Educated and Skilled
The Best in the USA

TV’s Mike Rowe
his new job focus: the dignity of work

female firefighters

U.S. and international competition results

how our teachers are improving lives one at a time
THIS MAN IS TRAPPED IN THE WRONG DECADE. SO IS HIS CAREER ADVICE.

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WorldSkills Competition
Twenty SkillsUSA students travel to Germany to give it our nation’s best.
BY CRAIG E. MOORE

This Team is SkillsUSA Strong
A new group of student leaders takes over.
Find out what it means to reach the top.
BY E. THOMAS HALL

Where There’s Smoke
Two young women lead the way through the tough training to be a firefighter.
BY ANN P. SCHREIBER

Building Better Lives, One at a Time
From across the nation, instructors share stories of their greatest achievements.
BY E. THOMAS HALL

Mike Rowe: Work Smart and Hard
As a student, the “Dirty Jobs” star was told success comes from working “smart,” not working hard.
Closing the skills gap will mean changing that image, and he’s asking for your help.
AN EXCERPT FROM HIS SPEECH AT SkillsUSA’s NATIONAL CONFERENCE

On the Cover:
SkillsUSA Champion Matthew Drotar of Thornton, Colo. Photo by Lloyd Wolf.
In keeping with a tradition of respect for the individuality of our members and our role in workforce development, SkillsUSA strives to ensure inclusive participation in all of our programs, partnerships and employment opportunities.

SkillsUSA champions

Visit the SkillsUSA Champions “e-zine” version at www.skillsusa.org/champions/to flip through articles, view videos and extra photos and get updates. You’ll find archives of past issues, advertiser links, lesson plans for new issues, and more.

See even more champions on our frequently updated website, www.skillsusa.org, as well as:
Let Them See You Sweat

Executive Director Tim Lawrence has known SkillsUSA as a student member, instructor, industry partner and state director. Got a question? He can help.

Q: How can I sharpen my focus to make this school year count?
Tim: In my days as a student and teacher, fall was always the time for looking at all the possibilities and setting new personal goals. As motivational speaker Jim Rohn says, “If you don’t design your own life plan, chances are you’ll fall into someone else’s plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much.”

Apply this simple philosophy to your daily work: If you don’t make a plan, you don’t have a plan. First, set a goal such as improving your grades or mastering new skills. Then set a personal goal like starting a new activity, and add another goal involving your family or community.

Push yourself a little; it always feels good when you do, and you’ll stretch beyond what you might expect. Get more involved in your SkillsUSA chapter, which offers a network to build your professional muscle. Break a sweat when it comes to your technical and academic achievements.

To stay focused, start every day with a plan. Just a short list of daily goals will work. Look back at your list at the end of the day, and you’ll feel good about what you accomplished. This will help you pay attention to the things that need to get done the next day or later in the week.

If you need help setting and carrying out goals, try SkillsUSA’s Professional Development Program. Through PDP, you can set yourself apart from your peers and gain an edge with employers.

Here at SkillsUSA headquarters, we’ve been pushing ourselves, too. We’re adding programs, classroom resources, competitions, online offerings and more support from business, industry and government than ever before. Visit www.skillsusa.org often to see what’s new and to check out online tools for our students, teachers and chapters. The SkillsUSA Champions Advocacy Site (http://capwiz.com/skillsusa/home/) has a great way for you to communicate with legislators and the news media.

In this issue of SkillsUSA Champions, our members really illustrate how SkillsUSA can change lives for the better. From local members making a difference in the school and community, to our students competing on the world stage, every student and teacher in SkillsUSA has the potential to be a champion and (as we’re building on our theme this year) to be “educated and skilled to lead America.”

So, stretch a little and be the best you can be this school year. Your future — and our nation’s — depends on it.

Got questions about SkillsUSA or other topics? Email anyinfo@skillsusa.org or send a letter to the address on the facing page. Put “Ask Tim” in the subject line or mail address.
A Caring Partner
Resuscitates Student Pride

SkillsUSA members from Canadian Valley Technology Center in El Reno, Okla., had worked on their project for months, but on one May night, a tornado destroyed tools, equipment ... everything.

In January, the Lowe’s Charitable and Educational Foundation had awarded the school a $9,050 grant to cover the “Champions over Drought Gardens” project, designed to grow drought-tolerant plants that require little moisture. As part of the project, students began building an outdoor classroom and a wheelchair-accessible garden, but the tornado shut the project down for good. Or so it seemed.

At SkillsUSA’s national conference in June, Troy Dally, senior vice president of Lowe’s Companies Inc., delivered a surprise second chance, re-awarding the grant and reigniting student passion to finish the job. “The storm wiped out their project,” Dally said, “not their spirit.”

The rubble of ruined plans still fresh in their memories, surprised students from Canadian Valley Technology Center get the chance to finish what they started, courtesy of Lowe’s.

WorldTeam is World Class

The SkillsUSA WorldTeam brought its expertise to the 42nd WorldSkills Competition in Leipzig, Germany, and that expertise did not come home unrewarded. Alex Pazkowski took the silver medal in Welding, and Kieron Kohlmann (Automobile Technology) and Marcus Cain (IT Networks Systems Administration) earned medallions of excellence for scores of more than 500 points out of 600. Pat Klaricki, the U.S. technical expert in Print Media Technology, won the “Sustainability Award” for running the greenest competition of the week.

For full details on the 20-member squad, see Page 12. For photo and video highlights of the event, visit: www.skillsusa.org/compete/worldteam.shtml.
A Puzzle Piece You Might’ve Missed

You may be familiar with SkillsUSA’s website and its presence on social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter, but don’t forget to check out the organization’s audio and video podcasts on iTunes. You’ll find a growing archive of SkillsUSA-related presentations and messages there, including Mike Rowe’s keynote speech at SkillsUSA’s national conference, a congressional briefing from SkillsUSA Executive Director Tim Lawrence, video footage from SkillsUSA events and more. To learn how to access and subscribe to the podcast (it’s free, of course), visit: www.skillsusa.org/students/podcast.shtml.

