MODELS of EXCELLENCE

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

2018
June 2018

Dear SkillsUSA Advocates:

It is my pleasure to share the successes of this year’s 24 Models of Excellence (MOE) recipients. This award celebrates the highest level of our Chapter Excellence Program (CEP), which recognizes chapters nationwide for the outstanding application of the SkillsUSA Framework in developing the personal, workplace and technical skills demanded by industry.

We are in the fourth year of CEP and the impact on SkillsUSA has been tremendous. Since the program’s inception, chapter participation has grown by 24 percent. We’ve seen greater consistency in chapter operations, and we are proud to say that 19 SkillsUSA state associations meet the qualifications of the new SkillsUSA State Standards of Excellence program. We also had a record 395,000 members in 2017; growth of almost 30 percent from the previous year. We anticipate membership to easily exceed 400,000 members in 2018. While these developments reflect cumulative results of SkillsUSA programming, I can confidently tell you that CEP has played a significant role in all of it. Stronger chapters equate to stronger state associations and a stronger national organization. It’s that simple.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to Lowe’s Companies, Inc. for their collaboration in promoting and supporting chapter excellence from the beginning. The involvement from the corporate office and local stores has been instrumental in the program’s initial start-up, continued growth and ongoing success. As part of their sponsorship, MOE recipients each receive up to $4,000 in grant dollars to pursue worthwhile projects in their chapter or community. We’ve seen chapters do everything from building mobile kitchens to adding classroom technology because of Lowe’s generosity. In addition, our MOE chapters return home and foster relationships with their local Lowe’s stores through community outreach activities. Many of these interactions have blossomed into long-term partnerships between SkillsUSA chapters and Lowe’s stores, extending far beyond the scope of MOE participation. It is a beautiful thing to see the red blazers of SkillsUSA working alongside the red vests of Lowe’s to achieve mutually beneficial results.

Due to the increased participation in this program, competition at the MOE level has become fierce! Each one of the chapters featured in this booklet represents the BEST of chapter skills engagement and student application. Chapter activities are based around the intentional delivery and learning of personal, workplace and technical skills outlined in the SkillsUSA Framework. Because of this, MOE goes beyond checking a box to receive an award. It’s about students taking the initiative to be proactive leaders and empowered learners. You can ask any MOE recipient about how they applied a specific skill to an activity and 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!

Thank you for your support of the nearly 400,000 SkillsUSA members nationwide.

Sincerely,

Tim Lawrence
SkillsUSA Executive Director
Career 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 as it relates to the integration of the SkillsUSA framework in chapter program of work activities. As a chapter’s yearly action plan, the program of work is at the heart of student learning and employability development. By using the 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 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 SkillsUSA Framework, the greater the chance for CEP honors.
### CONGRATULATIONS, 2018 MODELS OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

#### Personal Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>School Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Dorchester Career and Technology Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Durango High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Franklin Technology Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Grovetown High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Lynn Vocational Technical Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Sandy Creek High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>Tennessee College of Applied Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Union Grove High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Workplace Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>School Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Cambridge High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Catawba Valley Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Centauri High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Gloucester County Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Norwalk High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Southampton High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Wiregrass Georgia Technical College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Woodland High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Technical Skills Grounded in Academics

Texas  A&M Consolidated High School
Oklahoma  Autry Technology Center
Texas  College Station High School
Georgia  Cross Keys High School
Oklahoma  Gordon Cooper Technology Center
Massachusetts  Greater Lowell Technology Center
Colorado  Thomas Jefferson High School
Arizona  Willow Canyon High School

THANK YOU
Lowe’s Companies Inc.
for Supporting Chapter Excellence!
Collaboration with local business in an integral part of fostering meaningful SkillsUSA partnerships and relevant learning. Members at the Dorchester Career and Technology Center accomplished both by organizing and hosting an employability skills panel with local businesses. Working with the president of the Dorchester County Chamber of Commerce, chapter officers planned and facilitated framework-focused discussions. The goal was to have six businesses participate, but the chapter exceeded those expectations with 11 businesses representing the hospitality, transportation, construction, insurance and engineering industries. A total of four sessions were held during the school day to involve all chapter members and encourage small-group discussion. Panelists discussed employability skills and why they are important, and students asked a series of well-prepared questions. Businesses also provided specific insight into the hiring process relative to the framework, provided beforehand. A chapter survey revealed 95 percent of students felt the event was beneficial. Students also gained a valuable networking opportunity. Hyatt, the largest employer in the area, plans to return to assist students on an individual basis.

