MODELS OF EXCELLENCE

SETTING THE PACE FOR EXCELLENCE IN PERSONAL, WORKPLACE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

2017
June 21, 2017

Dear Models of Excellence Recipients and Honored Guests,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Churchill Downs for the third annual Models of Excellence (MOE) dinner. We are here to celebrate excellence within the vital core of our organization — the chapter — and to express appreciation to all who make it possible. What better place to commemorate your achievements than this historic venue, which honors 143 years of the longest continual sporting event in America?

We are eternally grateful to Lowe’s Companies, Inc. for making this program possible. Lowe’s has generously sponsored the Chapter Excellence Program (of which MOE is a part) since its inception in 2015. The support from the corporate office and local stores is tremendous. As part of the Lowe’s sponsorship, our MOE chapters each receive up to $4,000 in grant dollars to pursue a worthwhile project in their chapter or local community. Over the past three years, we’ve seen the relationship between our MOE chapters and neighborhood Lowe’s stores blossom from one-time interactions to ongoing partnerships. This collaboration has yielded everything from community outreach and in-store celebrations to campus improvement projects and new chapter initiatives. Our MOE recipients will tell you that working with Lowe’s personnel is the true gem of this program.

I would also like to thank our teachers, advisors, school administrators, parents and community leaders for helping us change lives. You are the unsung heroes who make great things happen every day. For SkillsUSA to exist and a multifaceted program like this to thrive, we need the support of every stakeholder in a student’s educational and career journey. There is nothing more valued in this process than a vested interest by those who care about student success. Your generosity of time and resources is appreciated more than you know.

As you read this booklet, you’ll be inspired by the quality and depth of skills demonstrated by the chapters being honored. Their examples are humbling, yet extraordinary. These activities are based around intentional learning and application of the personal, workplace and technical skills outlined in the SkillsUSA Framework. Because of this, MOE goes beyond doing activities and checking a box to receive an award. It’s about students taking the initiative to be active leaders and engaged participants in their learning. You can ask MOE recipients about how they applied a specific skill to an activity and in every case they will give you details of what they learned and why. This is the definition of purpose-driven education with tangible workplace connections. It is also why we know the SkillsUSA Framework is working!

I invite you to soak it in and enjoy this unique moment in your personal history. You make us proud. Enjoy Dinner at the Derby!

Sincerely,

Tim Lawrence
SkillsUSA Executive Director
Career and technical education and SkillsUSA exist because we believe every student deserves career success. It’s that simple. We’re in the business of ensuring students are ready to excel in the workplace and as leaders of their communities. It’s an awesome responsibility, but one to embrace because it defines our legacy of positively influencing student lives and supporting our nation’s economic future.

What do students need for career readiness? We believe the answer resides in the SkillsUSA framework for developing personal, workplace and technical skills. This trifecta of student success centers on industry demand and builds the foundation for relevant and intentional student learning and leadership development. Innovative programming, quality instruction and industry partnerships focus on equipping students with the necessary leadership, technical, communicating and management skills to succeed at work and in life. When it all comes together, students have the opportunity to explore and experience high-demand, high-skilled, high-wage (H3) careers. And voila! Together, we address the skilled labor shortage while placing our members on a pathway to a better life.
The Chapter Excellence Program (CEP) is the single best way to build a successful SkillsUSA chapter!

CEP recognizes achievement in integrating the SkillsUSA Framework in chapter activities related to the program of work. As a chapter’s yearly action plan, the program of work is at the heart of student learning and employability development. By using our framework as a guide, chapters have a blueprint for creating relevant activities that encourage participation and foster an understanding of student learning attained during each activity. The SkillsUSA Framework’s focus on intentional learning turns the program of work into more than just a planning tool. Using the framework, the program of work becomes the vital conduit that links students to the application of personal, workplace and technical skills demanded by industry — the SkillsUSA trifecta for student success!

Within the personal, workplace and technical skills areas, there are specific Essential Elements tied to each. The Essential Elements are high-demand employability skills as defined by industry, and the benchmark for measuring student success during an activity. If students learn the Essential Element of responsibility during a personal skills activity, the SkillsUSA Framework requires that a chapter be specific regarding the how and why students learned responsibility. This conscientious approach gives added meaning to the valuable experience gained by students in the planning, organization and implementation of activities. Most importantly, this approach actualizes SkillsUSA’s mission to “empower members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens” on the chapter level.

Every chapter is encouraged to participate in CEP, and there are three award levels to recognize program involvement. The first two levels are acknowledged by a chapter’s state association, and the third level is recognized nationally through Models of Excellence. Each level is designed to give chapters a benchmark for success and future improvement, leading to stronger chapters and more prepared students. The more a chapter applies the Framework, the greater the chance for CEP honors.
THE BEST of THE BEST!

