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insider’s guide
how to stand out among the competition

new prizes and scholarships

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

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The Courage to Compete

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

Q: SkillsUSA competitions are big at my school, but I’m fearful of them. I never do well under pressure. Any advice for keeping calm?

Tim: Competition is one of the things that makes SkillsUSA unique. Industry partners set the standards and assist as judges to help evaluate students’ performance. This is an important part of your SkillsUSA experience. Start by looking at it this way: By competing in our events, you’ll meet potential employers and take a step forward on your career pathway.

When students compete, everyone wins. You get to see how you perform under pressure and learn from it. Instructors see where they can improve their training programs. Industry sees the educational process and has the opportunity to help shape the next generation of workers.

This issue includes an annual guide in which our industry and education leaders give insider advice on how to excel in competition. The same messages come out again and again: pay attention to detail, use time management, stay calm under pressure, follow instructions, be a team player and practice your skills.

If you hold SkillsUSA competitions at your school, sign up for at least one. If you don’t have them, form a school committee, obtain a copy of the SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards and start this year.

Ask your chapter advisor how you can be a part of district, state or national competitions. These are life-changing events.

Once you’re signed up to compete, it’s actually healthy to have a little fear. Study the rules, practice your skills and be as prepared as possible. On the big day, repeat to yourself something simple, like “I am SkillsUSA strong,” over and over. Imagine wearing a large “S” like Superman to empower you. It sounds silly, but that kind of visualization can calm your nerves and help you stay focused.

Competitions are often a catalyst for change. By competing shoulder to shoulder with your peers, you’ll learn and grow. Your instructors will enhance their programs as they see what other teachers are doing. Your school will develop a greater sense of community by coming together around these annual events.

I hope you’ll find our competitions to be shining moments in your school career. Life is a continuous competition, and this SkillsUSA experience will help prepare you for the challenges and opportunities you’ll face along the way. You may even gain a few bragging rights.

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.
Spotlighting Selfless Service

Since its inception, SkillsUSA has been about more than individual improvement; it’s also about inspiring individuals to help others. That’s why SkillsUSA is a certifying organization of the President’s Volunteer Service Award.

This honor recognizes community service efforts of volunteers nationwide. SkillsUSA helps identify eligible recipients, verify service hours and distribute the award to those who deserve it.

We know you don’t serve because you want a pat on the back, but presidential recognition can go a long way in validating you or your chapter’s hard work in the community. For more, visit: www.skillsusa.org/students/volsvc.shtml.

With 371 attendees representing 29 states and Puerto Rico, the 2013 Washington Leadership Training Institute was the biggest in SkillsUSA history.

WLTI offers training to students and advisors that focuses on advanced leadership, citizenship and employability skills. It also teaches students how to advocate for career and technical education, and they get to practice those skills in the heart of the nation’s capital during the clear highlight of the week: state delegation visits to congressional representatives.

This year, students and advisors visited with 37 senators and 72 representatives, bringing these national decision-makers firsthand evidence of the positive difference programs like SkillsUSA make on young lives across the country.

For more details and photos from this unique conference, visit: www.skillsusa.org/events/wlti.shtml.

During one of the Washington Leadership Training Institute’s many emotional highlights, SkillsUSA national officers take part in a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

**SkillsUSA Leaders Experience Capitol Gains**

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**SkillsUSA Champions Winter 2014**
SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TAKING

Hear that flapping sound? It’s the year in the process of flying by. Since what goes up must come down, make time now for these scholarship opportunities before deadlines descend.

- **National Technical Honor Society** awards four $1,000 scholarships annually to SkillsUSA members at the national conference in June. To be eligible, students must be active, dues-paying members of both SkillsUSA and NTHS. The deadline for submissions is April 4.

- **Sharon Melton Myers Memorial Scholarship** offers two $500 awards to help graduating SkillsUSA members continue their education at the college/postsecondary level. The deadline is April 30.

- **SkillsUSA Alumni Merit Scholarship** recognizes outstanding qualities in a selected student, including leadership, commitment to service and more. The deadline for this $500 scholarship is May 1.

For full details on these and other scholarships, visit: [www.skillsusa.org/students/scholarships.shtml](http://www.skillsusa.org/students/scholarships.shtml).

Also, the **Women’s Industry Network** is offering a scholarship to women and men studying collision repair. High-school recipients will receive a one-year WIN membership and $1,000 to continue their collision repair education. College/postsecondary winners will receive a one-year WIN membership, $1,000 to be used toward continuing education, and travel expenses to attend the 2014 WIN Educational Conference. For more information on this scholarship, visit: [www.thewomensindustrynetwork.ning.com/page/scholarships](http://www.thewomensindustrynetwork.ning.com/page/scholarships).

