



**SUMMER 2023**



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:



*Welcome to the Summer 2023 issue of the Foundation newsletter.*

During the recent commencement ceremony, Northeast Community College faculty, staff, students and alum launched the celebration of the institution's 50th Anniversary. We look forward to celebrating this milestone through special events during the 2023-2024 academic year.

We continue to be dedicated to empowering every person in our region to achieve their academic and workforce development goals. The scholarship luncheon and South Sioux City expansion are two strong examples of how we measure success. You can read more in this newsletter.

Enjoy the latest highlights from the last six months and keep in touch. Once a Hawk, always a Hawk.

*Dr. Tracy Kruse*

Northeast Community College Foundation | Executive Director

Northeast Community College | Vice President of Development & External Affairs

## SUMMER 2023

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Take us anywhere!

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# Fulfilling Dreams

## 2023 Scholarship Luncheon

Many students would not be able to attend college without the help of strangers, and at the recent Northeast Community College Scholarship Luncheon, scholarship recipients had a chance to share with donors the stories of how generosity helped them get on the road to success.

"I love this event for so many reasons," said Dr. Leah Barrett, College president, in kicking off the annual luncheon. "It is time for us to learn of our students' journey and their hopes for the future. It is time to say, 'thank you' for your generosity and commitment to support our students' educational and workforce goals."

The number of scholarships Northeast Community College has awarded continues to increase annually but it has not kept up with the full needs of current and prospective students. In 2021-2022, Northeast's Financial Aid Office received more than 800 online applications for scholarships, but only 539 scholarship awards were made. For the current 2022-23 academic year, there was an increase to 1,106 applications.

"Students aspire to attend Northeast Community College, but many times - through no fault of their own - they run into roadblocks in achieving their dreams," Barrett said. "Factors such as family and job commitments often prevent these students from having the financial resources necessary to attain their degree or degrees to be successful in life. However, people such as you, our donors, help make those dreams come true."

Four students shared their stories with the audience, telling of the hardships they had faced and how scholarships made it possible for them to attain their dreams.

Daisy Mora, Norfolk, began her journey with Northeast in 2012. She knew what she wanted to do but did not know how she was going to be able to accomplish her dream until she heard about scholarships.

"The last two years of college have been better than ever. I was able to focus on my classes instead of trying to figure out how my classes would be paid for," Mora said.

"Because of scholarships I was able to graduate with my associate degree in December 2022. I can proudly say that because of scholarships I was able to accomplish being on the Honor List all four semesters of my college career at Northeast Community College."

Mora is currently a student at Wayne State College.

Daryl Lambert, Wayne, graduated from Northeast in May with an associate degree in nursing. Scholarships from the Dr. Jagmohan & Shobhana Desai Family, Northeast Nebraska Public Power District, and Northeast Phi Theta Kappa Tau Chi Chapter, along with tuition assistance from the Veterans Administration allowed him to achieve his dream of being a nurse and providing health care in a rural community.

Above (left): Christina Miller, Communication Arts Excellence Scholarship recipient, visiting with donors.

Above (right): Daisy Mora was one of four student speakers during the Scholarship Luncheon.

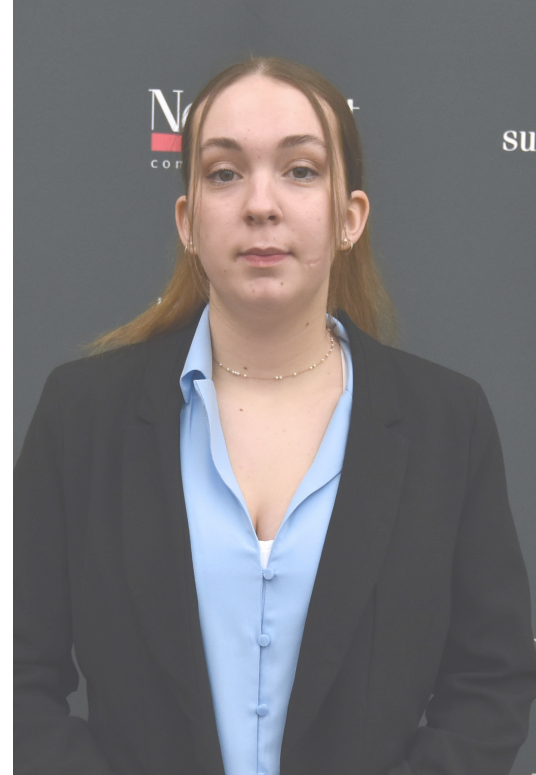




Above (left): Daryl Lambert was one of four student speakers during the Scholarship Luncheon.