Get rewarded for spreading the (video) word

To support the message of “SkillsUSA: Champions at Work,” we’re challenging students to create a video that shows why our members are “Educated and Skilled to Lead America.”

Currently enrolled high-school or college/postsecondary members are eligible, and the two- to three-minute video can be created by an individual, a team or a class. Once your video is ready, upload it to YouTube and send the link to khorton@skillsusa.org. Videos must be submitted by Nov. 15.

Winning teams and schools will receive prizes and recognition from SkillsUSA, including a $300 award and an airing on our national website. For full details, contact Kelly Horton at the email address listed above.

NEW RESOURCES HELP ANSWER OLD QUESTIONS

As any veteran SkillsUSA advisor knows, the first year of SkillsUSA involvement can be, well, a bit overwhelming: “How do I plan a calendar?” “How do I conduct meetings?” “How do I recruit?” “How do I run a successful fundraiser?”

Answers to these and other membership-related questions can now be found by phone through the SkillsUSA membership hotline. Operators are ready to help new advisors start successful chapters and to help experienced advisors discover ways to engage more members. Got a question? Call toll free at 800-355-8422. Too busy to call? Submit your questions by email to dpeabody@skillsusa.org or mstrickland@skillsusa.org.

Through October, e-learning opportunities are also being offered to all advisors through a series of 45-minute webinars designed to help kick off a powerful and productive year in SkillsUSA.

The webinars offer practical solutions to common advisor questions and will help empower students to define their chapter’s goals and achieve them as a team. Topics include “Developing Your Program of Work,” “Integrating SkillsUSA into the Classroom Environment,” “Preparing for the SkillsUSA Championships” and more. Advisors participating in these idea-laden sessions will be ready to integrate what they learn the very next day in class.

For a full list of available webinars and to sign up online (you’ll receive a free resource item just for attending), visit: www.skillsusa.org/join/elearning.shtml.

NEW RESOURCES HELP ANSWER OLD QUESTIONS
Most 49-year-olds will be the first to admit that while some things improve with age, others, well, degrade. SkillsUSA’s National Leadership and Skills Conference is a happy exception; it turned 49 this past June in Kansas City, Mo., but proved itself — in every way — bigger, better and more vital than ever.

Can that claim be backed up with stats? Sure! For starters, a record 10,146 people registered for the conference, and a record 5,905 students competed in 98 technical and leadership events, the most ever.

Other aspects of the NLSC are harder to quantify. For example, Tuesday’s “Champions Night” was the biggest it’s ever been, but as of this writing, a method for measuring sheer, unbridled joy has yet to be invented, so we can’t put a numerical value on how high emotions soared. How about we just go with, “through the metaphorical roof”?

When Mike Rowe delivered a triumphant speech at the opening ceremony, it’s hard to say how many left with a renewed sense of pride and purpose as career and technical education students, but based on the roars that punctuated Rowe’s impassioned comments (read many of them on Page 22), it’s safe to characterize that number as “the vast majority.”

Nearly 500 students and advisors participated in the annual community service event, but how many went home with a fresh understanding of their power to make a difference in their communities? We’ll make an educated guess of “most.”

Yep, numbers never tell the whole story. Sometimes, you just have to be there. Let’s hope that next year, for the big 5-0, you will be. For more photos and videos, visit: www.skillsusa.org/events/nlsc.shtml.
2013 CONFERENCE HONOREES
Honorary Life Members: Dave Camden, SkillsUSA board member from Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. Inc.; longtime chapter advisors Ron Downing of Kansas, Paul King of Oklahoma and Larry Lebsock of Arizona, all SkillsUSA championship volunteers from the local through national levels; Greg Rintala, SkillsUSA board member from Snap-on Industrial; Gerald Tylka, SkillsUSA board member, Pennsylvania Department of Education

Advisor of the Year: Jackson Tegarden, Homer Hanna High School, Brownsville, Texas (see story, Page 19)

Corporate Champion Award: Lowe’s Companies Inc.; State Farm Insurance Companies

Outstanding Alumni Award: Kristina Rice, Tampa, Fla. (for her story, read our Summer 2013 issue at: www.skillsusa.org/champions/summer13.shtml)

Pat Dalton Outstanding Achievement Award: Dave Camden, Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. Inc.

President’s Volunteer Service Award: More than 100 individual SkillsUSA members and 11 teams received gold, silver or bronze awards. For the full list, go to: www.skillsusa.org/students/volsvc.shtml

Student2Student Mentoring Recognition: (grand prize) Lynn Nelson, Mounds View High School, Arden Hills, Minn.; (awards of excellence) Giovanni Chiarelli, Brookhaven Technical Center, Bellport, N.Y.; Leonard Moreno, Palmdale (Calif.) High School

Torch Carrier Award: Russ Hoffbauer, State Farm Insurance Companies

Epic Win
From smartphones to sodas, industrial distributors supply the parts that help companies make every product you’ve ever used.
3-D VISUALIZATION AND ANIMATION: Lance Wells/Damian Richard, East Valley Institute of Technology, Mesa, Ariz.; Ismael Marquez/James Ordner, Tuloso-Midway Rand Morgan High School, Corpus Christi, Texas

ACTION SKILLS: Carlos Rivera, Lawson Occupational Center, Bell, Calif.; Amanda Torres, SUN Area Technical Institute, New Berlin, Pa.

ADVERTISING DESIGN: Nathan Ribelin, Riverside (Calif.) Community College; Spencer Smith, Kettering-Fairmont High School, Kettering, Ohio

AMERICAN SPIRIT: (teams) Fort Myers (Fla.) Institute of Technology, Buckeye Hills Career Center, Rio Grande; Ohio ARCHITECTURAL DRAFTING: Rutger Hill, Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah; Amy Wood, Stafford Senior High School, Falmouth, Va.

AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY: Andrew Kincaid, Western Michigan University, Battle Creek; Cory Elijah, Charlotte Technical Center, Port Charlotte, Fla.

BASIC HEALTH CARE SKILLS: Abigail Hoffman, Lewis and Clark Career Center, St. Charles, Mo.