Students learned about work ethic from the viewpoint of business owner and/or an employee through role play. Panelists gave specific examples, including ethical dilemmas, relative to their industry. Members showed professionalism in their communication with the chamber president during planning, and in their interaction with business leaders during the event. They have also practiced professionalism during mock interviews, in class and at SkillsUSA events. Self-motivation was evident in the self-directed preparation for the panel discussion and in the goal-oriented perspective gained from this activity. Members are even more motivated to accept feedback and learn from it. Business and education working together — framework skills validation by those who know it best!
Culinary arts students at Durango High School used SkillsUSA Week as an opportunity to show gratitude for school staff while applying workplace skills in a professional atmosphere. In typical SkillsUSA servant-leadership fashion, members coordinated all aspects of the annual appreciation breakfast for more than 90 staff members. This included delegating team and individual responsibilities for tasks such as reserving the school kitchen, developing a menu, obtaining food donations, culinary preparation, cooking assignments, event setup and cleanup, breakfast invitations and serving duties. Their diligent preparations resulted in one of the best school breakfasts on record! Bright and early at 7 a.m., staff members were greeted by smiling SkillsUSA members and a full-course breakfast of eggs, fruit, French toast, bacon, sausage, coffee and orange juice. Members were on task, ensuring food was hot and replenished as needed, and that all of their guests were comfortably accommodated. School staff was overwhelmed by the delicious breakfast and member efforts in ensuring everything went smoothly.

The chapter demonstrated **integrity** by following through with a committed plan for serving a large group. The gratitude of attendees emphasized the rewards of integrity and hard work. Students practiced **professionalism** as they greeted administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, custodians, office staff and others when they entered the culinary classroom. Students respectfully directed participants toward the service line, continuously checking and maintaining food items to keep the buffet line moving. Members individually showed the value of being **self-motivated**, demonstrating their own internal motivations for doing a good job in individual and team tasks. Self-motivation was also present in the joy and enthusiasm of members as they arrived bright and early at 5:45 a.m. to start cooking. Purposeful appreciation!
Creativity and convenience defined the SkillsUSA professional development framework seminars at the Franklin Technology Center. The seminars were a collaborative effort between chapter leadership, advisors and technical instructors to give every member an opportunity for framework skills exposure and development. The chapter scheduled seminars during the first three months of the school year with September focusing on personal skills, October on workplace skills, and November on technical skills. The seminars were held once a month during a block day, allowing for almost two and a half hours of learning. Each seminar featured six rotations, one for each element, approximately 15-20 minutes in duration. Seminars were offered to morning and afternoon classes so all members would have access to training. Chapter leaders led some of the sessions, but most were facilitated by instructors. Activities included guest speakers, problem solving activities, and experiential learning. More than 400 students had an opportunity to participate and the seminars have proven fruitful in framework application! The SkillsUSA resources of Impact, Jumpstart!, Ignite and others were influential in developing meaningful, time-conscious activities.

Professionalism was paramount to seminar planning and facilitation. Members learned the importance of professional appearance and presentation etiquette in front of peers and during interactions with guest speakers. They gained an appreciation for work ethic through experiential learning, resulting in a deeper understanding of how work ethic applies to all essential elements in furthering career readiness. Self-motivation was apparent by each member’s willingness to learn something new and apply those lessons in the classroom and at work. Members were also required to write reflections on their learning, further emphasizing the purpose of professional development days. Class time well spent!
When Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, SkillsUSA members at Grovetown High School jumped at the opportunity to help. Working in partnership with the National Guard in Charleston and Samaritan’s Purse International Relief, chapter leaders organized a “Fill the Truck” initiative to provide much-needed supplies. Several student-led activities ensued, aimed at reaching the chapter’s goal of filling a 27-foot U-Haul with personal hygiene and nonperishable items. Members promoted the event by distributing fliers and using social media. They held a car wash to raise funds to pay for the cost of fuel and truck rental, earning $430. As soon as word got out, donations started pouring in! Members collected everything from water, paper towels and diapers to food items. Student leaders kept donations organized and called upon parent volunteers to help pack the truck. Thanks to member enthusiasm and community generosity, the chapter collected enough items to fill the truck plus an SUV! Donations were delivered to the National Guard in Charleston for transport to Puerto Rico. In the end, filling the truck resulted in a lasting bonding effort, especially significant due to the community’s large Hispanic population.

