



**KNOWLEDGE • CHARACTER • COMMITMENT**  
NEBRASKA COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

**2020-2021**

**annual report**

**GRAND ISLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
OMAHA NORTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL  
OMAHA SOUTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL  
WINNEBAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



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# FOREWORD

This year, the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy celebrates 15 years preparing first-generation and low-income students for academic success. What started as a pilot program with 52 students has expanded into a model of college access and success that continues to serve hundreds of scholars. Meanwhile, graduates of NCPA have pursued graduate school, been accepted into professional schools or have started successful careers.

NCPA scholars have proven educational success is achievable no matter the circumstances with the right academic and social support.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges for people and communities around the world, we are profoundly proud of how NCPA scholars persevered. This report recognizes the accomplishments of the past year and reflects upon how NCPA has evolved during the past 15 years.

Last year, NCPA high school scholars met and exceeded program expectations. In total, 86 NCPA seniors completed the NCPA's high school requirements, making it the largest and most diverse cohort in the program's history. The class of 2021 achieved numerous awards and recognitions – 17 Regent Scholars, Nebraska Achievement Scholars, Emerging Leader Scholars, D.J. Hero Awards, to name a few. Furthermore, 100% of the class of 2021 plans to enroll at a community college or four-year university. In addition, younger NCPA high school scholars participated in more than 180 remote and in-person events, illustrating their commitment by meeting obligations set by the NCPA program and their respective high schools.

At the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 32 first-year college scholars participated in the Summer Institute, NCPA's early move-in program. The scholars had additional time to transition to campus, learn COVID-19 protocols, and meet faculty, staff and peer leaders. 17 college scholars earned a 4.0 GPA, and 45% earned a 3.5 or higher GPA. Furthermore, we celebrated 12 scholars who earned their bachelor's degrees during the in-person graduation ceremony at Memorial Stadium! We invite you to review the numerous honors our college scholars achieved during the 2020-2021 academic year on page 17.

As we look forward to next year, we are mindful of the challenges that exist and aware of the opportunities to make a lasting impact. Thank you for your continued support of the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN  
T.J. McDowell., *Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs*  
Moises Padilla, *Director*

GRAND ISLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
2124 N Lafayette Ave,  
Grand Island, NE 68803  
Jeff Gilbertson, *Principal*

OMAHA NORTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL  
4410 N. 36th Street  
Omaha, NE 68111  
Dr. Collette Nero, *Principal*

OMAHA SOUTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL  
4519 S. 24th Street  
Omaha, NE 68107  
Jodi Pesek, *Principal*

WINNEBAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL  
202 Osborne Street  
Winnebago, NE 68071  
Dan Fehring, *Superintendent*  
Cheryl Burrell, *Assistant Superintendent*

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP  
Dr. Cynthia Gooch-Grayson, *MCC Associate Vice President*



MOISES PADILLA  
*Director of the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy*