BROADCAST NEWS PRODUCTION: (teams) Ozarks Technical Community College, Springfield, Mo.; Lehi (Utah) High School

BUILDING MAINTENANCE: Eduardo Neto, Indian Capital Technology Center, Stilwell, Okla.; Raymond Broughton, Mid-East Career and Technology Centers, Zanesville, Ohio

CABINETMAKING: Andrew Flores, Salinas (Calif.) High School; Joshua Alfaro, Scarlet Oaks Career Development Campus, Cincinnati

CAREER PATHWAYS SHOWCASE: (teams) Manatee Technical Institute, Bradenton, Fla. (three medals); Bear Creek High School, Stockton, Calif.; Delcastle Technical High School, Wilmington, Del.; Diman Regional Vocation Technical High School (RVTHS), Fall River, Mass.; Eldon (Mo.) High School, Center; Greater Lawrence Technical School, Andover, Mass.; Pensacola ( Fla.) State College; Southwest High School, Fort Worth, Texas; Tennessee Technology Center at Knoxville; Tennessee Technology Center at Ripley CARPENTRY: Seth Miller, Manchester (N.H.) Community College; Garrett Thompson, Buckeye Career Center, New Philadelphia, Ohio

CHAPTER BUSINESS PROCEDURE: (teams) Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah; Pocahontas County High School, Dunmore, W.Va.

CHAPTER DISPLAY: (teams) Gordon Cooper Technology Center, Shawnee, Okla.; Duncanville (Texas) High School

CNC MILLING: Axel Marohnic, Alexandria (Minn.) Technical and Community College; Matthew Gillett, St. Clair County Technical Education Center, Marysville, Mich.

CNC TURNING: Benjamin Hale, Columbia Basin College, Pasco, Wash.; Adam Prante, Medina (Ohio) County Career Center

COLLISION REPAIR TECHNOLOGY: Matthew Meyer, Waubonsee Community College, Sugar Grove, Ill.; Aaron Maki, Vanguard Sentinel Career and Technology Centers Sentinel Campus, Tiffin, Ohio

COMMERCIAL BAKING: Mai-Lan Tran, Art Institute of Michigan, Novi; Heather Pitt, Columbia (Mo.) Area Career Center COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT: (team) Adams Central Junior-Senior High School, Hastings, Neb.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: (teams) Tennessee Technology Center at Knoxville; Fox Valley Career Center, Maple Park, Ill.; COMPUTER MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY: Mitchell Dalton, Tennessee Tech Center at Knoxville; Brian Hogan, Weaver Academy, Greensboro, N.C.

DENTAL ASSISTING: Ashely Brittan, Central Pennsylvania Institute for Science and Technology, Pleasant Gap; Jonathan Candido, Diman RVTHS, Fall River, Mass.

DIESEL EQUIPMENT TECHNOLOGY: Jeremy Dones, Elizabethtown (Ky.) Technical College; Dustin Mortoff, Highland Community College Technical Center, Atchison, Kan.

DIGITAL CINEMA PRODUCTION: Jonathan Baez/Matt Cannon, Moore Norman Technology Center, Norman, Okla.; Jake Wangner/Ryma Mahoux, Fossil Ridge High School, Keller, Texas


EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION PROCESS: Melissa Brown, Tennessee Tech Center at Knoxville; Karen Rosado, Greater New Bedford (Mass.) RVTHS

ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY: (teams) Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah; Utah Technical High School, St. Cloud, Minn.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: (teams) Catawba Valley Community College, Hickory, N.C.; Adirondack High School, Boonville, N.Y.


FIRST AID/CPR: Gabriel Whitt, South Georgia Technical College, Americus; Joshua Cote, United Technologies Center, Bangor, Maine


GARDENING: (teams) Northwest Technical Institute of Michigan, Novi; Heather Pitt, Columbia (Mo.) Area Career Center

TECHNOLOGY CENTER: Southwestern College, Junction, Vt.; Lenard Ledwell, Poinciana High School, Kissimmee, Fla.

GOLD MEDALISTS

2013 GOlD MEDAliSTS


PATHWAYS SHOWCASE: (teams) Greater Lawrence Technical School, Bourne, Mass.; Eldon (Mo.) High School, Center; Greater Lawrence Technical School, Andover, Mass.; Pensacola (Fla.) State College; South Georgia Technical College, Americus; Northwest Technical Institute of Michigan, Novi

PASTEURIZATION: (teams)_different_1_2577836699.png

PHOTOGRAPHY: (teams) Manhattan Technical Institute, Bradenton, Fla.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: (teams) Northwest Technical Institute of Michigan, Novi; Eldon (Mo.) High School, Center; Greater Lawrence Technical School, Andover, Mass.; Pensacola (Fla.) State College; South Georgia Technical College, Americus; Northwest Technical Institute of Michigan, Novi

PLUMBING AND HEATING INSTALLATION: (teams) Midwest Technical Institute, Zanesville, Ohio; Northwest Technical Institute of Michigan, Novi

RADIO/TELEVISION NEWS PRODUCTION: (teams) Rialto High School, Rialto, Calif.

RECREATIONAL ENTRPRENEURSHIP: (teams) Haywood Central High School, Canton, N.C.; Manchester (N.H.) Community College; University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, Wis.

REGIONAL賽道: 長江技術センター、カーフィールドテクニカルコミュニティ、ジャスミントウン、ニューヨーク、サンノゼ技術センター、オレゴン、テキサス、ニューマンハイスクール、プロスペクト・クライス、ルイジアナ州

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT: (teams) Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah; Utah Technical High School, St. Cloud, Minn.

TECHNOLOGY CENTER: Southwestern College, Junction, Vt.; Lenard Ledwell, Poinciana High School, Kissimmee, Fla.

TELEVISION NEWS PRODUCTION: (teams) Rialto High School, Rialto, Calif.

THEATRE PERFORMANCE: (teams) Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles, Calif.