Members demonstrated work ethic by meeting tight deadlines and being self-directed in their community outreach. This included leadership shown by the seven members who spearheaded the project and in the extra effort put forth to exceed goals. The chapter showed responsibility during item collection, fundraising efforts, and in spreading awareness of supplies needed to help others; everyone fulfilled a role. Self-motivation was demonstrated in the outreach and publicity to make this event a success, especially in how members used social media to reach a large audience. A truck filled with purpose!
Veteran appreciation is an ongoing priority for 2017 MOE winner Lynn Vocational Technical Institute. Seeking to make the holidays brighter for veterans in their community, the chapter embarked on an educational mission to raise awareness about veteran suicide while collecting funds for a Christmas project. Working alongside local veterans’ organizations, the chapter identified four veteran families needing support. Chapter committees created workshop events with speakers to present veteran issues and suicide statistics, and delivered them to students and faculty schoolwide. At the end of each workshop, students explained the Christmas project and enlisted the support of peers to raise funds, suggesting each student raise $22 to honor 22 veterans who commit suicide daily. Participation culminated with an awareness walk hosted by the school on Dec. 22. In an incredible display of generosity, including that of fellow veterans, students raised over $6,000 and gathered enough donations to fulfill the needs of each veteran family. Members were also able to fulfill requests for 16 individual veterans, further adding to the project’s impact.

The chapter showed integrity by mobilizing the entire school to support a worthy cause. Members also did this through a purposeful approach in involving several local veterans’ organizations. Work ethic was apparent in the way members followed through on all the requirements of this multitiered effort. This included coordination of the school workshops and speakers, logistics of the walk, publicity efforts, donation collection and organization. Publicity went so well, the chapter received coverage by the local Fox TV affiliate. Finally, adaptability and flexibility was demonstrated in how members initially approached the project to help four families in the community but were asked to also help 16 other individuals. They accepted this challenge and answered the call. A Christmas to remember!
Sandy Creek High School, Georgia

Returning MOE chapter Sandy Creek High School blended chapter leadership with framework learning to present a series of four interactive student-led training sessions. Sessions were open to all SkillsUSA members, including nonmembers, before and after school. Chapter committees worked together to develop personalized topics relevant to member interest and career aspirations. Subjects such as interview skills, teamwork, goal-setting and motivation were covered. Chapter officers planned the workshops, developed visual presentations and facilitated hands-on activities with their peers. They used SkillsUSA resources such as Propel and Activate in their workshop preparation, and rotated duties so that each officer would have an opportunity to develop public speaking and leadership skills. Various ice-breakers were used to introduce topics, and each activity made intentional and purposeful framework connections. For example, during the goal-setting session, officers had members write down their goals for the year. They will circled back with members to debrief on what was achieved and what wasn’t, and discussed goals being set going forward. In addition to serving as an effective training tool, the sessions attracted new and involved members. One of the recruits was recently chosen to be an officer!

Students conducted themselves with professionalism in their role as workshop presenters and as members willing to improve their own abilities. Students demonstrated work ethic in their planning and execution, delivering relevant and engaging content to peers. The time and effort put forth by officers to make this training model a success was commendable. Self-motivation was exemplary due to the student-led training concept. It was also seen in the desire by officers and members to improve outcomes for future sessions both in attendance and content ideas. Talk about intrinsic, long-term benefits!
Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) — Pulaski

Exposure to topics outside the course curriculum is vital to workplace readiness. SkillsUSA members at TCAT-Pulaski sought to offer life skills training to their student body by partnering with local business and industry on an educational workshop. Members approached the TCAT-Pulaski student senate regarding a timely topic, and they chose good money habits. SkillsUSA officers met with TCAT administration to determine a workshop date, time and on-campus location. They then contacted and secured a speaker from a local bank to address smart money management, specifically the importance of a good credit score. Officers spread the word via email, fliers and classroom visits, and successfully hosted the workshop with more than 30 students in attendance. A dynamic question-and-answer session followed the presentation as students gained valuable insight regarding factors that positively and negatively affect credit scores, and the importance of achieving and maintaining healthy credit. The workshop was so well received that chapter officers will continue to seek similar opportunities in the future.

Chapter officers demonstrated responsibility by hosting an outside speaker to address a topic critical to personal and financial well-being. They also sought approval through the appropriate administrative and senate channels in event planning and delivery, assuming leadership responsibility throughout. Adaptability/flexibility was a necessity as officers had to make last-minute adjustments to the conference room to accommodate more participants. An entire class of students chose to attend at the last minute! The officers were self-motivated in securing a speaker, promoting the event, and selecting an excellent subject. Everyone who attended can now explain the ins and outs of credit. Looks like TCAT-Pulaski members are the life skills champions on campus!
Union Grove High School, Georgia

When a local elementary school needed help with an annual holiday event, perennial MOE chapter Union Grove answered the call — with gusto! Members immediately went to work on volunteering for existing activity stations while creating additional stations to support the sold-out event. Chapter officers drafted a plan of action for each station, including staffing assignments, materials needed, and a strategy to collect and procure supplies. Working in collaboration with the school’s PTO president and faculty, the chapter developed six activities for each station, manning a total of 10 booths with efficiency and maturity. Members were especially inspired when they found out proceeds from Jingle Jam were being used to fund a newer and safer playground for students with disabilities. To further connect framework learning, members held a large-group discussion about the relevance of essential elements used for this project, giving examples of how they were applied at various stages.