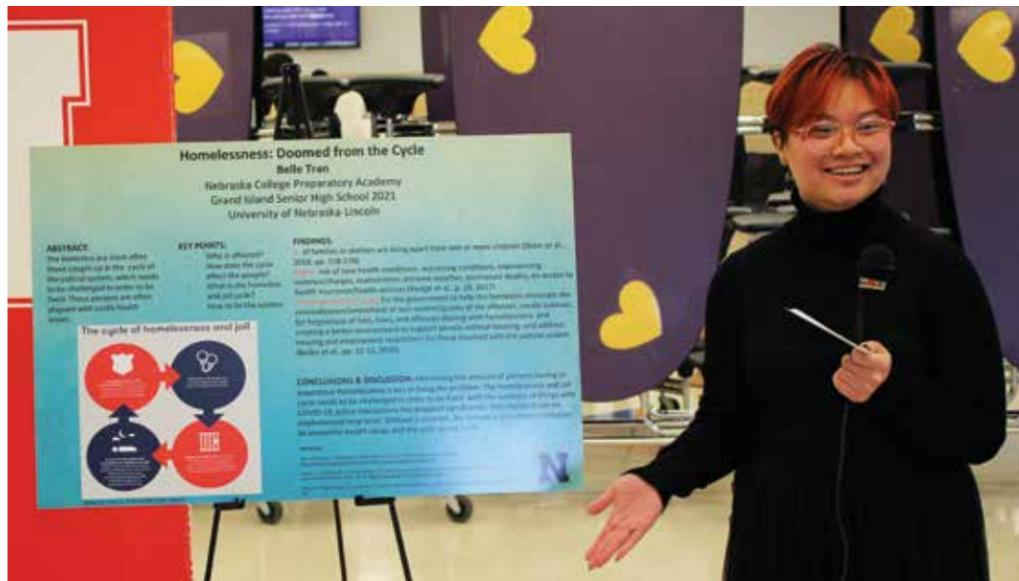


T.J. MCDOWELL  
*Assistant Vice Chancellor, Office of Student Affairs*





Grand Island Class of 2021



NCPA Scholar Belle Tran presenting her Capstone project.

## 2021 RECOGNITION RECEPTION AWARD WINNERS

Each school year culminates with a recognition reception, which brings together scholars, their families and educators to highlight and celebrate the year's accomplishments. The receptions include a Senior Showcase, where graduating seniors present their capstone research project. All NCPA scholars must complete a capstone project their senior year to successfully satisfy NCPA's high school requirements. This year's topics included the effects of body posture on wellness, voter suppression, and the impact music has on student's emotional well-being.

In addition, younger NCPA scholars, as well as high school and middle school teachers, are recognized for their hard work and contributions. Congratulations to our 2021 award winners!

### WINNEBAGO PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

- Freshman Recognition Award: Mimike Dolezal
- Sophomore Recognition Award: Anissa Rave
- Junior Recognition Award: Zaiden Bernie
- Pillar of Excellence Award: Jarius 'JT' Bass
- Middle School Educator of the Year: Ms. Jami Pixler
- High School Educator of the Year: Ms. Daniela Gant

### GRAND ISLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

- Freshman Award: Ashlyn Favazza
- Sophomore Award: Alejandro Amador
- Junior Award: Juan and Victor Garcia
- Pillar of Excellence Award: Nyanhial Pal
- Peer Mentor Award: Isabella Mora
- Middle School Educator of the Year: Ms. Jessa Yager
- High School Educator of the Year: Ms. Tracy Jakubowski

**16** Graduating NCPA high school seniors admitted to Nebraska Honors Program.

**800+** NCPA staff held 800+ individual meetings with NCPA high school scholars.

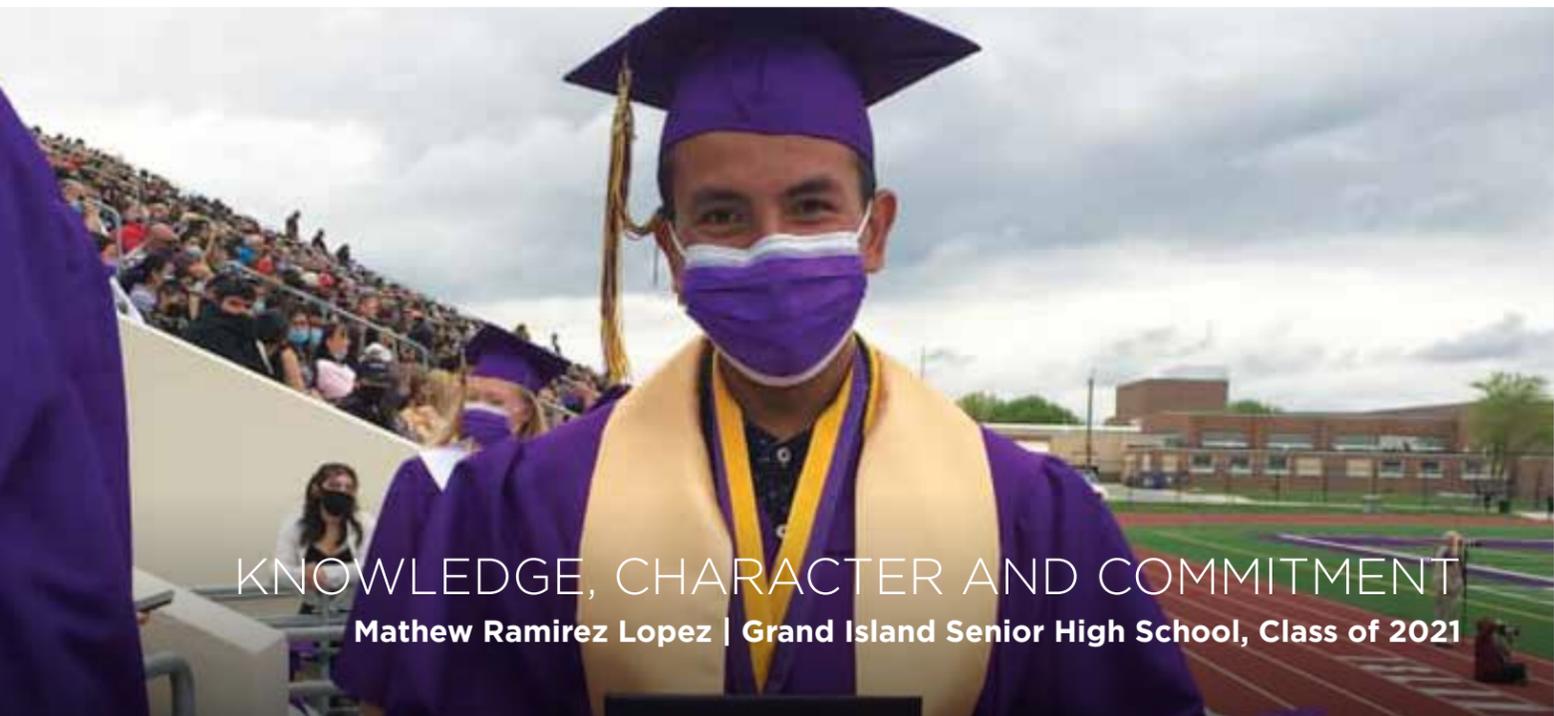
**100%** The first cohort of Omaha South NCPA scholars graduate from high school. 100% plan to pursue a degree at a university or community college. Nationally, 69.1 percent of high school graduates pursue a degree, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