Above (middle): Jaydn Weber was one of four student speakers during the Scholarship Luncheon.



Above (right): Nacesha Zahnd was one of four student speakers during the Scholarship Luncheon.

Lambert said one of the things that held him back from going to school was the fear of not being able to afford it.

“With the help of scholarships, those worries were taken away and instead of focusing on how I was going to afford school, I was able to focus on learning so that I could be the best nurse that I could be,” Lambert said.

“Your continued dedication to this institution of learning means the world to me and my family and I thank you for believing in me and awarding me the scholarships I received. Not only have you helped support my educational goals, but these scholarships have helped me to be a full-time student and have laid the course to my future.”

Structural drafting student Jaydn Weber, Norfolk, said scholarship assistance allowed her to live on campus and participate in activities like Student Activities Council (SAC). “Being on the SAC team required me to put aside my fears and be a part of a team and, at times, take on leadership roles; something I never did in high school,” she told the luncheon crowd.

“This program definitely keeps me on my toes,” Weber explained, “but has also developed confidence and leadership skills in me that I didn’t know I had. These are all things I truly believe I would not have gained or experienced without my scholarships.”

Weber is the recipient of the Northeast Community College Faculty Association Student Excellence Scholarship.

Nacesha Zahnd, of Atkinson, a first-year student in the auto body program, said she had never even considered college. One of 12 children in her family, Zahnd was homeschooled and believed that homeschooled students couldn’t go to college.

“One day, I just wanted to see if I could go to college,” Zahnd explained. “I decided that I wanted to, so I looked up good schools on Google, and Northeast came up. I did all the college stuff that I could figure out how to, but I was totally lost. I went on with my life not expecting anything of it. To my shock, I received a letter saying I was accepted.”

Zahnd is a recipient of a College Access Scholarship, part of the Student Success Endowment funded by the \$15-million gift received from McKenzie Scott in December 2020. For the 2022-23 award year, this scholarship was designed to assist first generation students with financial need and no previous degree who met other qualifying criteria.

This past year, scholarships in the amount of \$525,023 were presented to Northeast Community College students, with an average award of approximately \$974. The Northeast Foundation is working to increase the number and average size of the awards.

Support students’ dreams through scholarships by visiting [northeast.edu/giving/foundation-scholarships](http://northeast.edu/giving/foundation-scholarships) or by scanning the QR code. ■



For more information on scholarships, contact  
[foundation@northeast.edu](mailto:foundation@northeast.edu) or (402) 844-7240

# South Sioux City Expansion

## Construction of Commercial Driver's License (CDL) & Welding Facilities Soon Underway

Preliminary work will begin this summer on the \$8 million expansion of the South Sioux City campus of Northeast Community College.

In February, the Northeast Board of Governors approved the project which includes an 11,600 sq. ft. facility for commercial driver's license (CDL) training and a 1,500 sq. ft. addition to the current Industrial Training building to expand the welding program. The facilities and driving range will be located west of the main extended campus building at 1001 College Way in South Sioux City.

The truck driving training facility will include the CDL Training Building with two classrooms, a simulator room, instructor offices, drive-thru access, and an outdoor shelter for storing and charging. There will also be a training range for students to practice necessary maneuvers. The Industrial Training building addition will provide room for 20 welding booths and enough area for supervision and safety.

Dr. Leah Barrett, College president, said the expansion of the programs will provide increased opportunities for individuals who are looking to expand their skills as they seek employment in the two fields that are in high demand in the Siouxland region.