Responsibility was demonstrated in member willingness to sign up for different jobs and follow through in fulfilling the chapter’s commitment. Members were able to run their assigned booths with little or no supervision, and followed up on important items before and after the event. Members exemplified adaptability and flexibility by working after school hours to prepare each station and meet deadlines, including giving up their Friday night for the event. The night of the event, members readily assisted each other when needed, keeping the evening on track while making it fun for the children in attendance. All volunteers showed self-motivation by cleaning up their stations and assisting elementary staff with event break-down without being prompted. Jam on Union Grove, jam on!
Cambridge High School, Georgia

Returning MOE winner Cambridge High School believes there’s nothing like food to celebrate America’s growing international workforce. The chapter’s event, “International Night: Touring the World One Plate at a Time,” fused member resourcefulness with productive dialogue. Chapter officers directed student-led teams to prepare exhibits from different countries, each with a presentation, food item and cultural artifacts. Officers provided a rubric to ensure consistency among teams, and all members were required to participate. Considering the global diversity of Cambridge members, it’s no surprise that over 40 countries were represented with absolute authenticity. Members enjoyed savory dishes such as Chinese dumplings, Spanish empanadas and Tanzanian ugali, along with Mexican candy, Argentinian soda, real-cane sugar from Honduras and an array of sweets and pastries! Display items varied from clothing, money and totems to prayer rugs and family photos. Members each had a passport, receiving stamps as they ate their way around the world. The night concluded with a large group discussion about cultural considerations in the workplace.

Members exhibited effective communication when presenting cultural information and in respectfully conversing about ethnic and religious differences. They had to verbalize examples of how different cultures affect workforce dynamics and why that’s important. All members were able to explain the value of multicultural sensitivity and awareness in the workplace today and in the years to come. They learned the value of empathy and discussed how they will apply what they learned to competition teams, chapter leadership and future meetings. Teamwork was evident in the cooperative spirit among members in crafting exhibits, and in the effectiveness of the chapter officer team in overseeing the activity. Job-Ready Day One in an increasingly diverse society.
Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC), North Carolina

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “The time is always right to do what is right.” This is exactly what SkillsUSA members at CVCC, a returning MOE chapter, did by hosting a Black History Celebration to honor the legacy of Dr. King and other prominent African-Americans. Chapter leaders partnered with CVCC’s multicultural affairs office to discuss event speakers, presentations, exhibits, volunteers and the event theme of “The Dream is Still Alive.” Their planning and preparation yielded record-breaking results as more than 500 people attended. SkillsUSA represented the largest volunteer group with 45 members assisting with educational events including a tribute to Dr. King by a local pastor and a speech by CVCC’s president on the importance of multicultural sensitivity and awareness in the community. In addition, SkillsUSA members honored 23 African-Americans from the 1964 Ridgeview football team, machining custom bronze medallions and presenting them to players at the event. This team, known as the “Untouchables,” holds the record for the longest winning streak in North Carolina.

Ongoing and detailed communication was essential during meetings within the chapter and with other groups on campus. This applied to tasks such as coordinating speakers, planning event logistics and working cooperatively with the multicultural affairs office. Members used effective teamwork to accomplish event preparation and objectives. For example, a team of 24 members created the custom medallions while other teams handled the speakers and others worked on exhibits. The fact that SkillsUSA had the highest participation on campus for the school’s largest Black History Celebration speaks volumes about the chapter’s promotion of multicultural sensitivity and awareness. Dr. King would be pleased!
Centauri High School, Colorado

Waiting for the school bus during inclement weather in La Jara, Colo., just got better. Thanks to a partnership between SkillsUSA and the art department at Centauri High School, there are two new bus stop shelters in the community. The shelters were fortified to withstand the elements while showcasing colorful artwork and positive messages on the inside panels. Members drafted a proposal with structural designs, estimated material costs (based on local bids), and a project budget for submission and approval by the town mayor. Once approved members collaborated with the mayor, art department and town maintenance crews on timelines, construction and installation details. Students built the structures using traditional framing methods, installing durable siding board and corrugated metal roofing. Meanwhile, the art department fashioned murals for the inside panels, showcasing the area’s diverse community. Bus stops were securely anchored and installed by SkillsUSA in the spring, a welcome surprise for students.