### OMAHA NORTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL

- Freshman Recognition Award: Chloe Riddle
- Sophomore Recognition Award: Ahmaya Evans
- Junior Recognition Award: Taylor McKesson
- Pillar of Excellence Award: Kiya Miller
- NCPA Mentor Award: Akangkha Khan
- Middle School Educator of the Year: Ms. Maribeth Talbot
- High School Educator of the Year: Ms. Megan Witty

### OMAHA SOUTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL

- Freshman Recognition Award: Getsemani Sotelo-Flores
- Sophomore Recognition Award: Julia Pérez
- Junior Recognition Award: Gisela Meza-Guzman
- Pillar of Excellence Award: Alyssa Sturtevant
- NCPA Mentor Award: Viangri Sontay-Lopez
- Middle School Educator of the Year: Mrs. Giovanna Zermeño
- High School Educator of the Year: Mrs. Cara Palmesano



KNOWLEDGE, CHARACTER AND COMMITMENT  
 Mathew Ramirez Lopez | Grand Island Senior High School, Class of 2021



FIND BALANCE  
 Taylor McKesson | Omaha North High Magnet School, Class of 2022

**NCPA is helping Grand Island Senior Mathew Ramirez Lopez accomplish an important life-long goal.**

“My brother, dad and mom all immigrated to the United States from Bogotá, Colombia 20 years ago in search of a better life. Not knowing any English, they worked long shifts in a hotel to make ends meet. My brother went to school also knowing absolutely no English. I’ve always wanted to thank my family for everything they’ve done for me over the years. One of my biggest goals in life was to attend college without my parents going into debt. Thanks to NCPA, I’ll be able to accomplish that life-long goal.”

**Mathew’s career plans include giving back to future students.**

“I’m considering majoring in education and pursuing a career as a Secondary Social Science teacher. I desire to become a teacher because I want to show

future generations the importance of education and how it can greatly affect one’s life. By maintaining a positive and open environment in my classroom, I want to motivate all my future students to do well—not only my class but in life in general. I want to motivate my future students to be the best version on themselves.”

**Like many NCPA Scholars, Mathew says the relationships are a highlight of the Academy.**

“My favorite part about being in NCPA is all the new relationships and friendships I’ve made over the years. I’ve been able to meet some truly incredible people who have become great friends. NCPA has changed my life dramatically! Because of NCPA, I’ve had many great guides to answer my questions about planning for the future. The NCPA staff has truly helped me become the person I want to be. I would describe NCPA as

a whole new family, because that’s what NCPA is to me. Thanks to NCPA, I have been able to meet so many new people over the years who have helped shape me into who I am today.”