**Personal Skills**
- Alabama: Carver High School
- California: Southeast ROP High School
- Georgia: Cross Keys High School
- Georgia: Stephens County High School
- Massachusetts: Lynn Vocational Technical Institute
- North Carolina: Catawba Valley Community College
- Ohio: Pickaway-Ross Career and Technology Center
- Wyoming: Central High School

**Workplace Skills**
- New Mexico: Hobbs High School
- Ohio: Fairfield Career Center
- Texas: A&M Consolidated High School
- Texas: Keller Center for Advanced Learning
- Texas: Rudder High School
- Texas: Westwood High School
- Vermont: Green Mountain Technology and Career Center
- West Virginia: Putnam Career and Technical Center
### Technical Skills Grounded in Academics

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**THANK YOU**

Lowe’s Companies, Inc. for Supporting Chapter Excellence!
Carver High School, Alabama

SkillsUSA members at Carver High School let personal skills shine by enthusiastically reaching out to students with special needs at their school. This group of students is taught in a self-contained setting with minimal interaction with the rest of the student body. Members recognized the need for more peer interaction opportunities, leading to “adopt-a-buddy” and the creation of fun and inclusive activities on campus. Their idea was golden! All 23 chapter members participated in the planning and leadership of four unique social events at different campus locations, capturing the essence of this thoughtful and engaging peer outreach initiative. Events included a movie with popcorn and snow cones, a crazy hat Christmas party, a “March Madness” basketball game and a picnic with kite flying. Members embraced befriending their buddies while demonstrating integrity, responsibility and adaptability/flexibility along the way.

Integrity was apparent by the patience and kindness shown by members as well as each member’s example of personal accountability in the ongoing consideration of specific disabilities in planning, coordinating and executing activities. Students demonstrated responsibility by ensuring every campus location was accessible and nonrestrictive and by prioritizing tasks to address safety concerns, logistics and the effectiveness of activities. Adaptability/flexibility was exhibited as students overcame initial hesitations about working with peers with special needs and unforeseen circumstances. Members learned to proactively support each other in helping buddies with tasks such as eating, putting hats on straight, and adapting to limitations for activities such as shooting a basketball and flying a kite. Peer-to-peer interaction and learning at its best!
Southeast ROP High School, California

Three-time Models of Excellence recipient Southeast ROP High School once again demonstrated commitment and creativity in implementing SkillsUSA Framework skills. Using the chapter’s Lowe’s grant from 2016, members from the automotive and culinary pathways collaborated with their local Lowe’s store, the city of Norwalk and the Norwalk Senior Center to build a community garden. The objective was to build a garden for seniors to grow fresh produce while providing an opportunity for elementary-school field trips and cooking lessons using the garden’s bounty. Automotive students spearheaded design specifications and the construction of planter beds, while culinary students developed menus for work-day volunteers and made connections with media, elementary school leadership, administrators and senior-center management. Despite timeline and budget constraints, the garden build succeeded and volunteers ate well! Residents of the senior center are gardening and enjoying the companionship of elementary students during monthly field trips.

The SkillsUSA Framework skills of self-motivation, work ethic and integrity highlighted this project. Members showed self-motivation through intentionally planning every aspect of constructing a garden space while using their talents and discipline to bring the project to fruition. Students’ work ethic was visible in the details of planning and conducting the build, including arrival and completion times, location for the culinary catering cart, menu items and the residents’ desired plants for the garden. Integrity was demonstrated in the way members interacted honestly and ethically with all parties involved, especially the senior citizens. Members also showed integrity by following through with elementary-school field trips, walking students to the center to show them the garden and scheduling future field trips. A tremendous example of cultivating edible crops and timeless relationships!
Cross Keys High School, Georgia

Members from Cross Keys High School, a three-time Models of Excellence chapter, put the value of SkillsUSA resources to the test for this personal skills activity. Chapter officers used the resource entitled *The Four Pillars: Your Personal Leadership Journey* to assess and explore the personal skills development of members and determine potential leadership roles within the chapter’s program of work (POW). Officers presented *The Four Pillars* at meetings during the month of September, leading activities connected to each pillar (Trust, Compassion, Stability and Hope). The idea was brilliant! Meeting attendance increased with 60 percent of members completing all four pillars and 20 percent completing three pillars. At one meeting, chapter officers achieved 100-percent attendance! Even better, this activity led 65 percent of members to commit to program of work committees, with 12 to 15 members signed up for each committee.

