



*Principal Tom Lee*

## Avenue Scholars ‘getting ready for real world’

In Tom Lee’s mind, much of one’s success in life is contingent on opportunity. He sees Avenue Scholars Foundation providing those opportunities and more.

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

“It’s about getting kids out there in the real world,” Lee said. “That’s what Avenue Scholars Foundation is all about — getting them out there and getting them ready.”

Lee’s career and philosophy have been molded through a variety of teaching, coaching and administrative experiences at Omaha North, the University of Nebraska-Omaha, Blackburn Alternative School, Omaha Burke, and Omaha Central.

“They have all been good learning experiences,” Lee said. “I have enjoyed all of them because I do this job for kids; they keep me young and energized.”

At Northwest, Lee has embraced the challenge of instilling hope in all students envisioning a future beyond high school.

“Northwest went through trying times,” Lee said. “When I started my job here, I sat down with every program in this building and asked the ones I didn’t feel were necessary or making a difference for Northwest, I asked them to find other opportunities. Avenue Scholars is definitely one that has made a difference, one that has made a positive impact on our young people.

“I am especially proud of the work Miss [Taleya] Broadway (Northwest High School Career Coach) has done,” Lee said. “She keeps me abreast of what’s going on in the program. She keeps me informed. She has invited me into her



classroom to show off the work students have done. I can see Miss Broadway and her students truly have pride in the program.”

Lee believes the Avenue Scholars Foundation’s connections with Metropolitan Community College and with the business community have proven to be invaluable.

“Avenue Scholars gives Scholars 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. I wish we could expand the program to impact even more students.”

## Seniors prep for college experience

The Seniors started the semester by enrolling in Human Relations 1010, a dual enrollment course through Metropolitan Community College. In this class students are earning credits in both their home high school and at MCC, which will allow them to gain early credits towards their Associates Degree.

The content of this course allows students opportunities to learn about a variety of human behavior topics related to improving personal, job, and career effectiveness, including but not limited to stress management, goal setting, ethics and diversity in the workplace, and preparing for a professional interview. Through this experience, students are gaining exposure to the demands and expectations of a college class while still in the comfort of their home school with their Career Coach as their instructor.

In addition to their Human Relations course, students have also recently

prepared for and taken the placement exam, the Accuplacer, at MCC. The results of this test determine the level of English, Math, and, if necessary, Reading, students will be placed in when they begin taking classes on MCC's campus, possibly as soon as next semester for some students. In addition, the information helped students to begin plotting out their class progression in college.

Meanwhile, outside of both of these experiences, the Seniors are working diligently on their grades, attendance, work ready skills and behavior to ensure they are eligible to attend Senior Academy and/or participate in another approved Senior Experience next semester. They are also working to remain excellent candidates for the Avenue Horatio Alger Career Scholarship, which will be awarded this spring to active Avenue Scholars who are in good standing with the program.

## Juniors plan for college and careers

The juniors are busy exploring their strengths so they can make informed decisions about their career choices. The students are working through career-readiness curriculum to help them learn about how to obtain a job and show up to show up to the job with the skills to be successful. Career coaches are working with students to write a resume and cover letter, and they are practicing interview skills.

During the first semester, students also focus on their transferring skills as students in a work setting as well as the classroom. Career coaches work with students on how to improve their academic skills to ensure they are ready for Metropolitan Community College courses.

Juniors take an in-depth look at the high-demand career areas in Omaha: Medical Sciences, Business, Trades and Manufacturing, Industrial Technology, and Automotive Technology. Students recently attended a Career Exploration Day at Metro's Fort Campus. During this day they were able to explore each

industry area. Businesses graciously took time out of their schedules to teach students about entry-level positions within their industry areas and career advancement opportunities within the industry.

Businesses provided hands-on activities for the students to get the feel of what a career would be like within that industry. Highlights of the day included repairing a car bumper at CARSTAR, driving a truck simulator with Werner Trucking, practicing basic welding techniques with Drake Williams Steel, and experiencing a 3D printed engine replica created by prototype students at MCC. Students left the event with more clarity about what they want to pursue in the future.

Juniors Career Coaches will teach students about the career plan. Both student and coach will create a plan together, including proper steps to achieve their goal. This career planning process will continue beyond the high school program into their education and training at MCC.

## UPDATE

Avenue Scholars is off to a great start at Northwest High School. There are a total of 50 Juniors and Seniors enrolled in the Avenue Scholars program this year.

This year's students have already proven themselves to be an excellent group of hard working, committed students. Many Scholars brought with them a wealth of part-time job experience, and several others have worked to secure employment this fall. We have a total of 66% of students currently employed. Our goal is that ALL students have at least 150 hours of work experience by graduation, as we know this is the best way for students to gain work-ready skills.

In the classroom, the Juniors have learned about their individual Gallup Strengths, prepared for and attended the one-day Career Exploration Event, and have researched their careers of interest. We'll round out the semester by discussing the best ways to prepare for a professional interview, including drafting a resume, and developing thorough answers to interview questions.

The Seniors have been enrolled in my section of Human Relations 1010 at Northwest High. They've transitioned to following a syllabus and rising to the demands a college class, including reading from their textbook on a regular basis, maintaining strong attendance and moving through material at a more intense pace than we did last year. It's been an adjustment for them to see me as their college instructor, but most students are moving in the right direction, and I'm hopeful they'll be ready to take classes on campus from other MCC instructors this spring.

**Taleya Broadway**  
High School Career Coach  
(402) 312-1617  
tbroadway@avescholars.org