**NCPA’s Pillars of Excellence have all impacted who Mathew is today.**

“All three Pillars of Excellence have helped me in some way: **Knowledge** encouraged me to take more advanced classes in high school, **Character** taught me to always be open-minded and true to myself no matter what obstacles I faced and I learned the value of **Commitment** because I know that all the hard work I’ve put in over the years will be worth it in the end.”

**NCPA has helped Taylor McKesson learn to balance school and activities while working toward her goals for the future.**

“The most important thing I’ve learned from NCPA is consistency. NCPA has helped me learn how to plan, stay organized and balance all my activities and school work. Outside of NCPA, I’m also on the Black Student Leadership Council, the Omaha North cheer team and I participate in track and field in shot put and discus. Because of NCPA, I feel more prepared for college because I’ve learned skills needed for college life. They’ve helped me with ACT preparation, applying for scholarships and learning about what to expect with college. My goals for the future include attending college, going to medical school and being a voice within my community.”

**Taylor’s interest in the medical field came from seeing members of her family and community experience issues with mental and physical health.**

“I hope to work in the healthcare or medical field, because I’ve always wanted to help people. I want to be a voice for those who need it the most in the healthcare system. I’ve seen so many health problems within my family, community and at Omaha North, and I want to give back. Because some members of my family have experienced heart issues, I’ve seen what people go through at hospitals, and I want to help families in that situation. I’m currently working on my Capstone Research Project about postpartum depression within the Black community. Throughout history, this issue has impacted Black women, and I think the medical field can improve awareness and resources.”

**The NCPA community has supported and encouraged Taylor throughout her time in high school.**

“NCPA is the family that you never knew you needed. The staff always wants

what is best for you and will help you in any way they can. I appreciate all the memories from NCPA over the past few years. My freshman year at camp, I knew some people, and then we started meeting others and quickly created a larger group of friends. Now we look back and we talk about how much we connected and how far we have all come together.”

NCPA has impacted my family by showing them that I have an opportunity and that money doesn’t have to be an issue. It’s great knowing that I have someone outside my family that can help me with questions I have about college. Being in NCPA means that there are always people who want to see me succeed and fulfill my personal and academic goals.”



COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT

Leopoldo Hernandez | Omaha South High Magnet School, Class of 2021



FINDING CONFIDENCE

Cherish Flyinghawk | Winnebago Public High School, Class of 2022

**Thanks to four years of NCPA’s support in high school, Leo Hernandez is approaching college with confidence.**

“My favorite part of NCPA is getting to meet new people and getting help with transitioning to college. NCPA has taught me that family, friends and peers are always there to help. With all the seminars, camps and helpful advice from teachers and counselors from NCPA, I learned that it’s okay to explore lots of different options when it comes to choosing a major. I am considering majoring in Computer Science because I enjoy writing code and discovering new breakthroughs. I’m also interested in exploring biochemistry, dentistry and other majors!”

**The NCPA community has helped Leo learn to reach out to those around him.**

“NCPA is a family, and they give you a chance to be successful. Meeting my NCPA peers for the first time during our freshmen year of high school changed my life. I got to experience a family-like atmosphere throughout high school, and I learned to reach out for help when I need it. My goals for the future are to study hard in college, then secure a job that pays well. I also want to enjoy my time in college by meeting new people, making new friends, and developing a passion for what I’m studying. I am involved with AIM Code School, where I learn how to edit a website from the ground up. When it comes to hobbies, I enjoy taking care of my plants and four fish tanks, listening to music and playing video games with my friends.”

**NCPA helped Leo navigate the challenges of adjusting to life during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

“NCPA is a program full of helpful and attentive staff. NCPA staff helped me overcome the challenge of social anxiety. Talking 1-to-1 with staff helped me rethink my ideas and change the way I act. Ironically, COVID-19 made me more of an outgoing person—I really appreciated all the meetings with my NCPA teachers. The social isolation, while remote, took a toll on my social life. I appreciated all the meetings with my NCPA teachers, counselors and mentors.”

**NCPA has given Cherish Flyinghawk the motivation to succeed in every aspect of her life.**

“NCPA helped me stay on a good path. It encourages me to make better choices. NCPA really changed my life because I have come a long way. I never thought I would be where I am today—planning to attend college. NCPA helped me overcome a lack of focus and motivation for school, and realize how important my future is. I used to think I would never become successful, but now here I am getting closer to the future I have always wanted for myself.”