TOOL & DIE MAINTENANCE: (teams) Northwest Technical Institute of Michigan, Novi; Eldon (Mo.) High School, Center; Greater Lawrence Technical School, Andover, Mass.; Pensacola (Fla.) State College; South Georgia Technical College, Americus; Northwest Technical Institute of Michigan, Novi


UTONOMOUS VEHICLE DESIGN: (teams) Northeastern University, Boston, Mass.; Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah; Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Ariz.

VIDEO PRODUCTION: (teams) University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, Wis.; Rialto High School, Rialto, Calif.

VIDEOGRAPHY: (teams) University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, Wis.; Rialto High School, Rialto, Calif.

WESTERN ARTS: (teams) Northwest Technical Institute of Michigan, Novi; Eldon (Mo.) High School, Center; Greater Lawrence Technical School, Andover, Mass.; Pensacola (Fla.) State College; South Georgia Technical College, Americus; Northwest Technical Institute of Michigan, Novi

WILLIAMSBURG FINE ARTS: (teams) Newport News (Va.) Technical Career Center

WILLIAMSBURG TECHNOLOGY: (teams) Newport News (Va.) Technical Career Center
GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS: Jovie Camarne, Riverside (Calif.) Community College; Ben Ellsworth, South and West Washtenaw Consortium, Saline, Mich. GRAPHICS IMAGING — SUBLIMATION: Timesha Harris, Abram Friedman Occupational Center, Los Angeles; Alexis Barber, Harris County High School, Hamilton, Ga.

HEALTH KNOWLEDGE BOWL: (teams) Northshore Technical Community College, Bogalusa, La.; Charlotte Technical Center, Port Charlotte, Fla.

HEALTH OCCUPATIONS PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO: Tammy Hardin, College of the Ouachitas, Malvern, Ark.; Meriah Dinwiddie, Eldon (Mo.) Career Center.

HEATING, VENTILATION, AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION: Brock Miesner, Linn (Mo.) State Technical College; Daniel Blizman, Platt Technical High School, Milford, Conn.

HUMANOID ROBOTICS: Edgar Graciano/ Moises Valadez, Somerset (Texas) High School


JOB INTERVIEW: Jessica Black, Charlotte Technical Center, Port Charlotte, Fla.; Cameron Smith, Terrell (Texas) High School.

JOB SKILL DEMONSTRATION A: Devonta Brown, East Mississippi Community College, Mayhew; Alexandra Santos, Diman RVTHS, Fall River, Mass.

JOB SKILL DEMONSTRATION OPEN: Dale Brand, East Mississippi Community College, Mayhew; Michael Ferrell, Buckeye Hills Career Center, Rio Grande, Ohio

MAJOR APPLIANCE AND REFRIGERATION TECHNOLOGY: Troy Bormeere, Southeast Community College, Milford, Neb.; Liandy Salinas, Robert Morgan Educational Center, Miami

MARINE SERVICE TECHNOLOGY: Jonathan Anderson, Lake Washington Institute of Technology, Kirkland, Wash.; Bryce Tocci, Ocean County Vocational Technical School, Toms River, N.J.

MASONRY: Brent Austin, Central Cabarrus High School, Concord, N.C.; Andrew Mullis, South Rowan High School, China Grove, N.C.

MECHATRONICS: Chandler Holzbauer/Craig Sholts, Alexandria (Minn.) Technical and Community College; Kevin Krieg/Ryan Danko, Pinckney (Mich.) High School

MEDICAL ASSISTING: Sandra Gulle, North Georgia Technical College, Clarkesville; Ashley Koeppeing, Center of Applied Technology South, Edgewood, Md.

MEDICAL MATH: Brittany Joyce, Wilkes Community College, Wilkesboro, N.C.; Gustavo Alvira, Technical Education Center Osceola, Kissimmee, Fla.

MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY: Belinda Coates, College of the Ouachitas, Malvern, Ark.; Danae Thompson, Northern Penobscot Technical Center Region 3, Lincoln, Maine

MOBILE ELECTRONICS INSTALLATION: Eddy Cruz, Slawson Occupational Center, Bell, Calif.; Shane Pennington, Lawrence County Vocational Center, Monticello, Miss.

MOBILE ROBOTICS TECHNOLOGY: Kyle Riddle/Thomas Riddle, Tennessee Technology Center at Hohenwald; Glenn Galviz/Clayton Dailey, Milliani (Hawaii) High School

MOTORCYCLE SERVICE TECHNOLOGY: Robert Otterson, Georgia Piedmont Technical College, Clarkston, Ga.; Zachary Carlson, Tipmview High School, Provo, Utah

NAIL CARE: Stephanie Schoolcraft, Carver Career Center, Charleston, W.Va.; Hanna Fortin, Charilco Career and Technical Center, Wood River Junction, R.I.

NEURO ASSISTING: Chyamme Hawkins, University of Arkansas at Fort Smith; Alondra Herrera, Frederick (Md.) County Career and Technology Center

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY — MULTIPLE: (teams) Tennessee Technology Center at Knoxville; Dubiski Career High School, Grand Prairie, Texas

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY — SINGLE: (teams) Manatee Technical Institute, Bradenton, Fla. (college/postsecondary and high school)


OUTSTANDING CHAPTER: (teams) Manatee Technical Institute, Bradenton, Fla.; Buckeye Hills Career Center, Rio Grande, Ohio

PHOTOGRAPHY: Sara Goldberg, College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas; Madison Jacob, Lehigh Career and Technical Institute, Schencksville, Pa.

PIN DESIGN: Devonte Brown (STATE CONFERENCE): Cassandram Dlugiewicz, South Central College, Mankato, Minn.; Candace Tingle, Sullivan South High School, Kingsport, Tenn.

PLUMBING: Jordan Kleffner, Linn (Mo.) State Technical College; Anthony Collari, Blackstone Valley RVTHS, Upton, Mass.

POWER EQUIPMENT TECHNOLOGY: Tyler Christensen, Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah; Stephen Wajda, Bucks County Technical High School, Fairless Hills, Pa.

PRACTICAL NURSING: Crystal Aqualia, Diman RVTHS, Fall River, Mass.; Kelsee Kershaw, South Tech Academy, Boynton Beach, Fla.