National Recognition on the Air

SkillsUSA was recently featured on “American Graduate Day,” a live television program shown annually on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) stations across America. Each year, the show highlights organizations that help keep students in school, and SkillsUSA was one of the 20 chosen this year. Along with a video testimonial from television personality Mike Rowe, a live interview was conducted with SkillsUSA advisor Alice Boss and her former student, Chris Jimerson, both from Ypsilanti, Mich. (See their story on Page 9.) For more information and to view the clip, visit: [www.skillsusa.org/pbs.shtml](http://www.skillsusa.org/pbs.shtml).

SkillsUSA is once again offering graphic designers the chance to make a national splash with the national conference pin and T-shirt design contests. Both are open to all paid student members of SkillsUSA, and winning designs will be produced on the official pin or T-shirt for the national conference in June. All entries must be received by Feb. 1. For full details, visit: [www.skillsusa.org/compete/pindesign.shtml](http://www.skillsusa.org/compete/pindesign.shtml).

SkillsUSA alumni can enter a separate competition designed to produce a commemorative pin celebrating the organization’s 50th national conference. Proceeds from the pin’s sale will benefit SkillsUSA alumni. The deadline is Feb. 28. For details, visit: [www.skillsusa.org/supporters/alumni.shtml](http://www.skillsusa.org/supporters/alumni.shtml).
One of the most significant errors of judgment ever made in U.S. public education was the 1944 Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, known as the G.I. Bill. I can almost hear a collective “whoa!” from readers. But while there was lots to admire in the bill, like low-cost loans for homes and businesses, its major focus on earning a college education missed an extremely important opportunity.

Less than a year after the bill passed, a key science advisor delivered to President Truman a report, “Science, The Endless Frontier,” with a startling acknowledgement: 60 percent of high-school students were dropping out. But rather than focus education efforts on the minimum goal of finishing high school, the report encouraged Americans to embrace undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate degrees.

Readjust our national focus
Invest more in early education for higher skills, fewer dropouts

The unmistakable conclusion was that to be considered “educated,” one had to pursue a college degree. By the time the first Baby Boomers descended on overcrowded high schools, there were two tracks: “college prep” and, for those considered less intelligent, “vocational/technical/shop” courses.

So, how has this grand college education plan played out over the past seven decades? According to 2013 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 70 percent of our adults still do not hold a college degree. Of those who do, a majority under age 25 are unemployed or underemployed, as a recent study shows from Boston’s Northeastern University, and many are carrying huge college debt obligations.

And, while we’ve made remarkable strides in lowering the nation’s high-school dropout rate from 60 percent in 1944 to 25 percent in 2013, 5,500 students drop out every day of the academic calendar!

Ideas about education dating to World War II are still reflected in today’s public attitudes and government policies, says global technology expert Gary Beach. His book on the skills gap has been called “a badly needed wake-up call challenging educators, politicians, parents and voters to a national debate” on preparing our workforce.

Refocusing on where skills are learned
What must the United States do to fix the “state of crisis” that Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently described? First, we need to readjust our national focus. In study after study, countries that perform best on global math, science and reading literacy tests invest the highest percentage of funds in early education. We do the opposite here. Thanks to the legacy of the G.I. Bill and “Science, The Endless Frontier,” our nation still invests the majority of its education dollars in postsecondary endeavors.

Second, we need to embrace the ideas introduced in the Fitzgerald Act of 1937, also referred to as the National Apprenticeship Program. Germany often gets well-deserved kudos for its remarkable apprenticeships, but clearly, such programs are nothing new to Americans. While we’re at it, let’s make a national commitment to eradicate the words “vocational” and “community college” from the lexicon of education and replace them with these three words: “career technical education.” Our students need careers, technical skills and a great education.

Third, we need great teachers. Lee Iacocca, the automobile executive, once said, “In a totally rational society, the best of us would teach while the rest of us would find something else to do.” To make career technical education exciting and relevant across the nation, we must get the very best teachers in CTE classes, and we must pay them well (at least $65,000, according to McKinsey and Co.)

As I was researching my book, I discovered a 1990 report from the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. The title summarizes it well: “America’s Choice: High Skills or Low Wages?” Twenty-three years after that report, and nearly 70 years after the G.I. Bill and “Science, The Endless Frontier,” America has not yet made that choice. The public must come to the realization that “high skills” are learned in places other than colleges and universities.

