

PRESS RELEASE



Uniting for Students' Futures

A new college scholarship program targeted toward at-risk students has been developed at University Center by Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center.

The Avera McKennan Sister Sheila Schnell Scholarship Endowment has been developed specifically to provide opportunities to area students who graduate from high school after completing the USucceed program.

USucceed, a new initiative of Sioux Empire United Way and Lutheran Social Services, will be launched in area high schools in January. Through the program, volunteer mentors will commit to work with at-risk high school students through the duration of high school. The goal of USucceed is to provide support and encouragement for young students to complete high school.

“The most powerful aspect of this new scholarship is the opportunity that it provides to young people who otherwise may not have had the financial means or the support system in place to even consider college,” said Mark Lee, Executive Dean of University Center.

Any student who participates in the USucceed program for all four years and graduates from high school will have the ability to apply for the new scholarship to attend University Center.

“Helping at-risk students pursue a college education is an outreach that helps fulfill our mission at Avera McKennan, and the mission of the Sisters. Supporting higher education also helps us develop a strong workforce for the future. This scholarship program addresses both goals,” said Dr. David Kapaska, regional president and CEO for Avera McKennan. “Sister Sheila highly values education and at the same time is dedicated to helping people who are underprivileged. Naming this scholarship after her honors her commitment and example.”

In addition to the scholarship opportunity, plans are underway to create a higher education resource network called USucceed University. Beginning in their first year of the program, USucceed students and mentors will have access to information and educational workshops on navigating the world of post-secondary education. All post-secondary schools in the Sioux Empire have been invited to participate.

The US Department's National Center for Education Statistics shows that young adults with a bachelor's degree earned 114 percent more than those without a high school diploma, 50 percent more than young adult high school completers, and 25 percent more than young adults with an associate's degree in 2009.

"USucceed was designed to provide students who might lack a strong support system with someone to guide them all the way through high school," said Scott Lawrence, Sioux Empire United Way Board Chair. "This scholarship fund has taken that concept even further by showing our first class of participants that our community is ready to see them through high school, college, and beyond."

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Julie Ward, *Director of Communications*

Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center • www.AveraMcKennan.org
1325 S. Cliff Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57117 • (605) 360-4476 • julie.ward@avera.org

Mark Lee, *Executive Dean*

University Center
(605) 367-5380 • Mark.Lee@SDUniversityCenter.org

Brandi Miller

Sioux Empire United Way • www.seuw.org
(605) 336-2095 • brandi@seuw.org