Chapter officers demonstrated work ethic in planning each presentation, continually improving upon their professionalism and facilitation abilities, and modeling desirable behaviors. Members exhibited work ethic by completing *The Four Pillars* booklet and taking initiative to learn more about their own personal leadership development. Officers demonstrated responsibility in fostering and building upon the leadership skills of fellow members. As is standard at Cross Keys, the chapter is student-driven and student-run, with this activity being the perfect example of peer-to-peer leadership development. Finally, self-motivation won the day with an impressive number of students participating in *The Four Pillars* training and signing up for program of work committees. Chapter officers used their leadership influence to improve the performance of others. Their professional development committee is already at work helping fellow members who did not complete the pillars booklet to finish. Lead on!
For members at Stephens County High School, a returning Models of Excellence chapter, giving back to their community is a priority. Working with the Social Services Department of the Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital in Atlanta, members were challenged to provide 100 comfort kits for homeless veterans. Members had a timeline of four weeks to collect and assemble the contents of the kits, consisting of gloves, socks, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, a toothbrush, deodorant, washcloths and other essential care items. Not only did members collect items, they contributed financially to purchase items and ensure every kit was complete. The chapter exceeded its goal of 50-percent member participation with 82 percent participating and 109 kits assembled and delivered to the VA hospital. Impressive for such a short timeframe.

Members showed responsibility for those less fortunate by reaching out to support local veterans who needed assistance. Spearheaded by the leadership team, members mapped all the details of the project and did an excellent job communicating with each other to ensure goals were met or exceeded. Students showed adaptability/flexibility by assessing their abilities to provide certain items and evaluating additional items that would be beneficial such as additional hats, socks and scarves. They also worked on keeping a more accurate count of individual items as they were being collected. Self-motivation was demonstrated by the chapter’s ability to achieve personal and organizational goals in meeting timelines and supplying more kits than the initial commitment. Members are already planning how to make the kits even better for next year. A beautiful way to give back to the men and women who have served our country.
When Congressman Seth Moulton reached out to the Lynn SkillsUSA chapter, a returning Model of Excellence, for assistance with a “Day of Service in Memory of 9/11,” members moved into action. They decided to honor local first responders by giving them bags filled with snacks and favorite items along with handwritten thank-you notes. In the weeks leading up to Sept. 11, the chapter reached out to the community via social media, newspapers and email to request items. The chapter was quickly inundated with donations, and the project took shape. On Sept. 11, more than 100 volunteers gathered to decorate cards and gift bags and fill them with over 2,500 donated items. After hours of creation and assembly, members hand-delivered 250 gift bags to firehouses, police stations, EMT stations and emergency-room personnel in the City of Lynn. The project was life-changing for those involved, with grateful first responders sharing memories of their experiences on 9/11.

Members displayed integrity in the way they led others to give back to the community. This was seen in the respect shown to first responders, in holding members accountable for project roles, and in the courtesy shown throughout the donation gathering, bag assembly and delivery process. Students took responsibility in ensuring widespread community participation, including gaining volunteer support from the City of Lynn and the North Shore area, in creating bags that expressed appreciation for the work of first responders on a daily basis. Professionalism was exhibited in the way members encouraged and guided volunteers during the bag-filling process, and in the gracious demeanor they exhibited when delivering bags to first responders. Never forget!
SkillsUSA members at Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC) added reality-TV flair to their training in business planning and presentation skills — hosting their very own version of “Shark Tank.” A chapter committee collaborated with CVCC’s entrepreneurship department and local business partners to plan and manage the competition and develop an evaluation process. Members launched a marketing campaign to attract participants and identified business leaders to serve on the judges’ panel. The chapter held preliminary, semifinal and final rounds, enabling a total of 58 students to participate. Students prepared five-minute business pitch presentations followed by questions, sharpening their public-speaking skills while instilling valuable business-creation concepts. Faculty met with over 30 students individually over the course of the event to provide valuable mentorship, including setting personal and career goals. Twenty-one community leaders served as judges, sponsors or mentors.

The skill of professionalism was demonstrated in how students presented themselves to faculty and business leaders as well as during the presentations and mentoring sessions. Students showed work ethic in creating unique business ideas and pitches and working alongside faculty and business leaders to learn as much as they could about a realistic business-pitch situation. Self-motivation was visible in the students’ initiative to plan and execute a quality, multitiered event that offered learning opportunities from both a planning and participation perspective. Students tested their abilities in a challenging, yet friendly atmosphere that afforded them the opportunity to also recruit new SkillsUSA members and instructors. The chapter is pleased to have added 20 more students and 10 more instructors to their SkillsUSA program. Now that’s an episode of “Shark Tank” where everyone wins!
Pickaway-Ross Career and Technology Center, Ohio

SkillsUSA members enrolled in the Medical Careers and Health Care Foundations program at PRCTC had a rare opportunity to gain hands-on experience in assisting at a regional Senior Olympics event. Residents from over 50 nursing homes in 11 Ohio counties and parts of Kentucky came together for a day of live music, food and competition including shuffleboard, bowling, basketball foul shots, bingo and checkers. More than 100 chapter members joined other volunteers to help residents with wheelchairs, competitions and various activities such as wagon rides and exercises. The chapter had more experienced 12th-grade students, many with State Tested Nurses Aid (STNA) certification, mentor the 11th-graders who were working for the first time with the geriatric population. Students learned how to socialize and interact appropriately while also gaining experience with helping seniors exercise and improve mobility — valuable preparation for upcoming clinical training. Residents were thrilled to be in this entertaining environment, interacting with students and stimulating their senses.

