



Millard North Middle School • 2828 So. 139th St. • Omaha, NE 68144-3396 • (402) 715-1280 • (Fax) 715-1275

Dear Matt,

I would like to start off by saying thank you for asking me to write an alumni letter about my experience with the Southwestern Company. I sold books for 8 years. I started as freshman in college and worked with the company a few years after I graduated college. The experience I had in those 8 years with the Southwestern Company was so tremendous that it will be hard to fit it all on one page.

First of all, I would say that no matter what grade you are in college or major you are pursuing, if you get the opportunity to be part of the program, take it! If you work hard, study hard, and are coachable, you will get more than you could ever expect. It is still the most challenging thing I have done in my life, but that is what has made me who I am today and got me where I am. I chose to do it for 8 years because the challenge was always there, no matter what summer it was for me. The job will continue to push and improve yourself if you work hard. The things you learn from selling books are things that you cannot get from some college course or book. It is real world experience and it is priceless.

As a teacher and coach, every day is different. It is much like the bookfield. You have to make decisions all the time as a teacher and have to be extremely flexible. You can plan a lesson that you think will be great, and then the class starts and you start to realize, it may not have worked out as well as you hoped. But you have to have a great attitude and enthusiasm no matter how your lesson went or how the kids are acting that day. A great teacher, to me, is not one who just knows the material, but how you present it to the kids. I have had teachers ask me what I do because the kids are enjoying my class so much, but also learning the material. I believe it comes down to some very basic things. I love my job and look forward to every day I step into my classroom. My kids know it too. They know I want to be there and that I will do anything to help them. When I sold books, there were some days I didn't want to work, but I had a choice to make. I could be positive and work hard, or be negative and let it affect me. I also have enthusiasm. If I don't make my class interesting, the kids will have a hard time paying attention to me and the material. I learned from selling books that enthusiasm is contagious. I have seen that in my classroom too. How I relate to kids, parents, and other staff members I learned by all the interactions I had on the bookfield. There are so many more things that I use every day in my classroom that I learned from selling books.

As a rookie teacher last year, I was awarded the "Rookie Teacher of the Year Award" for the entire Millard Public Schools district. I didn't know that the award existed and so it was not a goal of mine. I did have one goal last year and that was to make each day the best day I could make it. I didn't develop that habit last year as a teacher; I developed the habit of doing my best every single day selling books. Habits take time to form and I don't believe that I would have the habits I have today or won that award if it wasn't for my experience selling books.

I still think back to the day a friend of mine told me about an internship I might be interested in. I am so thankful I said yes to hear about it and was given the opportunity to do it. Thank you Southwestern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Aschoff". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matt Aschoff
Millard Public Schools
Teacher/Coach