PRECISION MACHINING TECHNOLOGY: Cody Coffin, Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville; Neil Nino, Homer Hanna High School, Brownsville, Texas

PREPARED SPEECH: Claire Ballew, Tennessee Technology Center at Chattanooga; Stephanie Crepeau, Pinkerton Academy, Derry, N.H.

PRINCIPLES OF ENGINEERING/TECHNOLOGY: Daniel Beck, Worcester Technical High School, Newark, Md.

PROMOTIONAL BULLETIN BOARD: (teams) Autry Technology Center, Enid, Okla.; Sikeston (Mo.) Career and Technology Center

QUIZ BOWL: (teams) Ogeechee Technical College, Statesboro, Ga.; Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School, Bridgewater, N.J.

RELATED TECHNICAL MATH: Brian Warzeha, Dakota County Technical College, Rosemount, Minn.; Alec Griffith, San Luis Obispo (Calif.) High School


RENTAVER SERVICE: Rhonda Wheaton, Bristol Community College, Fall River, Mass.; Sarah Alley, Broadmoor Technical Center, Shawnee Mission, Kan.

ROBOTICS AND AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGY: Jason Neely/Trezzor Owens, Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah; Wyatt Smrcka/Micah Stuhlbreheer, Pinckney (Mich.) High School

SCREEN PRINTING TECHNOLOGY: Patrick Wadleigh, Waynesville (Mo.) Career Center; Rachel Rock, Sammamish High School, Bellevue, Wash.


SUSTAINABILITY SOLUTIONS: Jeremy Staggs, Tennessee Technology Center at Pulaski; Jared Raffel, Excelsior Springs (Mo.) Area Career Center

TEAMWORKS: (teams) Metropolitan Community College, Omaha, Neb.; Adairsville (Ga.) High School

TECHNICAL COMPUTER APPLICATIONS: Wyatt Wood, Iowa Central Community College, Fort Dodge; Will Perlak, Sussex County Technical School, Sparta, N.J.


TELECOMMUNICATIONS CABLING: Allen Collins, Northwest Kansas Technical College, Goodland; Logan Robinson, Vanguard-Sentinel Career and Technology Centers Vanguard Campus, Fremont, Ohio

TELEVISION (VIDEO) PRODUCTION: Nick Richardson/Colleen Hammond, Macomb Community College, Warren, Mich.; Garrison Crofut/Zachary Gavin, Cheshire Vocational Center, Keene, N.H.

T-SHIRT DESIGN: Lissett Garcia, East Los Angeles Occupational Center, Los Angeles; Amanda Ross, Thomas Edison High School of Technology, Silver Spring, Md.

URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE: Ryan Wendell/Arnaldo Figueroa, Mid-Florida Technical Institute, Orlando; Dillon Arnold/Robert Silberberg, Blackstone Valley RVTHS, Upton, Mass.

WELDING: Tyler Johnson/Katie Mosteller, Mississipi Gulf Coast Community College, Perkinston; Nick Taylor/Christian Sweeney, Lake Havasu High School, Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

WELDING: Simon Rowe, Cuesta Community College, San Luis Obispo, Calif.; Andrew Desjardin, Blackstone Valley RVTHS, Upton, Mass.

WELDING FABRICATION: (teams) Central Community College, Hastings, Neb.; Douglas (Wyo.) High School

WELDING SCULPTURE: Jeremy Wright, Southern Crescent Technical College at Flint River, Thomaston, Ga.; William Loew, Cumberland County Technical Education Center, Bridgeton, N.J.

To see all gold, silver and bronze medalists, as well as teams of three or more, visit: www.skillsusa-register.org/rpts/EventMedalists.aspx
Since 1973, SkillsUSA has represented the United States in the WorldSkills Competition. With 20 competitors, 2013’s U.S. team was the largest yet and had more training than ever before. The students’ journey to compete in Germany took more than two years and even included a stop in Sao Paulo. Find out how they gave it their best, direct from the scene of the international event.

Story and Photos by Craig E. Moore
about the experience. The students also visited Germany’s embassy in Washington to learn about its food, culture and education system.

The U.S. delegation in July had nearly 100 people, including contestants, experts, industry partners and supporters. Tim Lawrence, SkillsUSA executive director, also led a tour for state government officials, college presidents and U.S. labor representatives who visited the event.

“We traveled with one of the best, most articulate and composed teams we’ve ever taken to international competition,” Lawrence said. “I’m incredibly proud of them. They represented their states and our nation extremely well.”

For Alex Pazkowski, walking across the stage to accept his silver medal in Welding was “pretty cool.” The Ann Arbor, Mich., student added, “I’m glad I got to represent the country. There’s no better feeling.”

**RESULTS**

- Alex Pazkowski from Washtenaw Community College in Michigan won the silver medal in Welding and also “Best in the Nation” for the United States.
- Earning medallions of excellence for scoring over 500 out of a possible 600 points: Marcus Cain of Duke University, Durham, N.C. (in IT Networks Systems Administration) and Kieron Kohlmann of Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Mich. (in Automobile Technology).

(Top photo) Marcus Cain competes in IT Network Systems Administration; (middle row, left to right) Kieron Kohlmann works in the Automobile Technology competition, Oklahoma’s Savannah Dunn takes on the fantasy makeup portion of the Beauty Therapy event, and North Carolina’s Sarah Parker and Maryland’s Amaia Edwards enjoy some rare down time in the Leipzig town square; (left) Alex Pazkowski shows off his silver and “Best in the Nation” medals after the awards ceremony.

See more photos and video from the competition online at: [www.skillsusa.org/compete/worldteamphotos.shtml](http://www.skillsusa.org/compete/worldteamphotos.shtml)

Be sure to support the U.S. team’s industry partners, including anchor sponsor Lowe’s, listed at: [www.skillsusa.org/compete/worldteamsupport.shtml](http://www.skillsusa.org/compete/worldteamsupport.shtml)
“It changed my life.”

Ask any of our national officers “What has SkillsUSA meant to you?” and you’ll get this answer. Their reasons why point to the strengths of the organization.