The framework skills of work ethic, professionalism, and adaptability and flexibility were required throughout this activity. Members demonstrated work ethic and professionalism by being attentive, assisting residents throughout the day, and a willingness to learn from peers and seniors alike. These framework skills were also seen in the positive attitude and compassion students demonstrated in a setting that cannot be replicated in the classroom. Adaptability/flexibility was essential, as there was no predicting what the day would bring at each moment. Members initiated changes needed to improve outcomes, because there is no guidebook on helping seniors shoot a basketball! A true learn-by-doing activity that yielded Olympic-size smiles.
Central High School, Wyoming

No child should go hungry, which is why SkillsUSA members from Central High School assisted the Friday Food Bag (FFB) Foundation in their school district to prepare bags of nutritious, nonperishable food for local children. The meals are delivered on Fridays while school is in session to children who otherwise might not eat well, or at all, during the weekend. The chapter set a goal of creating at least 500 food bags in an hour and raising enough money for FFB to feed a child for an entire year. With the support of 40 members and parents, the chapter packed over 1,000 bags in an hour and raised $250 dollars, enough to feed one child for a year with money left over to go toward a second. This is an excellent example of supporting an important cause while increasing awareness about a vital issue. Thanks to the SkillsUSA chapter, many students at Central High School are now aware of the hunger issues facing many youth in the community.

Members showed strong work ethic during the activity by working efficiently and as a team, taking responsibility for individual work tasks to double the number of bags filled. They showed adaptability/flexibility through a willingness to do different jobs in a professional manner to meet goals and timelines. Students also adapted to working in a new environment in which they were not accustomed. Self-motivation was apparent in the way students wanted to do something beneficial for others, showed discipline in getting the work done, and supported the performance of all volunteers to improve an existing process. The chapter’s participation also opened the door to similar endeavors because the community knows SkillsUSA is here to help. Great job!
Hobbs High School, New Mexico

Hobbs SkillsUSA members believe it’s never too early to start thinking ahead. That’s why the Hobbs chapter, a returning Models of Excellence program, shared the value of STEM careers and SkillsUSA by facilitating monthly workshops at a local elementary school. Members used the SkillsUSA resource Jump Into STEM! as a starting point to plan and present lessons, ultimately creating their own as the program progressed. The chapter divided volunteers into three teams with each team developing, practicing and presenting lessons. Chapter officers worked with teachers at Broadmoor Elementary School to develop a schedule that would accommodate each second-grade class on the first Friday of the month. More than 50 percent of members volunteered, and the lessons were so well-received that the chapter is now doing STEM outreach at a second elementary school. In addition to a valuable mentorship opportunity, members strengthened their own STEM knowledge and workplace skills.

Members improved oral and written communication skills by preparing and presenting lessons in a manner appropriate for a second-grade audience. They exhibited patience when communicating and offered clarity when giving instructions. For teamwork, members worked constructively and collaboratively, capitalizing on the strengths of team members to make the program a success. The skill of planning, organizing and management was demonstrated in the way students fostered a positive working relationship with others, including the second-grade teachers, managed program teams with little assistance and effectively used resources to complete the project. This included doing ample research around each lesson and being prepared each time they entered the school. Way to share your talents, Hobbs!
Fairfield Career Center, Ohio

Multicultural awareness in the workplace leads to a productive and positive work environment. Students from the Fairfield Career Center, a two-time Models of Excellence chapter, learned the value of this attribute by participating in an engaging student-led activity. Using the SkillsUSA Professional Development Program (PDP) Level 2.5 as a starting point, chapter leaders created a step-by-step exercise to help members recognize, define and practice integrating multicultural awareness in the workplace. Members first completed an anonymous survey regarding cultural sensitivity in specific workplace situations. Chapter leaders then presented a PowerPoint presentation on multicultural awareness, leading an open discussion about interacting with various cultures and ideas for practicing cultural sensitivity. After the presentation, students reflected on what they learned in writing, expressing new perspectives and ideas. Over half of the students said they learned something new, and almost every student said they would have changed one or more of their answers on the survey knowing what they knew now.