Gary Beach, author of The U.S. Technology Skills Gap: What Every Technology Executive Must Know to Save America’s Future, cites SkillsUSA first in his list of model public-private partnerships. You can contact him by email (gbeach@cio.com) or Twitter (@gbeachcio).
Before They Can Drop Out, A Game Changer Drops In

When a potential dropout finds help from a caring SkillsUSA instructor, what does she do? She becomes a caring SkillsUSA instructor who helps a potential dropout.

They come from different generations, but their early memories are a lot alike. “It wasn’t a normal environment for a kid to grow up in ... gang violence, a lot of drugs,” 21-year-old Chris Jimerson remembers his Ypsilanti, Mich., neighborhood. “Not a lot of options when you’re poor,” adds Alice Boss, 49. Through SkillsUSA, both found a way to succeed.

“My senior year of high school, my dad passed away,” Boss recalls. “I was skipping school a lot, and my oldest brother told me I needed to think about what’s next.” Boss enrolled at nearby Washtenaw Community College to study a subject she’d been interested in since her early teens: culinary arts. An inspirational SkillsUSA advisor, Don Garrett, persuaded Boss to compete. “Then the lights really came on,” she says.

Boss excelled, graduated and embarked on a varied career that saw her catering movie sets and working as a personal chef. But a difficult divorce convinced her to “come home and do something meaningful.” Boss earned her master’s degree in hospitality and, in 2005, landed a position as the culinary arts instructor at Ypsilanti High School, the same one she’d once considered dropping out of. There, she met a promising new student: Jimerson.

“Before, I didn’t care about school, always skipping,” Jimerson says. “Miss Boss showed me how to make myself a better person. She became a second mother to me.” As for Boss, she immediately saw herself in Jimerson. “He was energetic, wanted to learn, but hadn’t yet made the commitment,” she says. “I started doing what Don did for me.”

Boss convinced Jimerson to compete in SkillsUSA. In his senior year, he placed ninth at the state competition, surprising himself as well as instructors from more affluent school districts whose students’ scores he’d surpassed. “It felt wonderful,” he says. “It gave me so much confidence.”

Once expected to drop out, Jimerson finished high school and has avoided the pitfalls many of his peers have succumbed to. He’s now managing a restaurant and hopes to one day open his own. Meanwhile, Boss has come full circle in SkillsUSA as an advisor and instructor at Washtenaw Community College.

Although Boss and Jimerson have always kept in touch, they were reunited recently on “American Graduate Day,” a live television special that aired on Public Broadcasting Service stations nationwide. (See Page 7 for more details.) On the program, the two shared their stories of how SkillsUSA changed their lives.

Boss sums up those stories succinctly: “When you realize you’re of value to your community and you can do it, for a kid like Chris and me, it’s a game changer.”

By Tom Kercheval
If you’re competing in the SkillsUSA Championships, thoroughly read the instructions and rules for your competition. That advice may seem obvious, but apparently it’s something not everyone remembers to do. In a recent survey of the experts behind the championships, the need to read and follow the rules came up again and again.

These technical committee chairs are responsible for running the competitions each year at the national championships. They are also the experts SkillsUSA taps when revising the technical standards manual that carries the instructions and rules for every contest.

“The SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards were revised in 2013,” says Dave Worden, director of the SkillsUSA Championships. “We had changes in 52 contests. It’s crucial to have the current technical standards manual and to follow the directions for your contest. If you’re using an old version of the book or CD-ROM, you won’t have the latest and best information about your competition.”

Another great source for preparing to compete is the Contest Updates page on SkillsUSA’s website. Updates for various competitions have already been posted at: www.skillsusa.org/compete/updates.shtml. These will continue through the month of May, so competitors should bookmark the page now and check back regularly to see if their contest has been updated.

Aside from reading the latest rules, the technical committee chairs had a lot of other advice to share. In fact, they offered more than could fit in this issue, including not only what contestants tend to overlook, but also what makes the winners stand out. You can get their full comments online at: http://bit.ly/17jrcZ6.

To help you succeed in the championships, this issue also features students who have competed and won. Know what they recommend most? If you guessed “reading the rules,” you’re well on your way. •
Technical experts: What do you think makes a winner stand out?

**AUTOMOTIVE REFINISHING TECHNOLOGY**
They understand the spray gun and its cause and effect. They understand color. — Alan Craighead, LKQ Corp.

**AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY**
Taking time to review each task and pay attention to details. — Wayne King, Kentucky Department of Education

**BUILDING MAINTENANCE**
Experience with the equipment. — Marvin Miller, retired, Ohio

**CHAPTER DISPLAY**
What impresses the judges most is the opportunity for viewers to actually manipulate the display. Displays can be made to be interactive. That is what many professional displays offer. — John Scott, University of Georgia, Athens

**COMMERCIAL BAKING**
Confidence. Preparing for the competition: practicing the formulas and working with the equipment. Managing time well. — Peter Fendt, Quality Bakery

**COMPUTER MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY**
Last year’s winner was near perfect in two critical troubleshooting scenarios. One had a higher level of complexity because the student only could communicate with the customer in a chat window. — Chris Sessa, Cardiovascular Consultants

**COMPUTER PROGRAMMING**
Not only the ability to have good code but also well-commented code, which is required by industry. — Terry Yoast, Olathe (Kan.) South High School

**CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION**
Teamwork! That’s the key. Communicating with each other and working efficiently. — Michelle Nordyke, Kansas City (Mo.) Police Department

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE**
Confidence. If you feel confident, you can work through any situation given. — Heather Massey, City of Liberty, Mo.

**DIESEL EQUIPMENT TECHNOLOGY**
Follow instructions. Ask questions. Do not rush through the contest. Do not overthink the tasks at each station. If you don’t know, try it anyway. You will learn something in the process. — Dave Andrus, Tognum America

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**
Have well-written lesson plans and dynamic demonstrations, with well-organized activities that are engaging. — Anny Broom, Yakima (Wash.) School District

Photos: Lloyd Wolf. Pictured, left to right: Melissa Schuman of Maryland, competing in Masonry; Quincy Nwaneri, New York, Job Skill Demonstration A; Gilad Goldstein, Pennsylvania, Cosmetology; Alondra Andrade, Washington, Commercial Baking; Joe Iacona, Maryland, Engineering Technology/Design; Yolanda Omana, Colorado, Computer Maintenance Technology; Brandon Fuchs, Illinois, Technical Computer Applications
Winning welding team smokes the competition

Jose Farias and Chris Crosslin of Eisenhower High School in Yakima, Wash., were on the same Welding Fabrication team at the 2011 national competition and came back in 2013. In their event, students build projects from given material, based on the prints they draw.

Farias’ advice to competitors: practice, try hard, and use as much of the provided material as possible. Also, be sure to wear boots and safety glasses. It’s important to read the tools list clearly and to be prepared to share tools, Farias adds. “They are mostly looking for teamwork and the quality [welds and measurements] of the work in the project.”

Crosslin advises, “Never stress out. You are there for a good time and to learn a skill that will be with you no matter if you ever go into that specific field [or not].” He encourages competitors to bring the hand tools they use most frequently when fabricating. Power tools are provided.

“Judges are looking at a high-quality project that’s done to an industry standard and nothing less,” Crosslin continues.

Their experience brought an unexpected benefit. Attending their first SkillsUSA conference in Kansas City, Mo., Farias and Crosslin were inspired by the local cuisine. Once back in Yakima, they created a commercial-grade barbecue smoker to raise funds for their chapter.

Fascinated by the smokers they’d seen in Kansas City, Crosslin and Farias designed and constructed two of them. When they had problems keeping the fire lit in the first, they tweaked the design. The second works great and includes everything, even a kitchen sink.

This rolling showcase of skills — both welding and project management — helps the students make great burgers from instructor Gary Kurpgeweit’s family recipe for German sausage. The food sales cover smoker supplies as well as trips to the national competition.

— by Ann P. Schreiber

What do you think makes a winner stand out?

**ELECTRICAL CONSTRUCTION**

**WIRING** Eye for detail. [Last year’s winner] took notes as he was being given verbal instructions. — Greg Rachal, POPS Electric LLC

**ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY/DESIGN** Ability of all the members of the team to verbally articulate how they went through each step of the design process. Also, knowing the importance of working as a team and being able to show and document what each team member did in completing the prototype. — Gary Wynn, International Technology and Engineering Educators Association

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP** Preparation and in-depth knowledge of the business and industry. — Melinda Stumpf, PPL Corp.