“Before SkillsUSA, I had such a lack of confidence,” explains Crystal Sandoval, recently elected president of the high school division. The Brownsville, Texas, resident knows many students who deal with this issue, and “SkillsUSA was that motivating factor for me” to overcome it.

“It’s really helped me develop as a person,” adds the new college/postsecondary president, Leah Rife of Colorado Springs, Colo. “With the challenges I’ve faced, SkillsUSA has always been there to help me through that, whether personal employment goals or educational goals.”

Another student officer, Elizabeth Czerpak, calls SkillsUSA “a source of acceptance and family.” For this Philadelphia-area resident, “it’s meant the world to me. It’s really pushed me, and I’ve grown so much.” Likewise, Juan-Carlos Medina of Hobbs, N.M., says his membership “has really given me a sense of belonging. I know that I belong here and that I am welcomed here with open arms. This is where I love to be. This is my home.”

Laura Gouillon of Petaluma, Calif., points out the diversity of SkillsUSA members. “It’s showed me that we all have our individual strengths and weaknesses,” she says, “and that we all have the potential to be whatever we want to be.”

Adds Daria Ferdine of Hamburg, N.J., “My SkillsUSA membership has meant accepting myself for who I am, and being able to use what I know and what I learn from others to empower those around me. That is something I believe is a beautiful gift: to be able to take my experiences and share them with others, and to hear other people’s stories as well.”

By E. Thomas Hall
Chandler Forsythe, SkillsUSA’s Region 4 vice president, is an architecture and construction student at Cleburne (Texas) High School. College/postsecondary treasurer Zach Pechacek studies electrical and building science at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, Neb.

Region 2 vice president Jacob Halfin hails from Troup High School in LaGrange, Ga., where he’s an engineering student. Cole Falls of Greene County Career Center in Xenia, Ohio, is Region 3 vice president and studies welding/metal fabrication. A drafting design major at Northeast Alabama Community College in Rainsville, Dustin Cagle is college/postsecondary vice president. Tony Hamblin, college/postsecondary parliamentarian, studies business systems technology at Tennessee College of Applied Technology – Oneida/Huntsville.

National high-school vice president Laura Gouillon is a video production student at Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa, Calif. Elizabeth Czerpak, Region 1 vice president, studies culinary arts at Central Montco Technical High School in Plymouth Meeting, Pa.

High school president Crystal Sandoval is enrolled in the criminal justice program at Veterans Memorial High School in Brownsville, Texas. A pre-engineering student at Oklahoma’s Tulsa Tech, Bailie Henry is high school parliamentarian. Brittany Velez, high school secretary, is a dental assisting student at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School in Fitchburg, Mass.

College/postsecondary president Leah Rife is majoring in graphic design and video production at Pikes Peak Community College in Colorado Springs, Colo. Juan-Carlos Medina, who’s getting a degree in computer systems information at New Mexico Junior College in Hobbs, is college/postsecondary secretary. Cinematography student Daria Ferdine attends Sussex County Technical School in Sparta, N.J., and is high school treasurer. Erika Nelson, Region 5 vice president, is enrolled in the industrial engineering program at Aberdeen (Wash.) High School.
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ne wants to help people. The other escaped a fire in her home. Both took on grueling training to become firefighters, a dangerous career requiring a quick mind and nerves of steel, plus physical strength and endurance.

Melissa Cracknell, a recent graduate of the fire academy at Lamar Institute of Technology in Beaumont, Texas, has applied to work for the city’s fire department. In its 137-year history, only seven women have served, counting the current fire chief.

When only 6 years old, another Texan, Emerson Curtis, awoke to flames engulfing the family home. Her mother grabbed and carried her sister outside, with Curtis running behind them. The family escaped, but the incident stayed with her — so much so that Curtis enrolled in the Lyndon B. Johnson Fire Academy in Austin. She’s now a freshman at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, on a full merit scholarship. While studying chemical engineering and Spanish, Curtis says firefighting is in her blood.

“I don’t know exactly what I will do with my engineering degree, but I would love to use it to better the fire service in some way,” Curtis explains. “Firefighting is a passion of mine. I love everything about it. I love the people, the physical aspects, the fun skills and drills that I’ve done hundreds of times. I know I will find my way back to firefighting.”

For Cracknell, wanting to give back to her community led to a visit to a fire station, where the camaraderie and teamwork appealed to her. She currently works for Christus St. Elizabeth Health and Wellness Center in management and as a personal trainer. While her main goal is to work for the Beaumont Police Department, she’s also applied to Beaumont Fire and Rescue.

For both, being female in this male-dominated field comes with challenges. “Some of the physical tasks that you have to complete as a firefighter are hard on the upper body, and as a female, those tasks can be challenging,” Curtis says.
“As a female firefighter, you have to prove yourself and make sure everyone knows they can count on you when they need to.”

To pass the firefighters’ Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT), recruits must complete a series of physical challenges. One involves wearing a vest weighing 75 pounds. The tests are tough, regardless of gender.

Cracknell has worked as a personal trainer for 10 years. When not facing the rigors of firefighter courses, she continues cross-fit endurance and strength training.

As a child with two older brothers, Cracknell did whatever she could to keep up, and that drive carried over into this career path. It also helped her place fifth in the nation in SkillsUSA’s postsecondary Firefighting competition, she says.

“I knew what I was getting into, so I dedicated myself to training, and it ended up paying off. There are some things that are harder than others for females ... but [training] helped me to overcome a lot of things and face a lot of fears.”

Firefighting requires a sharp mind, and Cracknell has found herself in training situations that helped her learn how to make good split-second decisions.

Cadets face staged fires in a pitch-black, five-bedroom home. Instructors, who stay with the cadets and guide them, set each room on fire and present challenges such as creating obstacles with furniture.

Making life-saving decisions

“They just throw different scenarios at us each time,” Cracknell explains, “so we’re not used to the same thing. They want us to make quick decisions but, at the same time, make smart decisions, because in a real fire, you are going to rely back on your training. ...”