***"This project will allow Northeast Community College to meet increased employer requests for workers with the specialized skills of truck driving and welding to fill vacant positions and foster business growth in the region."***

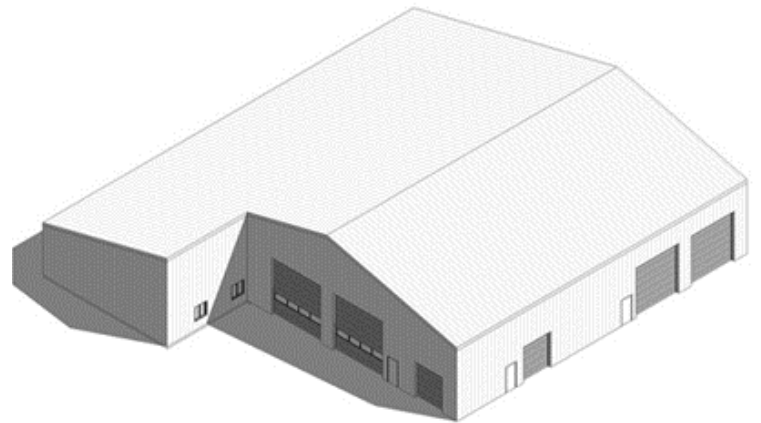
"These facilities and program expansions will provide opportunities not currently available in the Siouxland area, including career pathway programs with on and off ramps and short-term credentials that provide excellent opportunities with life sustaining wages for low skilled individuals," Barrett added. "These projects support our region's small businesses and are aimed at many of the industries most negatively impacted by COVID-19."

All funding for the project will come from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, along with other federal grant funds and donations through fundraising efforts.



Additionally, Northeast will use \$500,000 from a \$1 million U.S. Dept. of Labor community funding appropriations request that was in the Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations budget. The request, which was supported by Rep. Adrian Smith (NE-3), was approved by Congress in December. It was a joint request with Western Nebraska Community College to support the purchase of equipment and the hiring of faculty members to expand the CDL programs at both institutions.

Work on the driving range is scheduled to begin in July. Construction on the building projects is scheduled to begin later this year, with completion in Summer 2024. ■



Above: The architectural drawing of the CDL building planned for Northeast Community College's South Sioux City campus.



# A Big Difference

You may be looking for a way to make a big difference to help further the mission of Northeast Community College.

## Benefits of an IRA charitable rollover

- Avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to Northeast
- Satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year
- Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions
- Make a gift that is not subject to the deduction limits on charitable gifts

## How an IRA charitable rollover works

1. Contact your IRA plan administrator to make a gift from your IRA to the Northeast Foundation.
2. Your IRA funds will be directly transferred to the Foundation.
3. Please note that IRA charitable rollover gifts do not qualify for a charitable deduction.
4. Please contact us if you wish for your gift to be used for a specific purpose.

## Contact a professional

If you have any questions about an IRA charitable rollover gift, please talk with your IRA plan administrator or financial planner.



## Founders Society Members

Anonymous (4)  
Kendra Barnes  
John & Diana Blaylock  
The late LauraNel Carlisle  
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# NORTHEAST FOOD PANTRY



The Northeast Community College Food Pantry has received \$8,455 thanks to Healthy Blue Nebraska, Daycos4Good, College faculty and staff, and the Norfolk Area Big Give and a partnership with Poppin' Delights Gourmet Popcorn.

The Northeast Development Department sold bags of Poppin' Delights popcorn for the Big Give, held May 23, with all profits going to benefit the food pantry. A total of \$955 was raised from 22 donors.

Also in May, the Northeast Food Pantry received a \$2,500 grant from Daycos4Good. Gina Krysl, Northeast director of student care and outreach/counselor, plans to use this donation to purchase a full-size upright freezer for storage as well as additional food, paper products, and toiletries.

In April, Healthy Blue Nebraska donated \$5,000 to the Northeast Food Pantry. Half of that donation was in food from Lou's Thrifty Way in Norfolk. The other half was a check that can be used for future needs.

Krysl said the demand for help from the food pantry continues to grow.

"I believe we've had 70 students so far this semester coming to use the pantry," Krysl said. "We have students who come and use it just when they need it," she explained, "but we've also started offering food packages so when the College is closed over break and there's no food service, students who stay on campus have something to eat."

Krysl noted a change in policy has also increased use of the food pantry. "When I started," she said, "the expectation was that a student could only use the service once a semester. We got rid of that policy, and let it just be 'if you need something, come and get it.' I don't feel like we've had any students taking advantage of that."