All students honed their communication skills by practicing active listening, participating in open and articulate discussions, and in the writing activity after the presentation. Teamwork was present in how students interactively participated in the activity, taking a constructive approach to learning more about a sensitive topic. The framework skill of multicultural awareness and sensitivity was apparent in the newfound knowledge by every student, reflecting a greater awareness of different backgrounds, beliefs and experiences. Students learned to overcome initial perceptions and gained an appreciation for cultural differences in the workplace. An inclusive and fruitful endeavor!
A&M Consolidated High School, Texas

In a world where online threats and security breaches occur daily, public knowledge of cybersecurity is increasingly important. Members at A&M Consolidated High School, a 2016 Models of Excellence winner, tackled this topic head-on by leading a cybersecurity awareness initiative. The chapter took a two-pronged approach by seeking to further its own cybersecurity education while also providing outreach and cybersecurity presentations in the community. Students participated in the CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Education Program online curriculum, completing lessons during IT class-time. Taking what they learned, they planned and participated in two local outreach efforts, which included participation at a safety event at their local Lowe’s store in October 2016 and a presentation hosted at their high school in February 2017. At the Lowe’s event, students set up a display and answered security questions for hundreds of Lowe’s customers. During the school event, students presented topics on keeping data safe, offered a workshop on effectively using Google services and provided in-house consultation.

Members honed communication skills throughout the process, developing interpersonal skills by working with various groups and marketing the program to the community. They capitalized on audiovisual, written and well-constructed oral communication. Student demonstrated leadership by taking initiative to augment their existing classwork, which led the entire IT program to proactively learn more about cybersecurity issues. They also developed a level of trust with the community, building positive relationships and setting common goals. Extensive planning, organizing and management was required to organize hold these events. Students took charge of all facets of the program including planning and oversight, advertising and presenting. They worked in teams and secured the necessary resources to make the program come to fruition. In offering this valuable service, the chapter also gained visibility for its award-winning IT program. A cyber win for sure!
Keller Center for Advanced Learning, Texas

For senior citizens, the ever-changing technology scene can be especially intimidating with smartphones, apps, social media and the internet. SkillsUSA members in Keller, Texas, made technology more approachable for area seniors by creating a monthly technology-training program. The SkillsUSA officer team worked alongside the chapter’s community service committee to model the program after a similar one in another school district. They created multiple teams of 12 to 14 students, determined topics for the training and worked with the senior activity center to create a schedule. Seniors were able to sign up for assistance with smartphone functions, apps for healthcare and benefits, online tools for mental alertness, internet navigation and more. It’s been a huge success. Since the program’s inception, the chapter has conducted nine visits to the senior activity center, with expansion to other activity centers on the horizon.

Members practiced multicultural sensitivity and awareness by pairing students and senior citizens of shared cultural backgrounds to get the most out of visits. Also, many students worked with seniors from different cultural backgrounds, learning more about their traditions and values. Students practiced teamwork by establishing parameters for the program and working collaboratively with each other, seniors, activity center management and the team from the school district from which they modeled the program. Planning, organizing and management was seen in how members outlined and executed the details and promoted service learning through a positive social media campaign. In addition to seniors appreciating the ability to better connect with family members and take advantage of free services online, the multigenerational relationships being developed have been especially rewarding. Way to care for your elders!
Rudder High School, Texas

Sometimes the greatest opportunities to do good are right in front of us. This was the case for Rudder High School members in creating “Ranger Deployment Packs” (named to coincide with the school’s Army theme) for fellow members attending a three-day district SkillsUSA competition. At least 75 percent of students at the high school come from very modest means, making the trip financially difficult. Chapter leaders set out to support fellow members, several without any knowledge of this activity, to provide drawstring backpacks filled with snacks, supplies and hygiene products for the trip. Adhering to established timelines and objectives, members reached out to local businesses in writing and in person, raising $1,000 to purchase bags, snacks and supplies while also gathering hygiene items from local dentists and orthodontists. Prior to the trip, a chapter committee assembled the packs and labeled them. When the chapter arrived at the hotel for competition, they presented the packs to grateful and surprised peers.

Students did an excellent job of communicating needs to key audiences and working in a committee, while also being selective in how and where communication took place as to maintain the element of surprise. Leadership was shown in how members held each other accountable for donation procurement and in delegating specific responsibilities. The rewards of planning, organizing and management were apparent in the ability of chapter members to gather what was needed, find the best deals on items for purchase, and in the thoughtful distribution of packs at the hotel. A true team effort, making a worthwhile connection to one of the slogans on the goarmy.com website, “The Team that Makes a Difference.” Well done!
Westwood High School, Texas

When is a fundraiser more “fun” than “raiser?” When you have food and entertainment, of course! The Westwood High SkillsUSA chapter combined the enjoyment of favorite chili recipes with the plentiful talent of local elementary, middle-school and high-school students to create a stellar community event. The workplace skills and public relations committees collaborated to lead a multifaceted effort involving chapter members, businesses, schools and community leaders to coordinate and host a chili cook-off fundraiser. The generosity of the Westwood community was apparent at all levels with an enthusiastic chili cook-off competition, the collection and sale of over 150 silent-auction items and 35 live-auction items, and entertainment that featured choirs, dance troupes, drum lines and quartets to name a few. With everything donated, down to the bowls and spoons for the chili, the event netted a 100-percent profit, surpassing the chapter’s initial fundraising goal of $3,000.

