outreach Coordinator*

*Publication Date: November 2025  
Report includes photos provided by QLI.*

Avenue Scholars, the leader in bridging the gap between education and business, guarantees careers for our youth of hope and need through supportive relationships, individualized coaching, education, and training.



To support our mission, please consider a donation today!



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