"This year AWG has been donating refrigerated and frozen items," Krysl said. "We've now got a small freezer, and a used refrigerator has been donated to us."

Krysl added paper products and toiletries are also highly sought-after items. "Things like toilet paper, laundry detergent, deodorants," she said. "Those are hard to buy on a student budget."

A "Silent Disco" night was held for College staff and faculty April 28th at the Norfolk Country Club. There was no admission charge, but those attending were asked to donate toilet paper, tissues, paper plates and other paper products for the pantry. "Students are already excited about having toilet paper available again," Krysl said.

The food pantry is located in a small room near Krysl's office in Union 73. "Right now, it's big enough," Krysl said, "but we could use more space."

The Northeast Community College Food Pantry is available to all students, both on- and off-campus, as well as students attending UNMC in Norfolk. The food pantry is open over the summer months. "Last summer was not overly busy, but still about 20 students came to use the pantry," Krysl said.

"We take donations anytime," she said. "We have a collection basket right outside our office for non-perishable food, toiletries, and paper items."

Anyone wishing to make a donation to the Northeast Community College Food Pantry can contact Krysl at [gkrysl@northeast.edu](mailto:gkrysl@northeast.edu), 402-844-7277 or [foundation@northeast.edu](mailto:foundation@northeast.edu), 402-844-7240.

Online gifts also may be made using the QR code to the right. ■

**DONATE**





# Hawk Spotlight

## Alum Provides Support For Current Students



**Juanitta Chikaluma**  
A.A. Behavioral Science | 2021

An international student who graduated from Northeast Community College two years ago has had such a good experience she wants to remain in the Norfolk area.

"I just really love being here as an international student," Juanitta Chikaluma explained. "Not just the school, but Norfolk in general. It's welcoming. It feels homey."

Chikaluma came to Norfolk from Malawi in 2018 and has not been home since then. Her initial plan was to become a nurse.

"I did a semester and then realized this is not for me. I'm not a science person," Chikaluma said. "Then I switched to behavioral sciences because they don't have psychology here. I graduated and transferred to Western Iowa Tech and took psychology there for two semesters. Now I'm doing psychology at Wayne State College and minoring in human services."

Chikaluma plans to earn her bachelor's degree in the spring of 2024, and then begin work on her masters.

"My initial career goal is to get into clinical counseling," Chikaluma said. "But in working here, I have found I like working with students. It's something I want to do now. I love it - the setting, the atmosphere. I just love working with students."

Chikaluma works part time as the administrative assistant for Gina Krysl, director of student care and outreach/counselor at Northeast. Krysl supports Chikaluma's goal of returning to Northeast as a student counselor.

"She is a leader. She's amazing," Krysl said. "One thing that I talked to her about was the possibility of stepping in as one of the sponsors of the Active Minds group I wanted to get started. She is leading that, driving that group."



Active Minds is a national student-led organization at Northeast. Its purpose is to raise awareness about mental health on campus.

"It's so exciting," Chikaluma said of Active Minds. "Everyone is so passionate about mental health, and it's just a safe space and something I'm passionate about, too."

The group first met in January, but several smaller events have already been held, including distributing "self-love" cards for Valentine's Day and an "art and snack" night where students could paint, sculp, bead, or do other art projects while enjoying food treats.

Chikaluma was hired as an administrative assistant in October 2021, so she was already in that position when Krysl started working at Northeast.

"She sees things that I don't," Krysl explained. "She is one of the first points of contact for students coming for an appointment or in crisis. She brought to my attention that we need a better system to screen students when they first come in. Now, the student comes in and she just has a few questions to ask them. She knows if they answer yes to some questions, she needs to interrupt me immediately."

"Education outreach is also under my responsibilities," Krysl continued, "and she is awesome with that aspect of it. When we need flyers created, she knows what looks the best, what might be more engaging for students."

"I would love to have her eventually become a full-time counselor at Northeast," Krysl said of Chikaluma. "I know that's at least three years down the road, but I think she would be amazing at that. She has connections, knows what she is doing, has good ideas."

Chikaluma now has a younger sister in Norfolk. They share an apartment, and her sister is a nursing student. Juanitta has another younger sister in Malawi, along with the rest of her family. In May, her mother and an aunt visited Norfolk - this was the first time she had seen her mother in five years.