Teamwork was exemplified in how chapter leadership involved members in all aspects of this project, recognizing their efforts and contributions to the group. Teams communicated clearly and effectively with defined roles and expectations. Multicultural sensitivity and awareness was seen in the appreciation and variety of talent that performed at the show, highlighting the rich cultural heritage of the community. The effective use of planning, organizing and management was demonstrated in the way students stayed on schedule, interacted with local business to exceed donation goals, managed their time, and in outreach efforts to ensure maximum community participation. A prime example of Texas-sized spirit and support for a great cause — SkillsUSA!
Green Mountain Technology and Career Center, Vermont

Returning Model of Excellence GMTCC used the expertise of SkillsUSA members in their Allied Health Careers Program to expose elementary students to essential healthcare practices. Working with the Medtrek coordinator at a local elementary school, SkillsUSA members facilitated two sessions involving hands-on activities that emphasized patient care techniques and the importance of confidentiality including HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations. Topics covered included infection control, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), transmission-based precautions, proper hand washing, how to check vital signs, and the use of CPR and an AED defibrillator. Elementary participants not only learned more about new topics, but they were able to demonstrate the use of PPEs including how to remove contaminated rubber gloves without cross-contaminating their hands. Students were so excited about the visits, they didn’t want the SkillsUSA members to leave and said they plan to attend GMTCC in the future.

Students demonstrated decision-making by thoughtfully considering which topics should be presented and how elementary participants could apply that knowledge through hands-on application. In working with the Medtrek representative and the school’s schedule, students showed proficiency in making decisions within a desired timeframe. Members demonstrated teamwork by collectively working to develop content and activities for the sessions and actively listening to each other’s point of view. They did the necessary research to present timely information on topics critical to healthcare in a manner applicable to their young audience. The chapter also achieved a teamwork goal of having 30 percent of students in the Allied Heath program participate, which they did. A superb example of gaining experience in outreach and application.
Putnam Career and Technical Center, West Virginia

In June 2016, floods displaced more than 4,600 residents in West Virginia, leaving several families in temporary housing months later. Working in cooperation with the West Virginia Department of Education’s “Big Hearts Give Tiny Homes” project, PCTC SkillsUSA members designed, constructed and furnished a tiny house for a flood-displaced family. The collaborative effort involved student representatives from 11 PCTC programs including carpentry, drafting, welding, electrical, plumbing, masonry, dental assisting, ProStart, firefighting, graphic design and HVAC. The PCTC chapter, a three-time Models of Excellence recipient, met a tight two-month build schedule and solicited more than $6,000 in donations to support the project beyond the $20,400 initial grant. From materials acquisition to the final finishing touches, members efficiently completed the fully equipped home in time for a public dedication ceremony before Christmas. In the presence of the governor and other public officials, a grateful family received the PCTC tiny house along with other families who accepted tiny houses built by other West Virginia high schools.

Members excelled in communication by the sheer nature of this project and the number of chapter programs participating. In addition to ongoing logistical communication, the chapter prepared a presentation and 3-D model of the home for the dedication ceremony. Members also used conventional and social media as well as cold-calling to exceed donation goals to completely furnish the home. The chapter defined teamwork through a divide-and-conquer approach. Drafting and building trades programs were involved in the design and construction phases, while other programs such as dental assisting, graphic design and ProStart collected donations and created the presentation. For planning, organizing and management, members stayed on task through delegation, weekly meetings, budgeting, and adhering to established timelines. There was nothing “tiny” about this project!
Central Arizona Valley Institute of Technology, Arizona

Being prepared for an active-shooter incident is an unfortunate reality in today’s world. Law students from CAVIT, a returning Models of Excellence chapter, addressed this public-safety concern with a twofold approach involving local business outreach and interactive experience for students. Members visited three local businesses, accompanied by a police officer, to present a safety video and discuss options to run, hide or fight with strategies specific to each business and location. The chapter then conducted mock active-shooter drills in six CAVIT classrooms for students in various career pathways. Debriefing and discussion sessions followed the scenarios, enabling students to reflect and analyze what they did right and what they would have done differently. The chapter had 100-percent participation by second-year law students, with all of them learning something they didn’t know before. Business and student participants alike were challenged to think about their reactions, survival options and defense tactics for these grave situations.