**More than anything, NCPA has helped Cherish realize her own worth and find confidence.**

“When you know your worth, you can handle tough situations no matter what. I’ve learned that failing is not the end of

the world. You have to brush it off and try even harder. NCPA is like a family because they include every scholar and make them feel welcome. The staff and teachers are a really big support system to every scholar.”

**By being involved, Cherish is preparing for her future—no matter what it holds.**

“I am currently involved in National Honor Society, Student Council, FCCLA, Volleyball, Track, Softball and Speech. My future goals are to finish college and get a career that I am passionate about—I have been struggling between choosing education or nursing. I really like education and teaching others. I also like to help people, and one day I want to be able to come back to my hometown and help or teach people in my community.”

**Now, Cherish is ready to make that future happen.**

“I have learned that being an NCPA scholar isn’t about being smart, it’s more about working hard. You need to want to be successful and want a better future for yourself. Even when times are tough, just know that you can do anything you set your mind to. My favorite part about NCPA is being challenged and being able to handle the challenges. If someone was thinking about applying for NCPA, I would tell them that the most important part is to believe in yourself through every step of the way. NCPA helps you prepare for a better and successful future. It challenges you to work harder. It gives you more opportunities to do bigger and better things.”

NEBRASKA COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY  
THE FIRST 15 YEARS

2006

- The first freshman cohort at Grand Island Senior High School begins.

2008

- The first freshman cohort at Omaha North High Magnet School begins.

2010

- Academic standards increased from 3.0 to 3.25 GPA
- **The first cohort of NCPA high school scholars enroll at Nebraska.**
- Partnership with MCC to provide increased academic options for Omaha scholars.

2011

- NCPA hires first Senior Assistant Director to coordinate emotional & mental health services and training for NCPA staff, students and families.
- Capstone Research Project component implemented for high school senior scholars.

2012

- Brothers & Sisters of the Academy (now Scholars of the Academy) is implemented to assist incoming scholars with a successful transition to NCPA and high school.
- 8th-grade semi-finalist interviews implemented for the selection process.

2013

- First NCPA scholar enrolls at MCC.
- **First Omaha North NCPA scholar (Taylor Armstrong) graduates from Nebraska.**

2014

- **First Grand Island NCPA scholar (Abel Covarrubias) graduates from Nebraska.**
- First NCPA scholar enrolls into graduate school.

2016

- First NCPA scholar accepted into the University Honors Program and College of Business Honors Academy.
- 11 scholars study abroad in six different countries.
- Nebraska Faculty publish official research examining self-efficacy and resilience of NCPA scholars: "Promoting Positive Youth Development and Critical Consciousness through College Preparation".

2017

- **NCPA expands to serve Omaha South and Winnebago High Schools.**

2018

- New partnership with The Trenchard Foundation. The Institute of Excellence, NCPA college success program, is renamed to the Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence.

2019

- **The first cohort of Winnebago High School scholars enroll at Nebraska.**

2020

- NCPA successfully adjusts program services to support NCPA scholars and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **NCPA celebrates a milestone of 100 college graduates from Nebraska.**

2021

- **The first cohort of Omaha South High Magnet School scholars enroll at Nebraska.**
- As of June 1, 2021, nine scholars have received the nationally competitive Gilman Award.
- Reyna Sebastian, Grand Island and Nebraska alumna, becomes the first NCPA scholar to earn a doctorate.



SUCCESS THROUGH SUPPORT  
Clarice Santos

*NCPA scholars have proven educational success is achievable no matter the circumstances with the right academic and social support. What started as a pilot program 15 years ago continues to make an impact on the lives of scholars. We invite you to read what Clarice Santos—sociology and economics major from Omaha, Nebraska—has to say about her NCPA experience.*

"One of the greatest legacies that my family has bestowed through each generation is their need to learn. Education is held in high regard within my family despite the limited chances that we've had to pursue it. As a result, I have always found myself surrounded by curious learners. They have always strived to find ways to teach themselves whatever subject catches their attention—law, mechanics, botany, ornithology and more.

My family created a space for learning by encouraging discussions and passing on their own knowledge to each other. This environment was an antithesis of their situation, as they have been discouraged to pursue the education they desire. As a result, attaining higher education is the

highest priority for me. I carry with me the sacrifices of those who have carved a path of opportunity to pursue the curiosities that I have inherited.