Members excelled in communication among departments and with town officials, and providing regular updates. They also sh owed clarity in communication when determining project materials, obtaining bids and presenting the proposal to the mayor. Students let their leadership skills shine by spearheading the project from start to finish. This included making timely decisions, keeping the art department’s work on schedule, and ongoing follow-up with all parties involved. The nature of the project required many hours of planning, organizing and management. Members were systematic in their approach, completing each task with diligence and professionalism. This involved making adjustments as needed and managing expectations to fulfill an important obligation. It’s no surprise the chapter has been asked to construct more bus stop shelters. Practical beauty personified!
Gloucester County Institute of Technology (GCIT), New Jersey

For past MOE winner GCIT, framework skills application is about creating meaningful experiences. The chapter once again validated that philosophy through a care package initiative to support SkillsUSA members in Puerto Rico recovering from Hurricane Maria’s devastation. The effort combined leadership development, donation collection and multifaceted teamwork to prepare packages for school and personal use. Chapter leaders formed committees and developed an organizational plan of action. More than 50 percent of chapter members participated in the effort by soliciting items from local businesses and SkillsUSA supporters, by using monetary donations to purchase items, and in putting together packages. All total, the chapter put together 75 school supply packages and 60 personal care packages, neatly assembled in drawstring bags. School packages included items such as binders, folders, rulers, calculators, pencils and hand sanitizer. Personal care packages included items such as shampoo, bug repellent, soap, deodorant, razors, dental care products, flashlights and batteries. In addition to the packages, members tied in community leadership growth by participating in “The Connection is in the Relationship” training.

Members were proficient in decision making by putting thoughtful consideration into care package contents. This involved work with the chapter in Puerto Rico; the chapters continue to stay in touch via social media and email. Planning, organization and management was exemplified by the efficiency in meeting timelines for donations, in ensuring every care package had all identified items, and in the active committee work performed by chapter members. In terms of leadership, members took a two-fold approach in (1) training to be better leaders and (2) in applying what they learned in connecting to those they helped in Puerto Rico. Members helping members — good stuff!
Norwalk High School, California

California’s perpetual MOE standout, Norwalk High School, put its culinary and logistical skills into action by creating a “Night to Shine” districtwide prom for special needs students. Chapter officers directed the effort, involving all chapter members in the process. Culinary students met with special education faculty to discuss dietary restrictions for 70 students and 60 adult aides and volunteers, crafting a first-class menu that included gluten-free, vegetarian and dairy-free items. Automotive students took the lead with facility logistics, meeting with faculty onsite to discuss the mobile kitchen arrangement for a timely dinner and service, as well as accessibility and security considerations. To fill the gap in the food budget, members participated in fundraisers. The menu was critiqued and finalized, a detailed plan for dinner service created, venue preparations orchestrated, and voila! The night was an overwhelming success with many attendees going back for seconds!

Communication was critical for both the culinary and logistics teams, enabling them to build relationships and work effectively. Preparing the food service area for those in wheelchairs, acting as greeters and hosts, and assisting faculty with security concerns were essential details. Student-run leadership enabled members to quickly work through different scenarios, address technical issues as they arose, and present an outstanding final product. The chapter did such a good job, it’s been asked to do it again next year! As for planning, organization and management, everything ran like clockwork. Dinner service was promptly ready by 6:45 and concluded by 7:30, allowing extra time to dance. Members were free to leave after dinner. But in typical SkillsUSA fashion, most stayed to take photos with attendees and dance the night away! Truly “A Night to Shine” for the Norwalk chapter!
Southampton High School, Virginia

What's the best way to commit the SkillsUSA Framework to memory? Play a game, of course! That's what SkillsUSA members at Southampton High School did with their version of the “Framework Game.” Using information from the Job-Ready Day One lesson plan, chapter leaders created a series of flashcards pertaining to framework skill relevance and workplace application, along with game instructions. Chapter advisors promoted the game to cosmetology, culinary and masonry classes, and all had an opportunity to play during 90-minute blocks, including nonmembers. Using a small group question-and-answer format, teams were challenged to present correct answers to a variety of questions. A neutral scorekeeper tracked answers and scores, announcing the winner at the end. What’s more, members were surveyed to determine the game’s effectiveness. Approximately 95 percent of students participated in the game and turned in surveys, revealing positive results and a desire to play again. The chapter publicized the game’s success in the school newsletter, reaching an even larger audience with framework values.

A group of 30 members led this activity, letting their chapter leadership influence and expand framework knowledge among peers, even non-SkillsUSA members. Communication was important in outlining game objectives, scheduling game time, promoting participation and survey follow-up. The benefits of teamwork reached all participants because everyone in this activity was assigned to a team, whether it was the team planning the activity or the teams playing the game. Students worked collaboratively when developing game parameters and in formulating correct responses while playing. All participants left with a greater understanding of why each framework skill is important, requesting more playing time at after-school meetings. “Framework Game” anyone?
Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, Georgia

SkillsUSA members at Wiregrass Georgia Technical College made a local “Night to Shine” prom for teenagers and adults with special needs extra spectacular. Using a three-pronged approach, chapter members shared talents by (1) conducting a special occasion clothing drive; (2) organizing Boutique Days for pre-prom shopping; and (3) setting up Salon Days at their college for hair and makeup. Members publicized the “Tiaras and Ties” project using fliers, social media and local media outreach, collecting 482 dresses, 70 men’s jackets and pants and 162 accessories. This was followed by Boutique Days where members assisted prom-goers with selecting the perfect outfit and coordinating accessories. Cookies and refreshments were enjoyed courtesy of the culinary program. Finally, cosmetology, barbering and esthetics students set up shop prior to the big night, offering a total of 84 appointments! Due to the overwhelming community impact, support and appreciation for this project, members are planning to make it even better next year!