Members demonstrated job-specific skills by applying knowledge of defense strategies and looking for ways to help others learn new skills and applications. They also provided an opportunity to teach an important subject matter while honing their own skills through practical application. Members followed safety and health practices by seeking the counsel and support of the local police department and by ensuring school scenarios were conducted in a realistic yet secure environment. Service orientation was demonstrated in the chapter’s proactive outreach to local business and in helping their fellow members assess what they would do to protect clients or customers in a workplace setting. Members excelled in addressing a difficult subject by exhibiting professionalism in all aspects of learning. This awareness and preparation could save a life.
Kofa High School, Arizona

Returning Models of Excellence chapter Kofa High School used the talent of its welding program to collaborate with the City of Yuma to create unique artwork as part of a citywide beautification project. Members worked alongside city employees over a five-month period to design, construct and install a sculpture for display at one of the city’s entry ports. This included the creation of a project plan, incorporating time management, data analysis and presentation techniques. Students used new fabrication equipment and training programs to increase manufacturing skills and ensure the project would be completed according to city specifications. In the end, students fabricated two 7-foot steel palm trees standing in front of a mountain-shaped rock cage, 20 feet long by 5 feet tall, with a sun rising above the mountain, all designed to reflect Yuma’s rich farming community. The sculpture was dedicated the end of May, welcoming all entering through this port.

This project enabled students to achieve tangible experience in using job-specific skills and enforcing safety and health requirements in a manufacturing environment. Students delegated different roles to team members to ensure timely completion, including assigning project managers, fabricators and welders. Students worked with various blueprint styles to achieve design goals, and they created a training program to instruct their peers on equipment operation consistent with industry safety standards. Throughout the project, inspections were completed by students and the advisor to maintain quality control, complete modifications and establish an organized manufacturing process, including process improvement. To add a cherry on top, students learned the value of communication skills in working together and with a city agency to deliver an outstanding end product. Bravo!
Union Grove High School, Georgia

Partnering with their local Lowe’s store and Timber Ridge Elementary School, Union Grove SkillsUSA members transformed an overgrown space into a vibrant educational garden. Members collaborated with the school to renovate an area intended for growing plants for educational purposes, but that never came to fruition because of lack of time and resources. Union Grove, a three-time Models of Excellence chapter, led a complete overhaul of the area including site planning, materials coordination, ongoing communication with school staff, volunteer logistics and project completion. During the six-hour renovation, members worked alongside Lowe’s employees and Timber Ridge teachers, students and parents to clean up the area and plant a variety of vegetation including parsley, dwarf zinnia, Russian sage, Elijah Blue fescue, black-eyed Susan and other butterfly-attracting plants. Today, everything is in bloom, and the chapter has added additional plants and materials. Members plan to return to the school with SkillsUSA Jump Into STEM! lessons that tie into the garden to help students learn about sustainability, life cycles, butterflies and agriculture.

Members demonstrated service orientation by showing initiative in addressing a community need and pulling together the human and capital resources to make it possible. They created a positive environment and assisted others with learning the value of service while developing a thriving end-product with the garden. Job-specific skills shined in students’ abilities to use landscaping software, create and read site plans, manage timelines, and prepare and plant the space, and in the professional interaction with Lowe’s and the school. They also readily assisted others and accepted opportunities to perform new tasks and processes. A growth project with benefits yet to be realized!
Greater Lowell Technical High School, Massachusetts

Want to know more about SkillsUSA at Greater Lowell Technical High School? Visit www.gltechskills.com. Thanks to design and technology skills — and a successful outreach effort by chapter members — teachers, students and parents now have easy access to everything they need to stay fully informed of events and activities, better communicate with one another and actively participate in SkillsUSA. The user-friendly site features essential items such as a calendar of events, electronic copies of forms and documents, information on leadership events, contests and conferences, announcements, student spotlights, a photo gallery, OSHA/PDP tools, contact page and more. It’s also a tremendous educational site for those who simply want to know more about SkillsUSA or SkillsUSA alumni who may want to reconnect. Students promoted the website using posters and announcements as well as during a televised school committee meeting and open houses. The look, content and design all exceeded the expectation of the website development committee.

Members demonstrated job-specific skills by exceeding initial expectations for the website in taking on new tasks and processes and in making content and design decisions that reflected the chapter’s vision. The project promoted professional development because students completed a career-related project they had never done before. They did the required research necessary to create a successful website and improved their technical skills and website design abilities. Computer and technology literacy was shown in the ability of members to use an online resource to make chapter tasks more efficient while promoting SkillsUSA to key audiences. In doing so, they also implemented a more efficient method for achieving chapter involvement and leadership goals. #GltechskillsRocks
Bergen County Academies, New Jersey

SkillsUSA at Bergen County Academies, a returning Models of Excellence chapter, is known for combining baked delicacies with effective fundraising. The chapter worked with the Culinary and Hospitality Administration programs at the academy to host a record-breaking Thanksgiving pie sale. The student-run operation encompassed menu creation, publicity and sales, ingredient estimates and procurement, baking, decorating, boxing and timely distribution of apple, pumpkin, pumpkin cheesecake, pecan and chocolate pecan pies as well as pumpkin bread. An impressive selection! The chapter used an online schedule to involve members throughout the process, and online ordering augmented customer service and boosted production and delivery efficiencies. All members contributed, signing up for volunteer slots to deliver pies during the week and the weekend prior. Needless to say, the chapter had a lot of happy customers, selling 542 pies and exceeding their sales goal by 35 percent!