I think that first-generation students are susceptible to impostor syndrome. There is a sort of hyper-sensitivity to our lack of common knowledge regarding the college environment. However, because of my NCPA cohort, I was able to witness how others shared those same struggles and overcame them. The NCPA staff was also tremendously important as they have reassured me of my place on campus throughout the years—they created a space for me to belong.

The college environment is unlike anywhere else, and it's something that you need to learn how to navigate. NCPA is not just a scholarship to open your opportunity to attend college, it's also an amalgamation of people who will do their utmost to ensure that you will achieve the goals you've set for yourself during college."

CLARICE'S AWARDS, HONORS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Alpha Kappa Delta Honor Society, 2021
- Vanetta Aaron Outstanding Undergraduate Student Paper Competition: Best Paper on Race, Class or Gender, 2021
- Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2020
- Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experience (UCARE) Grant, 2020
- UNL Opportunities Scholarship Award in Sociology, 2020, 2021
- McNair Research Grant, 2019
- Alice Lou Crank Undergraduate Sociology Award, 2019
- Nebraska Achievement Scholarship, 2018
- Trenchard Foundation Academic Excellence, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021
- Dean's List, 2018, 2019, 2020



Mentee Jaquelin Serrano and mentor Akangkha Kahn at Bob Ross Paint Night

## MENTORSHIP DURING THE PANDEMIC

For many NCPA scholars, preparing for college can feel stressful and daunting—for reasons in and outside of the classroom. Having people to reach out to and connect with during this process is key.

NCPA’s Mentor Program connects high school scholars with college mentors, providing yet another avenue of support to scholars beyond NCPA staff members. By connecting scholars and college students, the Mentor Program bolsters the support system in place for scholars and enhances the social aspect of NCPA.

Mentors are current University of Nebraska–Lincoln undergraduate students, and many of them are current NCPA college scholars. The mentors are all dedicated to helping the high school scholars accomplish their goals and grow in confidence.

This last year, mentors and mentees had to make some adjustments because of the pandemic, but it didn’t stop them from spending time together. Mentors hosted virtual meetings, including a game night, a Bob Ross paint night and a mentor panel. Thank you NCPA mentors for your dedication and leadership to the NCPA Mentor Program!

I have loved having the NCPA Mentor Program, both from the mentee perspective as well as the mentor perspective. If I had a question or wanted to build a relationship as a high school scholar, there was someone there for me. As a mentor, it was amazing to see that I helped someone out and got to see them achieve their goal of graduating high school.

–**Khila Bowling** (NCPA Mentor)



“

What I like about the mentoring program is being able to build a bond with my mentor over my four years in high school. I like how involved my mentor was with her mentees; she always tried to keep in contact with us. She planned events with us and is always willing to help us.

–**Jimeace Riley** (Omaha North Scholar)

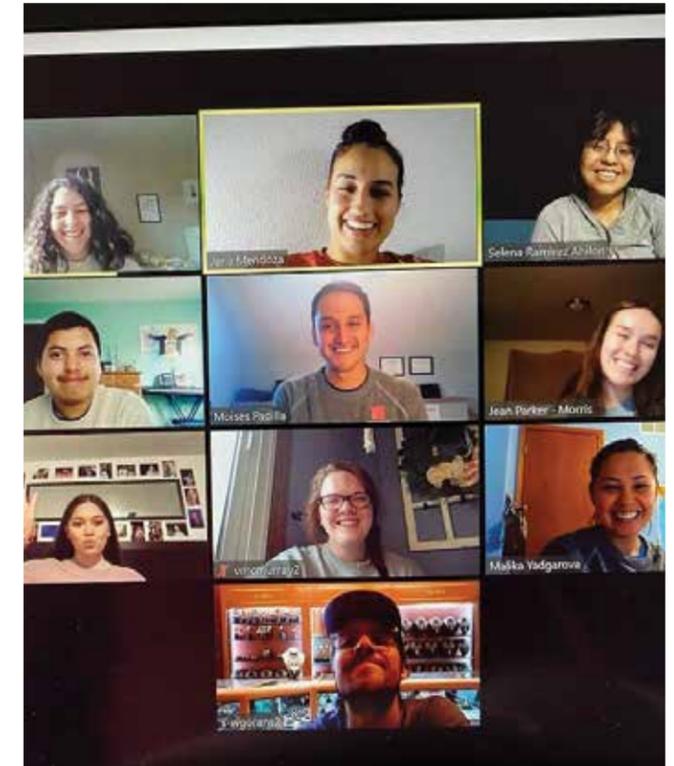
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“

The mentor program has helped me in many ways. I now have a great mentor to go to and ask questions about college, NCPA and anything in general. I really enjoy having someone there to talk to any time. I especially like the mentor events. I think the mentor program is great.