“You just have to make snap decisions. I mean, you know there is a body lying there. Are you going to pull the body out first and then fight the fire? And, with car wrecks, you’re going to have to make quick decisions on how to get the person out and get them to safety. It’s pretty challenging mentally, too.”

Running into a burning building is a scary concept. In the scenarios Cracknell’s experienced, she says the nervousness goes out the window when somebody is inside. “Your adrenaline pumps. You want to get that person out. That is my main thought as I go in there: You have to save this person or property if you can.”

For Curtis, being an emergency responder comes with a great amount of responsibility, and that’s the hardest part.

“Knowing that someone else’s life is in your hands is daunting,” she says. “But it’s also exhilarating, and it makes the field worth getting into. Being able to be around interesting, courageous and amiable men and women is unlike anything else. Firefighters are good people; they are willing to help anyone at any time. They put their lives on the line.”

Cracknell says SkillsUSA has helped her gain the confidence to achieve what she puts her mind to — and to recognize just how good her instructors were at Lamar Institute of Technology.

Curtis adds, “SkillsUSA has exposed me to a world of opportunities. I was able to grow as a firefighter, as a leader and as a person. ... SkillsUSA also improved my skills as an applicant. I learned how to do well in an interview, how to act around professionals and how to do all of these things in a sophisticated manner.”
Making the world a better place begins at home, this instructor learned. Now he’s raised generations of low-income students to become architects.

When describing SkillsUSA’s advisor of the year, it’s easy to focus on his accomplishments in terms of numbers: 51 state champions, seven national medalists and three national officers in his 28 years of service, just for a start.

But there’s a personal, individual side of Jackson Tegarden’s story that shouldn’t be overshadowed. “Mr. T,” as he’s fondly called, has changed countless lives, one student at a time. Better to let him tell his story his way.

“I’m a Vietnam veteran, I’m a Peace Corps veteran and I’m a teaching veteran,” he says. “I tell people, ‘I joined the military to save the world from tyranny, and we didn’t. Then I joined the Peace Corps to save the world from poverty, and we didn’t. So I went back to Brownsville and started working on one kid at a time.’ That’s what I consider my greatest achievement: the kids.”

The Texas instructor has a core belief that none of his drafting students can advance in their training until they’ve mastered the previous skill. “I teach on a one-on-one basis,” he explains. “So I’ll sit down with the kid and say, ‘If you’re not getting this, let’s work to find a way that you’ll learn it.’ You know, no two children learn the same way, so your job as a teacher is to find out how they learn.”

WEB RESOURCES
- Find out more about the 2013 Advisor of the Year finalists. Go to: www.skillsusa.org/educators/aoy.shtml
- Know an outstanding SkillsUSA advisor? You can nominate that person for Advisor of the Year by contacting your state association director. Get the contact information for your state at: www.skillsusa.org/about/dir4.shtml
Because his architecture and construction program spans four years, Tegarden’s students have a lot of skills to master. He introduces the freshmen to computer-aided drafting. In their second year, they design a small house. Their third year covers advanced architecture, and the seniors move on to job shadowing or internships with local companies.

His SkillsUSA members at Homer Hanna High School are allowed to work on their competition projects during instructional hours, “but everything else they do outside of class,” Tegarden says. “Being a bachelor, I never go to lunch, so I always open up [my room] for the lunch period and always open up an hour before school. I always stay an hour and a half after school so the kids can come over and get their stuff done.” For their leadership training, “other schools will send kids over to me,” he adds — which means that Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. are also devoted to SkillsUSA.

**Raising students to be architects**

Tegarden trained his first state champion for a technical skills competition in 1992. The student, who lived in a house with a dirt floor, was the first in his large family to graduate from high school. After receiving a full scholarship to the University of Texas, he’s now an architect. “In ’94 I got a second state champion,” Tegarden says. “We had state champions every year since then, so we’ve had 19 years of taking the state title every year.”

The instructor calls this a “real highlight” of his career. But he’s just as proud of his students’ achievements on the leadership side, whether at their school near the Mexican border or on legislative day at the state capital. “Just because Spanish is their No. 1 language, it doesn’t mean they can’t get up there and talk to the governor of Texas and have a good conversation.”

Tegarden recalls one member, already a winner in her state skill competition, who also “had the gift of gab.” She became state president and a champion in state leadership events for two more years. The school valedictorian “got a full ride” to a prestigious architecture program and now works for a large firm in Houston.

That student, who as a little girl had always wanted to design buildings for other people, had been homeless for a time. “I started working with her, started convincing her that she could achieve, and she did really well,” Tegarden says.

With successes like these, it’s no wonder so many students have thought of “Mr. T’s” classroom as their second home.
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This year, “Dirty Jobs” has run its course. We did 300 [episodes]. We’ve been to all 50 states, which brings me here in front of you. … We’ve got some challenges and we have a problem, and the problem isn’t in this room. The problem is in the way a big hunk of the country thinks about the definition of a good job. … Companies all over the country are struggling to find people who are willing to learn a skill, be really great at it and work their butts off. And I’ve been walking around trying to figure out how that happened. …

[When] I was 17, I was summoned to my guidance counselor’s office. … He pointed at a poster that he had hanging over this desk — here’s a guy holding a degree, and here’s a guy holding a wrench. My guidance counselor says to me, “Which one of these guys do you want to be?” The caption really jumps out — how’s that for a bit of genius? — “Work Smart, Not Hard.” … I think the country’s full of people right now who actually believe they can find success by working smart instead of working hard.

Now in 1979, colleges needed a PR campaign, and this was part of it. Posters like that were hanging all over high schools all over the country. It worked. … Right now there are a lot of people who have a four-year degree who can’t find a job. Millions more have a four-year degree and are working in a field that has nothing to do with what they studied. But worst of all, we’ve got a lot of people who paid a lot of money for a four-year degree who went into debt. We have a trillion dollars of student loans on the books. We’re loaning money that we don’t have to kids who’ll never be able to pay it back in order to educate them for a job that no longer exists.