But even with the separation from family, Chikaluma plans to stay in the United States. "I love it here," she said. "If I can make a difference back home while I live here, I would love to. But I feel like I'm gonna stay." ■



# 50th Commencement

## Northeast Celebrates Student Success at 50th Commencement Ceremonies

Graduates of Northeast Community College were not only recognized for their academic achievements during Commencement ceremonies on May 12th; they also became members of a special group. The Class of 2023 was celebrated as the 50th in the College's history.

Nursing graduates received their nurse pins and participated in commencement to begin the day. The second ceremony awarded credentials to graduates in Applied Technology and Health and Public Services programs, while graduates in Science, Technology, Agriculture and Math, and Business and Humanities received their degrees, diplomas, and certificates to conclude the day.

Dr. Leah Barrett, president, said the day was extra special for the graduates.

"You are the 50th class to graduate from what we call today Northeast Community College. The end of your journey is a milestone for this college," she said. "In honor of this milestone we gave our students something very special – a lapel pin that reveals the college seal. You will see our graduates wearing them today."

The seal represents academic excellence at Northeast, adds authenticity to documents, and credibility as a degree-granting institution.

"Graduates, you are about to embark on an exciting journey. You have learned well and are commended for your accomplishments," Barrett said. "Go forth with confidence that you are well-prepared for the future. ... Congratulations to the Class of 2023, the 50th graduating class of Northeast Community College!"

In her faculty address, mathematics instructor Stacey Aldag told graduates they need to know who they are. She cited two reasons why they should become better at knowing themselves – they need direction, and they need people in their lives.

"Knowing yourself can help you improve your relationships with others and help you figure out where you are going in life. Knowing yourself can empower you to answer those graduation day questions. So, direction really starts by knowing who you are," Aldag said.

"Choose people you can learn from, people that challenge you to be better. When I was knocked down, there were





**Above (left):** “Congratulations Class of 2023. We started from the bottom and now we are here,” said Yovany Carrillo, Madison, as he ended his student address. Carrillo was awarded an Associate of Arts degree in Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement.

**Above (right):** Ryland Bates, Norfolk, receives a kiss on the cheek from mother, Debbie Bates, as she presented his diploma. He earned an Associate of Applied Science degree in Electromechanical Technology. Debbie Bates is a support specialist/advisor in Northeast’s nursing programs.

times when I thought I could not get up, but my people, I like to call them my personal board of directors, swooped in and pulled me back up on my feet. And I know without a doubt, I am 99.7% sure, that you will find your direction with your own personal board of directors.”

Yovany Carrillo, Madison, gave the student address. He shared the struggles his family endured in his younger years and the hard work he put in during high school to “change the cycle.” Carrillo recognized other graduates participating – including first generation college students, those from both low- and higher-income families, and international students, among others.

“Look if you didn’t get anything from the speech, take this. Don’t lose yourself. I believe in you. Do whatever makes you happy. Nothing in this life is worth sacrificing your own happiness,” he said. “Congratulations Class of 2023. We started from the bottom and now we are here.”

Carrillo was awarded an Associate of Arts degree in Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement. He plans to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and continue his education as a Business Administration major with a concentration in finance. He looks forward to pursuing his dream of working for a federal agency.

Approximately 923 graduates, including those earning more than one degree, and those who completed their studies this past summer and fall, were listed in the commencement program. The graduates earned 1,051 degrees; 67 students earned two degrees, 26 earned three degrees, and three earned four degrees.

The 3 p.m. ceremony was interrupted by a tornado warning midway through the event. Everyone was safely evacuated from the Cox Activities Center by Northeast employees to nearby areas of refuge on campus.

All three ceremonies were broadcast live by members of the Northeast Community College Media Arts – Broadcasting, and Media Arts – Audio Recording Technology programs. Ceremonies may be viewed online at [team1sports.com/northeastcc/](https://team1sports.com/northeastcc/) or by scanning the QR code. ■



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# EVENTS

## ***OKTOBERFEST FAMILY FESTIVAL***

***September 23, 2023 | 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.***

***LOCATION: NORFOLK CAMPUS***

## ***CELEBRATE WITH US***

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