(From left) Crosslin, advisor Kurpgeweit and Farias; (above) Crosslin and Farias work on their smoker.
After AZUMI NAGAO, an exchange student from Yokohama, Japan, extended her stay to compete in Pin Design at the SkillsUSA Championships, her adopted community of Hillsborough, N.C., pitched in. Members of her host family’s church helped cover the first-year SkillsUSA member’s travel costs, says Beth Landis, advisor at Cedar Ridge High School. That’s a Plott hound, the state dog, on Nagao’s pin.

**What do you think makes a winner stand out?**

**GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS**
Attention to detail and displaying calmness, even when nervous. Ability to ask questions. — Kip Jarrett, Heidelberg USA

**INDUSTRIAL MOTOR CONTROL**
Well-rounded technical and code training, time management and professionalism on the job, and hands-on experience with the tools and materials. — Bob Baird, Independent Electrical Contractors Inc.

**INTERNETWORKING**
Winners keep trying until the time runs out on that part of the contest. They are confident of their abilities but show us they are ready to learn new things as they appear. — Bob Schoenherr, Cisco Academy

**JOB INTERVIEW**
Ability to have a full demonstration, including an introduction, body and conclusion. Leaving nothing unexplained or unused. — Frank Cowgill, Pueblo (Colo.) Community College

**MECHATRONICS**
Time management and PLC programming. — Daniel Blanck, FESTO Corp.

**MOTORCYCLE SERVICE TECHNOLOGY**
Being calm and collected during the timed workstations, especially in taking the time to read the instructions and questions carefully. — Mike O’Neil, Motorcycle Mechanics Institute

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**
Winning notebooks display the required items in a clear manner. — Pat Vantuyl, U.S. Department of Labor, Kansas City, Mo.

**OUTSTANDING CHAPTER**
Following the instructions to the letter. — Bill Mann, retired, Florida
KARMEL TEVES, who competed in Plumbing, says to make sure your tools are sharp before the competition. A graduate of Walton Career Development Center in DeFuniak Springs, Fla., she’s competed in Masonry at the state level. Teves says Masonry projects must have good foundations, and judges do check to see that contestants use the correct tools and keep things clean as they work.

**What do you think makes a winner stand out?**

**PRACTICAL NURSING** [Last year’s winners] were confident in their skills and their practice. Previous clinical experience from their education/training prepared them for the “big picture.” — Brice Harader-Pate, St. Francis Trauma Emergency Center (Oklahoma)

**PRINCIPLES OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY** Physics knowledge. Attention to detail. The presentation and technical paper complement each other and show a high level of preparation. — Scott Watson, Hunter High School, West Valley City, Utah

**PROMOTIONAL BULLETIN BOARD** Practicing and being prepared for the oral presentation. The best-prepared board will not win if the presenter does not have an exceptional delivery. — Francie Russell, retired, Oklahoma

**SCREEN PRINTING TECHNOLOGY** Attention to time schedules, plus official attire for the competition. — Jesse Hudson, retired, Kansas

**TEAMWORKS** Ability to organize and work together as a team. — Jim Bohn, Bosch Corp.

**TECHNICAL DRAFTING** They read the instructions and ask questions if they do not understand what is asked of them. — Floyd McWilliams, American Design Drafting Association

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS CABLING** Knowing the trade and tools and being prepared. [One competitor] had a battery go dead and didn’t have a spare in his toolbox. It may have been a good lesson, however, because he may make sure he has a spare for the rest of his life. — Teresa Maher, Electronics Technicians Association International

**URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE** [Winners] demonstrated they had done the legwork in the documentation of their design and build process, as well as in navigating the robot via the wireless camera. They were prepared, professional and earned their top honors. — Alan Kirby, Pitsco Education

**WELDING SCULPTURE** The 2013 contest winners had very thorough notebooks that documented each step. They were comfortable talking about their sculptures and important influences on their work. — Shanen Aranmor, Miller Electric Mfg. Co. Inc.

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Dakota Rostron grew up watching her grandfather work on cars. “I was always around the smell and the sounds of them,” she says. As a freshman at Princeton (Ind.) Community High School, she walked into the precision machining class and “smelled the same thing. I just recognized it, and I just wanted to do it.”

Four years after that orientation, Rostron won a SkillsUSA silver medal in CNC (computer numerical control) Turning. The same month, she started Toyota’s two-year Advanced Manufacturing Technician program, where she works eight hours a day on Mondays and Fridays. Every Tuesday through Thursday, Rostron attends Vincennes University to earn her associate’s degree in computer integrated manufacturing. She’s considering two more years of college to get her bachelor’s degree in advanced manufacturing. “When I go back for that degree, it’s going to cover more of my CNC stuff. It will all come together,” she explains.