–**Valeria Dominguez-Ruiz** (Omaha South Scholar)

”



NCPA Mentor meetings went virtual in Fall 2020.



NCPA Mentors shared tips and experiences as college scholars to NCPA high school scholars at a virtual panel.





**FINDING A PATH FORWARD**  
**Samuel Aguilera-Robledo | Grand Island Senior High Alum**  
**University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Class of 2024**

**NCPA's support has allowed Samuel Aguilera-Robledo to achieve his goal of attending college.**

“NCPA changed my life by giving me hope and the opportunity to put in the work. Had it not been for NCPA, I don’t know if college would have been an option for me. They gave me the chance to better my life and maybe even make a change to the world as we know it. Attending college has given me a clear path to achieve my goals. It has also opened a new world of understanding for me. To me, the dedication that is required by NCPA has been entirely worth the opportunity they have given me. None of my hard work was in vain. All the work that NCPA has required has prepared me for college, and I am grateful for that.”

**At Nebraska, Samuel's career goals and aspirations have grown and evolved.**

“One thing that I really hope to accomplish during my life is to contribute in some way to the betterment and preservation of wildlife. I recently switched my major from Fisheries and Wildlife to

Computational Biochemistry. I may have switched my major, but I still want to contribute to the amazing world of wildlife. The field of research is constantly changing and evolving as new technologies get developed and as new information gets presented. I aim to one day be on the forefront of discovery and contribute to that change. More specifically, I aim to oversee my own team of researchers and focus on understanding and maybe even developing new ways to fight disease.”

**NCPA's financial support has affected Samuel as well as his family.**

“NCPA has positively affected my family by relieving the incredible stress that comes with worrying about money. Without this worry, my family has been able to focus on taking care of each other while I pursue a degree that will hopefully help my family in the future. My family consists of my mom and my two younger brothers. My dad got deported a while back, which left my mom to raise us on her own. All my life she has shown

me what it means to persevere, and her strength has inspired my own. When it comes to my brothers, I aspire to be someone that they can rely on, and I understand that the way I choose to live my life affects theirs. Family is one of the most important things to me, and that includes many of my friends who I also consider family.”

**NCPA staff was always there to support and encourage Samuel, even while he was graduating from high school in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

“The NCPA and TFIOE staff have always been a great source of support for me. This has been a great help, especially during the events of this current pandemic. This gave me the opportunity to see how much NCPA cares about us scholars. During graduation season, they put so much effort into hosting a small ceremony for us, and they even did a drive-by graduation! Being a part of NCPA is a bit like having a coach for college. They truly push you to become the best you can be.”

## SUCCESS ON CAMPUS

In addition to fulfilling their NCPA requirements, scholars at Nebraska are engaged on campus in a variety of ways and excel above and beyond the program goals set before them. From being accepted into honors programs and studying abroad to serving in leadership positions, being actively involved in student organizations and graduating with distinction, NCPA scholars made their mark on campus during the 2020-21 academic year.



### HONORS & AWARDS

- Natavia Jones won President of the Year for Nebraska's NPHC Greek chapters. Her leadership of the Omicron Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated during a pandemic and racial reckoning was exemplary.
- Daniela Chavez is one of eight undergraduate students awarded the university's Student Luminary Award recognizing her exceptional leadership and commitment to improving the campus and community.
- LaDaysia Smith, first-year college scholar, was selected to intern at Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture in Omaha, NE.
- Samuel Aguilera and Kya Pass are two of the 12 students selected as Ronald E. McNair Scholars. Samuel (Biochemistry) and Kya (Sociology) will engage in research under the guidance of a Nebraska faculty mentor.
- Selena Ramirez was honored as one of the 65 students named Chancellor's Scholars. Chancellor's Scholars are students who have maintained 4.0 grade-point averages on all collegiate work at Nebraska and elsewhere.
- Joana Reyes and Clarice Santos received the Gilman Award to study abroad; 11 total Huskers were selected for this prestigious award in 2020-2021.
- Viangri Sontay-Lopez was selected as New Student Orientation leader for summer 2021.
- Daelyn Zagurski won the Chief Standing Bear Journey for Justice Scholarship for her academic and leadership achievements.
- Steven Mena was admitted to the master's in Student Affairs Administration program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. One in five NCPA Nebraska graduates pursue a graduate or professional degree.

### STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS LEADERSHIP ROLES AND INVOLVEMENT

- First-Gen Nebraska
- Campus Recreation Student Advisory Board
- College of Arts & Sciences Ambassador Program (Ambassador)
- ASUN - Association of Students of the University of Nebraska
- University Learning Communities
- Minority Pre-Health Club (President)
- Academic Honor Societies
- Chemistry Club
- Mexican American Student Association
- University of Nebraska Inter-Tribal Exchange
- Afrikan People's Union
- UNL Chapter of Define American
- Lambda Theta Nu Sorority (President)
- Kappa Delta Chi Sorority, Inc.
- Sigma Psi Zeta Sorority, Inc.
- Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity, Inc.
- Panhellenic Council
- LGTBQA+ Student Organization
- OASIS – Office of Academic Success and Intercultural Services
- NCPA Mentor Program
- Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence – Peer Leader Program
- School of Natural Resources – Clubs
- Numerous Scholars with Professional Internships

“Attending college was always important to me because receiving a higher education was not an option available to my parents. As a first-generation student, going to college meant showing my siblings and nephew the wonders and ample opportunities that higher education can offer. As a Latina, going to college also meant an opportunity to be a representative voice for my Latino community, specifically in the healthcare field.

I hope to one day become a Physician Associate (PA), so I can participate in making healthcare more accessible. I hope to limit the disparities that many minorities face in healthcare by advocating for improved translation services and culturally appropriate forms of communication in healthcare.

I had never heard of the word college until NCPA introduced me to it. NCPA changed my life because it introduced me to leadership opportunities that have helped me overcome my fears, doubts and shyness. As an introvert, NCPA has helped me use my voice to speak out for what I value and to imagine making an impact in my community as an aspiring healthcare professional. Without NCPA, I would have never envisioned this career path, nor do I think I would be beginning my journey of becoming a PA this summer at one of the top ten PA programs in the nation.

All the dedication for the past four years has definitely been worth it. I am so thankful for all the support that the NCPA staff has given me and for all their words of wisdom and constant cheering. As a first-generation student, there were a lot of unknowns, but I always felt blessed that I could turn to NCPA to help guide me.

If I had to describe NCPA in one word, it would be support. Being a first-generation student, it was hard to explain all my accomplishments in college because it was an opportunity that my family never had before. My family did not always understand everything I was doing and going through as a scholar. On campus, I was so thankful to have NCPA as a community I could turn to. Initially, I was afraid to attend college because of the many unknowns, but NCPA really prepares you to get connected and to build lifelong relationships with other NCPA scholars and staff so that campus feels like a place in which you belong. **I am so thankful that I can say I was an NCPA scholar, and now I'm proud to be an NCPA alum.**”



## NCPA COLLEGE GRADUATION

The first Omaha NCPA Scholar to graduate from Nebraska was Taylor Armstrong in December 2013. In May 2014, Abel Covarrubias became the first Grand Island NCPA scholar to graduate from Nebraska. To date, there are 116 graduates. Congratulations to the following NCPA college scholars who graduated with degrees from Nebraska this year!

### OMAHA

- Josiah Ward, Mechanical Engineering
- Akangkha Khan, Psychology
- Arelis Placencia Monroy, Psychology
- Ciera Pieters, Film and New Media
- KeVonna Samuels, Criminology & Criminal Justice
- Khila Bowling, Psychology
- Natavia Jones, Child, Youth & Family Studies

### GRAND ISLAND

- Steven Mena, Child, Youth & Family Studies
- Seara Ontiveros, Psychology
- Selena Ramirez Ahilon, Nutrition and Health Sciences
- Valerie Ontiveros, Child, Youth & Family Studies
- Carolina Saquiche Dominguez, Criminology & Criminal Justice



**4%** NCPA freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate is 4% higher than the Nebraska average.

**3.2** College scholars have an average cumulative GPA of 3.2

**116** NCPA has had a total of 116 college graduates to date.



**METROPOLITAN**  
Community College