

From Hand Shakes to Investments, These Teens Are Prepared

BY SHERENE SALAHSHOOR,
SENIOR, SANDERSON HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY OF FINANCE

In Wake County there are 38 Sanderson High School students who are getting a jump-start on life. These students are members of The Academy of Finance, a school within a school that teaches young adults the beginnings of what it takes to be successful in the business world today. The purpose is to introduce students to broad career opportunities in the financial service industry and, in the process, equip them to make sound choices for the future. Established in 1982 with the first chapter in New York City, The Academy of Finance (AOF) has now expanded to 264 academies in 30 states and the District of Columbia. There are nine AOF chapters in North Carolina and Sanderson High School is honored to support the only one in Wake County.

Being in the AOF at Sanderson High School involves many facets—recruiting new and interested members, being innovative and creating fun fundraising ideas, visiting various business locations, listening to different speakers from around the country, and being able to gain unique experiences. All members attend monthly meetings after school in addition to Academy Nights which meet quarterly on and off the school site. Here, community members speak on etiquette, proper business attire, negotiating, budgeting, and other business and finance-related topics.

Field trips also allow these eager teens to see firsthand what goes on in a day-to-day market and

how finance plays a crucial role in the whole cycle. Recently, members of Sanderson's AOF visited Wake Med's newest location, The Federal Reserve in Charlotte, Pepsi Bottling Ventures, and RBC Centura. The most exciting trip for all members comes during their senior year when each member has the opportunity to go to New York City and see the heart and soul of finance and business district.

Visiting everywhere from Wall Street to Ground Zero, the students' hard work pays off when they can truly understand the impact every choice makes on their finances and the business they hope to one day dominate.

Throughout the years of being a member, one mandatory class is taken each year beginning with computer applications freshman year, computerized accounting as a sophomore, economics, finance & banking, and credit as a junior, and finally securities and international finance as

a senior. A college class is also taken senior year through Wake Tech, the local community college which uses Sanderson High School as an offsite campus at night. Rising 2007 AOF graduates are taking macroeconomics this year. During the summer between their junior and senior years, students participate in a full-time paid internship. This year, members have worked at Wake Med, The North Raleigh Lions Club, Geomagic, and Smith Barney. These young adults go through the process of submitting resumes, applications, and interviewing, and gain the experience of working in the account-




AOF students tour the local BMW/Rolls Royce dealership. Following the tour, they gathered in the conference room and learned about automobile purchasing options.

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ing or finance department of thriving businesses in Raleigh.

The National Academy Foundation, in addition to Sanderson High School's AOF board, awards scholarship money every year based on grades, AOF participation, community service, and overall business attitude.

For students who are intrigued by finance and are interested in pursuing business opportunities throughout their lives, the Academy of Finance is a wonderful program that provides a stepping-stone for these students to achieve their goals. Students discover the connections between what they learn in school and the real world. They learn skills and self-confidence, but they also learn about opportunities and making choices. Transition to adult life becomes easier because students are prepared for it. 

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Sherene Salahshoor is a senior in the Sanderson High School Academy of Finance where she is the historian for the 2006–2007 school year. Ranking in the top 5 percent of her class, she hopes to double major in biology and international finance at Washington University in St. Louis.