Rostron’s passion is all things mechanical. In middle school, she participated in Future City, which is sponsored in part by the National Engineers Week Foundation and features competitions. Paying it forward, she now mentors kids in robotics. Her SkillsUSA experience helped Rostron, who also served as a chapter president, get out of her comfort zone. “It’s made it easier for me to talk to people. I’m not so shy anymore,” she says. “It will help me in business meetings and communicating with other people in the factory or just walking around town.”

While in a high-school environmental class, Rostron went backpacking at Michigan’s Isle Royale National Park to learn the effects humans have on nature. That experience sparked her ultimate goal: to prototype and manufacture car engines that are better for the environment.

Who knows? Maybe someday, another young talent will watch Rostron work on cars and follow her own senses as far as she can. But thanks to Rostron, the only thing she smells could be clean air.
Learning to **Lift** Others Up Makes a Bully **Stay** Down

One of the great things about a healthy SkillsUSA chapter is how it creates an environment where people look out for and respect each other. As we see more stories in the news about bullying and its sad consequences, that type of environment seems to be needed more than ever. How can you help create it in your school? Start by getting to the heart of the issue.

Split the class into two groups. Within each group, come to a consensus on the definition of “bullying.” We’ve all seen the “big guy picks on little guy” scenarios, but does bullying take other forms? What are they? How has the advent of social media changed the nature of bullying?

Next, ask both groups to exchange definitions, and have each group list five ways to stop, prevent or handle bullying as it’s been defined by the other group. Reunite as a full class and share your answers.

For more about bullying and how to address it, visit: [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov).

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

— ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

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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 Jan. 15.

Congratulations to last issue’s winners: Christopher Phillips of Palmerton, Pa., and Chandler Kerr of Severn, Md.
SPARKING KIDS’ INTEREST IN FIRE SAFETY

What if there was a fire in your home? At your school? During a fire safety and awareness event in Coolidge, Ariz., children went through a variety of simulations to help them learn what to do.

During the event, hosted by fire science and law enforcement students from Central Arizona Valley Institute of Technology (CAVT), the youngsters participated in several staged scenarios.

Capt. Cameron Stout of the CAVT Fire Department says both groups learned something. One young boy shared that when he plays hide and seek with his friends, he hides in his dresser drawer. “I found that amazing,” explains Stout, “because now I know that children are unpredictable in where they will be in a fire, and that is a very good tip to know.”

All in to serve a large locale

For the last three years, students at Pioneer Career and Technology Center (CTC) in Shelby, Ohio, have hosted an annual day of service. The first two years, only SkillsUSA students participated and the work took place on the school grounds. This year, SkillsUSA members planned an event involving the entire student body. More than 930 students completed 64 projects in four counties, totalling 4,680 hours of service in one day. Projects included painting, cleaning parks, landscaping and picking up trash. In June, a team from Pioneer CTC won the bronze medal for this project in the Community Service contest at the SkillsUSA Championships in Kansas City.

Local heroes celebrated at picnic

Sheriff’s Deputy Jonathan Owens (pictured) is served a plate during a “Heroes’ Supper” organized by the SkillsUSA chapter at Jefferson County High School in Dandridge, Tenn. Students cooked a picnic dinner for dozens of police officers, paramedics, firefighters, dispatchers and jail personnel. The event included an assortment of door prizes donated by local merchants and supporters. This picnic for public safety officials is held every year.

Unique holiday ornaments

Machine trades students at Princeton (Ind.) Community High School build the tooling to create molds, then use injected plastic to make ornaments for their holiday open house. Pictured is an ornament developed by Dakota Rostron (see Page 15 for her story).
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.

I became the first-ever female diesel technician to graduate in my class. The only thing that helped me get that far was SkillsUSA, family, friends and, most of all, my teacher. Thank you, SkillsUSA, for giving me a better look at my future, making me a better role model and making me a better leader. I am SkillsUSA strong!

Jesse Brickson of Millboro, Va., a 2013 graduate of Western Montgomery Career and Technology Center in Shawnee, Okla.

I hope you look back at this week and think to yourself, “This is where it all started for me. This is where I started to see what was possible in my life.”

Lowe’s Troy Dally, speaking at SkillsUSA’s awards ceremony

SkillsUSA student Marshall Motley recaps his chapter’s service project for the board of education at Gordon Cooper Technology Center in Shawnee, Okla. He and other students remodeled a playground at an area homeless center. Motley’s advisor is Gay Johnston.

Photo: Tracy Farley
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