Several committees within the chapter worked collaboratively, including workplace, public relations and community service. Teamwork among these committees, chapter officers and advisors, as well as those in the greater community helped the chapter exceed expectations. It also presented the opportunity for several members to assume leadership roles. By working with special needs clients from diverse backgrounds, students now have a better understanding of what it means to embrace multicultural sensitivity and awareness in the workplace. Students displayed compassion and understanding with heightened sensitivity, while having fun learning from their clients. Planning, organizing and management was central in keeping this three-part project moving. All had a role and fulfilled their responsibilities with professionalism. A three-part triumph!
Woodland High School, Washington

Got customer service? As members at Woodland High School discovered, inviting a professional from Lowe’s to speak to you about this subject is a great way to start! Thanks to a training session by local Lowe’s employee Elle Newkirk, members in restaurant and customer service classes gained worthwhile lessons and hands-on experience in communication, decision making and teamwork. Ms. Newkirk’s presentation delivered an influential message, beginning with the importance of having confidence in yourself, your teammates and your company in delivering exceptional customer service. The message of confidence resonated! Members were taken through a series of activities involving storytelling, role play and reality-based scenarios. Ms. Newkirk asked students to critique each other first to see if they recognized important customer service traits. She then offered feedback and suggestions specific to different situations. The result was a comfortable and informative exchange, jam-packed with practical knowledge and helpful lessons. Students have continued to role play during class-time, honing their abilities and applying those skills during catering activities.

Members learned that listening skills and empathy are essential to effective customer communication. By using acting and storytelling techniques, members have improved voice tone and volume, especially when dealing with challenging customers. Role playing has also been beneficial in promoting strategic thinking and a calm demeanor in decision making. Handling a situation by oneself rather than passing it off to someone else has empowered members to show confidence in their managerial abilities. Finally, members learned that teamwork is important for creating a memorable customer service experience. Ms. Newkirk discussed the dangers of throwing teammates “under the bus,” encouraging them to always seek team-oriented solutions. The Lowe’s customer service advantage at work!
A&M Consolidated High School, Texas

The framework skills application of 2017 MOE winner A&M Consolidated High School combines proactive leadership with exemplary IT talent. For this endeavor, SkillsUSA members engaged in a multifaceted initiative to provide modern network infrastructure for Family Promise, a local organization that supports homeless families. Beginning in June 2017, chapter leaders worked collaboratively with Family Promise to create a high-tech office at the organization’s new facility. Members identified network design and installation needs, which included security cameras, computers, laptops, printers and wireless connectivity. Subsequently, the chapter submitted a proposal to the SkillsUSA/Lowe’s grant program for $25,000 to pay for equipment. Lowe’s delivered on the grant (much appreciated), and the chapter finished the project by November. Students operated as professional contractors by assembling computers, working with certified professionals to install security locks and cameras, managing all computer and networking logistics, and assisting with other physical systems. Members also gained a valuable education in gentrification and homelessness, learning firsthand from Family Promise employees and the program’s beneficiaries.

Service orientation defined this venture, enabling all involved to devote specialized skills to improve community welfare. Members gained a new appreciation for learning and using technical skills to make a noticeable difference for others. They also had an opportunity to serve as technicians in a newly built facility, employing job specific skills in a credible and professional environment. This included gaining proficiencies in trouble-shooting, computer fabrication, teamwork and quality assurance. Opportunities for professional development were ongoing as students practiced industry-standard skills, learned how to address specific client needs, gained industry insight via mentorship opportunities, and achieved high professional standards in planning, executing and completing the project. Another example of why A&M Consolidated is #Awesome&Motivated!
When great ideas become reality, everyone wins. SkillsUSA members in the graphic arts program at Autry Technology Center did just that, turning a calendar proposal into a $2,500 fundraiser for a local nonprofit, Bennie’s Barn. As a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH) certified program, Bennie’s Barn achieves a dual mission that helps both humans and horses. In addition to providing healing equine therapy to military veterans, disabled adults and children, Bennie’s Barn rescues abused and neglected horses and trains them to be therapy animals. Inspired by this work, members approached Bennie’s Barn with the calendar idea and action plan, and the rest is history! Graphic arts students worked in partnership with board members, managing and delivering on every aspect of the process from design concept review and approval, to proofing and editing, to printing and production. The result was 500 professionally printed calendars ready for purchase at a holiday event in December. The calendars sold out, achieving the chapter’s fundraising goal and providing Bennie’s Barn with a generous check.