Job-specific skills were engaged in both the business and baking aspects of this effort. Members used business acumen and culinary arts knowledge in a real-world setting, consistently demonstrating high-demand skills related to job duties and exceeding initial expectations. The use of computer and technology literacy in online scheduling and ordering helped the chapter proficiently manage data, creating a better workflow and accommodating a higher-than-expected demand for pies. The success of the project reflected the service orientation of members in professionally meeting the needs of customers while also raising funds for chapter programming. This was evident in the variety of items offered and in the synchronized work and delivery schedule to maintain product freshness. A profitable and delicious endeavor!
Gloucester County Institute of Technology, New Jersey

Two-time Models of Excellence national winner GCIT once again exemplified the chapter’s mastery of integrating the SkillsUSA Framework into chapter activities with a “Stress-Free Day” for local law enforcement. Putting skills to the test in a professional environment, the chapter’s cosmetology program hosted area police officers and their families for a day of relaxation and VIP treatment. The chapter sent formal invitations to every Gloucester County police station and advertised the event on local television stations and via social media. In preparation, cosmetology members researched and practiced stress-relief techniques, ultimately providing over 100 services during the day with scalp treatments, manicures, hand and back massages, facials and paraffin wax treatments. The team also put together goody bags filled with items that reduce stress, such as dark chocolate, green tea and stress balls. Thirty-six officers participated from seven towns, accompanied by several family members. The event was so well received that the chapter plans to make it an annual affair with involvement by even more departments.

SkillsUSA members excelled in job-specific skills by demonstrating proficiencies using equipment and stress-relief procedures, applying academic and technical knowledge in their field of study, and following expectations on the job. Members observed safety and health guidelines by conducting treatments according to state cosmetology standards and in a sanitary environment. Members spearheaded “Everyone is a Customer” to help members differentiate between internal and external customers and develop strategies for working with both. The positive results of this in-house training stood out during the day of service as members put the officers at ease and met their needs for a truly enjoyable experience. Members were also influential in their attitude toward others, fostering success in the workplace. An honorable and much appreciated endeavor.
Upper Valley Career Center, Ohio

When SkillsUSA members get inspired by a good idea, get ready for results! That’s what happened when members at Upper Valley Career Center challenged all programs at their school to get involved in community service using job-specific skills. Leading the way, the chapter officer team worked with advisors to set goals and develop marketing strategies to promote the project, which included email notification, posters, presentations, social media and newsletters. Members reached out to instructors and peers to generate interest, monitoring progress and organizing information regarding program participation and their chosen service project. Chapter enthusiasm and leadership worked with 65 percent of members from nine programs doing community service. Projects were varied and applicable to each program’s technical skill area. Examples included participation by Exercise Science students at an elementary-school field day and “little libraries” built and distributed around the community by the Building and Grounds program.

Chapter leadership’s proposal to have every program in the school do community service was a prime example of service orientation, providing customer service above and beyond the norm. Leadership also treated other programs as their customers by using different promotional vehicles to get the word out, following up and offering support as programs developed and completed projects. Each program had an opportunity to demonstrate job-specific skills because of the opportunity presented to serve the community. Every project was unique and applicable to the program performing the service. Safety and health procedures were practiced in doing the service. For example, the Building and Grounds program wore safety glasses and protective gear while building the little libraries. Talents multiplied for the community’s benefit.
Rudder High School, Texas

Through their program to sell posters and vinyl stickers, members running the print shop at Rudder High School have grown professionally and developed new skills. The chapter set out to provide quality service and products on campus, applying graphic-design principles and skills using Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. This past year, that product scope included the production of posters and vinyl cutout stickers. All activities were implemented by the SkillsUSA technical committee with the intent to gain practical and realistic print-shop experience while selling enough products to help support the program — along with other fundraising efforts such as DonorsChoose.org. This recently resulted in the purchase of a vinyl cutting machine. Students set forth production and sales goals and fulfilled orders for 14 customers this school year, learning every aspect of the process from creation to invoicing to delivery. Students have become so proficient at making posters and using the vinyl machine that advisor involvement is only needed for troubleshooting.

Students embraced the SkillsUSA Framework element of job-specific skills by seeking a new opportunity to apply current skills to new jobs and processes. This included the evaluation of existing processes and changes to improve performance. Service orientation was shown in students asking clarifying questions while learning and their responsiveness to customers in fulfilling orders. By running a print shop within the school, professional development is part of daily operations. Students are well on their way to achieving educational and workplace goals whether they choose to remain in this field of study or move on to another. As Albert Einstein said, “The only source of knowledge is experience.” For this group of students, Einstein could not have said it better!
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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.

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