Helping to close this skills gap
Do you know what that is? That is profoundly disconnected. … I’m going to ask you to help me change the worst advice in the world to something not so stupid, something that looks like this [new poster]. … This guy has a job. This guy likes what he does. This guy went through SkillsUSA. … This guy gets it. I really wonder what would happen if guidance counselors had a poster that said “Work Smart and Hard.” So this poster, I created it with my buddies at Caterpillar. … What are we going to do with it? I say we hang it up. I say we hang it everywhere. …

Millions and millions of Americans are out there that don’t understand the value that you bring to the table. They don’t understand the importance of the jobs that I featured on my show for nine years. They are profoundly disconnected from a couple of fundamental truths. I don’t think I can close the skills gap. I don’t know if we can all do it, but I do know it will never, ever happen unless we change the fundamental conversation that’s going on right now.

To help me do that, Caterpillar and I came out with a new website. Surprise, surprise, it’s called “Profoundly Disconnected” [www.profoundlydisconnected.com]. If you go there, you can get one of these posters. And if you do and if you’re feeling brave, I dare you — I double-dog dare you — get it back to your high school. Hang it up in a hallway. Find a teacher who understands; let them put it in their classroom. Find a guidance counselor; let them hang it up. Take a picture of it and send it back to me, and we’ll make a collection of some advice that actually makes sense. Maybe a couple years from now, people will Google “Work Smart and Hard” and go, “Oh, that’s where that started.”

Not only do you guys get it, not only do you have the talent, not only do you have the will to make for yourselves and for your families, but I’m calling on you to go further. Go out into the world, be an ambassador for work. Spread the kind of advice that actually matters, makes a difference. Have fun at what you do. This is the greatest country in the world, but I’m not biased at all when I tell you, it’s because of you guys. •

Watch the entire speech online at: http://tinyurl.com/MikeRoweNLSC.
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Find Your **Way** Through Black, White and **Gray**

A customer calls a small company’s owner, Eli, to complain about bad service. Eli offers his apologies, but the customer, who does a lot of business with the company, doesn’t listen. She threatens to take her business elsewhere if Eli doesn’t fire the employee, who happens to be Eli’s close friend. In talking with the customer, Eli understands why his friend might’ve lost patience with her.

As a class, split into groups and discuss how Eli should handle this situation. Try to come up with a group consensus. Return as a full class and share your responses. Was it tough finding the right answer? Is there a right answer?

The above scenario comes from SkillsUSA’s **RESOLUTE: Ethics at Work** card set, which offers a host of similar situations students can use to prepare for the complex ethical dilemmas they’ll face in the workforce. For details, visit: [www.skillsusa.org/store/newproducts.shtml](http://www.skillsusa.org/store/newproducts.shtml).

Ethics is **knowing** the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do.

— Potter Stewart

Find the photo, win a prize

No, the picture on the left isn’t abstract art. It’s actually a distorted part of another photo in this issue. Find the original photo and send us the page number where it appears to win a SkillsUSA sport duffel bag (first prize) or travel mug (second prize). To enter, email your answer, name, address and phone number to: anyinfo@skillsusa.org (include “Photo Contest” in the subject line). Or, send to: SkillsUSA Photo Contest, 14001 SkillsUSA Way, Leesburg, VA 20176. One first- and one second-prize winner will be drawn at random from the correct entries. Entries must be received by Nov. 15.

Congratulations to last issue’s winners: Samuel Steiner of Philadelphia and Frances Hewell of Gray, Ga.
SHOWING HOMELESS KIDS THEY CARE

After students at Las Vegas’ Southwest Career and Technical Academy learned that children in local shelters did not have basic necessities, they “adopted” 25 homeless kids attending C.C. Ronnow Elementary School.

Students in fashion, interior, Web and digital-game design applied the skills they’re learning. They created paperback books based on individual children’s interests and also sewed book bags that were later embroidered with each name. They silk-screened T-shirts depicting what each child wanted to be when he or she grew up and created customized seating mats.

Toiletries and nonperishable food items were also collected, and Zappos.com donated Converse Chuck Taylor All Star sneakers for each child.

No food bank? No problem

Without a food bank to serve their area, students at Atlanta’s Cross Keys High School started one of their own. Their first food drive produced 400 cans, helping to establish a pantry at the school. Several community organizations have joined the students’ effort, and now more than 75 families in need are being assisted.

Bear hug tribute

Students at Southern Adirondack Career and Technical Education Center in Hudson Falls, N.Y., held a stuffed-bear drive to pay tribute to two alumni who died in an accidental propane explosion. The toy bears will be used by local first responders to help comfort children who are involved in traumatic events. Having a stuffed animal to hug often helps youngsters who are scared and suffering. SkillsUSA students joined forces with the school’s Key Club to collect 270 bears — as well as monetary donations to acknowledge the work of the emergency personnel who responded to the scene of the explosion.

Money-saving maintenance

To help cut costs at Manatee Technical Institute in Bradenton, Fla., major appliance repair technology students Erik Wright and Nathan Brewster decided to set up a preventative maintenance and cleaning schedule of all appliances used in the school. Knowing the job would be large for just the two of them, Wright and Brewster recruited classmates to help.

They learned how to do diagnostic testing, check for fault codes and clean refrigerator coils and clothes dryer vents (as student Daniel Barboza, pictured, demonstrates).
SkillsUSA Champions features our members’ photography. We’re looking for images of SkillsUSA chapters in action, or ones that show individual members’ concentration or perseverance. For details, email thall@skillsusa.org (put “Image Photo” in the subject header) or write SkillsUSA Champions, 14001 SkillsUSA Way, Leesburg, VA 20176. The photographer’s chapter is awarded $150.

As a judge watches, Eduardo Estrada checks a chain saw during a SkillsUSA Power Equipment Technology competition at the College of Western Idaho’s Micron Center in Nampa. Kinsey Stansell, a graduate of Mountain View High School in Meridian, took the photo.

SkillsUSA helped me find a sense of direction and confidence in knowing where I want to go, like becoming an architect. It’s done that through competition, and the leadership side has transformed my abilities to speak, to interact.

New national officer Chandler Forsythe, Cleburne, Texas
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