Computer and technology literacy was paramount as both morning and afternoon graphic arts classes participated in calendar development and production. Students used Adobe InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator programs to create the calendars, expanding their computer and technology-based knowledge and skill sets. Students applied job specific skills in graphic arts competencies as well as collaboration with Bennie’s Barn board members as their client, setting and meeting deadlines, problem solving, and supplying a professional, high-quality product as scheduled. Service orientation was apparent in students taking the initiative to balance technical and production skills to benefit a valued community organization. Sounds like a calendar we would all proudly display. Giddy up!
College Station High School, Texas

When thinking outside the box, why not go for the gusto? This is exactly what SkillsUSA members at College Station High School achieved by producing original game prototypes and testing them on middle school students. Not only did this imaginative approach excel at challenging members in the technical aspects of game development, strategic leadership and public speaking, but it also exposed middle schoolers to SkillsUSA, high school CTE programs and potential careers; stealth recruitment! Student teams developed age-appropriate games and prepared interactive presentations for a memorable event. Members set up their game prototypes in the middle school cafeteria and led lively gaming sessions during different lunch periods. Middle schoolers were divided into groups with an opportunity to play-test different games, provide feedback and ask questions regarding game styles and similar topics. Members did an excellent job of connecting with their audience, fielding questions and simplifying the steps of game development to make instruction relatable and understandable.

Computer and technology literacy were at the forefront as members gained practical experience in all aspects of game development while also learning how to effectively articulate the specific steps involved in that process. Job specific skills were applied in computer applications and gaming technology as well as essential employability skills such as teamwork, communication, public speaking and time management. Professional development benefits were interwoven throughout as members navigated the waters of building and presenting prototypes while also expanding their knowledge of careers and opportunities in the video gaming segment. Middle school students got a front-row seat to the excitement that awaits by joining SkillsUSA. Brilliant framework application and serious fun in one package. Game on!
Cross Keys High School, Georgia

Preventative health is a necessity, but not always a priority. That’s why SkillsUSA members from Cross Keys High School, a returning MOE chapter, took wellness to the people. Partnering with their local Lowe’s store, members planned and directed a successful health fair onsite at Lowe’s, complete with basic screening services, demonstrations, and useful information and materials. Members staffed 21 stations, using their technical skills to become a valuable resource to the community. They offered health and wellness screenings ranging from oral health to blood pressure with more than 70 people taking part in at least one screening. The blood pressure table was especially busy! Students from a range of technical classes participated. Cosmetology students oversaw aerobic and nutrition tables; nursing students conducted vision and blood pressure screenings; computer science took care of graphic design for fliers, banners and signs; construction students handled setup and provided a safety booth; and so on.

Job specific skills were demonstrated in the competence and confidence of members in providing health and wellness services. It was also evident in the respectful demeanor exhibited by members when working with Lowe’s staff, in coordinating specifics of the event, and applying technical skills learned in class. Safety and health knowledge was evident in how members conducted the fair in accordance with industry safety and health standards. It was also apparent in quality handouts with tips on nutrition, diabetes prevention, breast cancer and other timely topics. Service orientation was prevalent in the willingness of members to assume leadership roles, to comfortably guide others through the screening process, and to ensure client satisfaction. Shopping at Lowe’s plus health services? Quite possibly the best two-for-one deal out there!
Gordon Cooper Technology Center, Oklahoma

Recognizing the importance of promoting STEM careers among young women, SkillsUSA members at the Gordon Cooper Technology Center hosted a highly successful Mother-Daughter STEM night. The event gave more than 70 girls, ages 7 to 14, along with their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters and neighbors, an opportunity to explore opportunities and careers in STEM-related fields, specifically engineering. Members created 15 stations for the event’s “Engineering Walk About,” facilitated by students from the Oklahoma State University College of Engineering, the local Pioneer Library and the Gordon Cooper Technology Center. Each station provided a thorough description of a specific engineering field and a hands-on activity demonstrating that career. Member-led committees excelled in organization and creativity in event planning and execution including online registration, social media outreach, marketing and publicity, logistics for stations, event check-in, T-shirt design, decorations and more. Participants were welcomed for a festive evening of career exploration with bright colors, balloons and delectable cupcake bar.

The framework skill of professional development was apparent in how members approached and organized event volunteers, handed registration and managed all moving parts to make this event a success. Computer and technology literacy was demonstrated in the development of marketing materials, creation of stimulating and interactive stations, and in using online software for tracking enrollment. Web-based registration required astute analysis to effectively plan and implement event logistics. Job specific skills were applied in the project management and ongoing communication as event parameters evolved, including the addition of volunteers as registration grew beyond expectations. Members broadened their engineering-related knowledge by delving into topics not covered in class and by demonstrating those concepts through compelling activities. Serious girl power for the future of engineering!
Greater Lowell Technical High, Massachusetts

Greater Lowell Technical High, a returning MOE chapter, used its Lowe’s grant to spread framework excellence schoolwide. Student leaders from each technical area were tasked with creating an interactive station with readily available materials for the school’s eighth grade open house. Members were incentivized with cash prizes paid from the grant in the amounts $250, $100 and $75. As a bonus, the three winning shops got to determine how the prize money would be spent. Four senior store representatives from Lowe’s attended the open house and judged the activity stations along with SkillsUSA alumni. Using a rubric, they scored and offered feedback while also reinforcing safety. The results speak for themselves! Twenty of the school’s 23 shop areas (87 percent) participated. Chapter officers publicized the event using posters, handouts, emails, daily announcements and postings on the chapter’s website. Additionally, participants were given co-branded, red T-shirts with the Lowe’s and SkillsUSA logos to wear during the challenge. To top it off, it was an outstanding recruitment tool, showcasing the different shops to eighth graders and their parents.

Student leaders representing all career clusters exhibited job specific skills in preparing stations that safely showcased their skill area. For example, members from machine technology demonstrated how material choice affects performance. Service orientation and professional development were apparent in how members conscientiously selected resources and activities to promote their trade while actively involving the audience. Since the challenge was completely student-led with instructors only available as consultants and to approve student proposals, members experienced a crash course in leadership! Eighth-graders and their parents enjoyed handling tools and equipment with the careful guidance of their SkillsUSA leaders. Lowe’s grant dollars well spent!
Essential to technical skills development is mentorship by industry professionals. SkillsUSA members from the Center for Communication Technology at Thomas Jefferson High School got a head start in project management training thanks to the Denver metro Project Management Institute (PMI). Members involved in the PMI program were part of a senior capstone pathway focused on 3D, web application and software engineering studies. This opportunity proved instrumental since PMI is a leading professional association for those involved in all aspects of project management. PMI members met with SkillsUSA members during the school year to teach members about globally recognized project management guidelines, including the nine knowledge areas of project management. Members created a PMI notebook and applied what they learned to their senior projects. Projects created in accordance with PMI standards included a golf handicap phone app, a prototype 3D turbocharge system, interactive gaming apps, and a developer tool for creating a personalized website. Three SkillsUSA members received awards from PMI for their outstanding work.

Due to the high-tech nature of this pathway, computer and technology literacy was at the forefront of student efforts. The training helped members make the organizational and technical aspects of their job much more efficient, ultimately resulting in a smarter approach. Members also learned how to use ProjectLibre project management software. Job specific skills were connected to real-world application. Students practiced collaborative skills, learned how to form ideas in accordance with global project management standards, and how to develop an effective presentation of their product. Learning the tools of the trade from certified Project Management Professionals (PMP) was an invaluable experience and professional development opportunity. Better project management = better results!
Willow Canyon High School, Arizona

SkillsUSA members from Willow Canyon High School put their broadcasting skills to work by live-streaming basketball games to local networks. Wildcat fans were able to enjoy four varsity basketball games during the 2017–18 season from beginning to end without interruption, including halftime shows! The broadcasts included live-streaming as well as commentary with at least 40 viewers each game, and postgame viewing on YouTube. One game had over 400 views as the Wildcats took the contest into triple overtime. For each game, the stream was set up on time and the games were successfully broadcast. Members took on different roles such as directing, cinematography and commentary, and they were able to resolve any issues to prevent interruptions. Broadcasts lasted anywhere from one hour 40 minutes to two hours 20 minutes, providing a valuable service to the school and fans unable to attend the game.

Members gained computer and technology literacy by using industry standard broadcasting equipment for an authentic task, and by overcoming unpredictable challenges to maintain a broadcast without interruption. Job specific skills were applied in the practice of using relevant technology specific to broadcasting, and in following safety protocols for equipment setup at the venue to ensure there were no hazards for broadcasters or spectators. Students were in the public eye at all times and were required to uphold professional standards in dress and behavior, especially as they were on-air with no means of editing poor word choices. This exercise provided ample opportunity for professional development, making students aware of the importance of game-day preparation, in thinking through venue logistics and in being observed while on the job. This project was a real slam dunk! Go Wildcats!
Thank you
Lowe’s Companies Inc.
for Supporting Chapter Excellence!

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.

www.skillsusa.org