SUMMER 2019

SkillsUSA champions

Pursuing Your Passion
Jobs That Bring Joy

pay it forward
rewards of careers in health care

networking in Hollywood

a celebration for the nation

the Happiest Place on Earth to work
SkillsUSA Graduation Regalia

A classic way to show off your members’ hard work and achievements

- Tassel with Fob
- Honor Stole
- Double Honor Cord
- Graduation Regalia Kit

Note: School policies on displaying graduation regalia during the graduation ceremony may vary.

www.SkillsUSAsstore.org
What’s New: SkillsUSA Week
Share in the excitement as student leaders interact with influential counterparts.
BY CRAIG E. MOORE

It’s a Great Feeling
Facing their own medical challenges has enhanced the perspectives of two future workers in the health care field.
BY ANN P. SCHREIBER

Sharing His Success
For students coast to coast, a SkillsUSA medal can open doors to a career in network television. See how pros like Bryan Glispie and others are paying it forward.
BY TOM KERCHEVAL

It’s His Turn
After a childhood spent supporting his family, Chauncy Walker (left) says he found a job at Walt Disney World that “forced me to be a kid again.” Plus: Meet the SkillsUSA advisor who pushed him to follow his dreams.
BY ANN P. SCHREIBER AND E. THOMAS HALL

On the Cover:
SkillsUSA Champion LaShondra George of Iowa, La. Photo by Lloyd Wolf.
**SkillsUSA**

**champions**

**SkillsUSA’s Official Magazine**
14001 SkillsUSA Way, Leesburg, VA 20176-5494
703-777-8810
www.skillsusa.org

**Magazine Staff/Office of Communications**
Tom Hall, Director
Ann Schreiber, Associate Director, Communications
Karen Kittel, Associate Director, Communications
Craig Moore, Senior Manager, Web/Technology
Tom Kercheval, Senior Manager, Audiovisual Technology/Communications
Jane Short, Manager, Public Relations/Communications
Hayley Uffelman, Specialist, Communications

**Office of the Executive Director**
Tim Lawrence, Executive Director
Shelly Coates, Associate Director, Conference Management Services
Ashley Ridgeway, Manager, Conference Management Services
Sandra Moore, Senior Administrative Assistant

**Administration and Finance**
Kim Graham, Director
Melissa Wilson, Associate Director, Human Resources
Sarah Utterback, Manager, Accounting
Roxanne Hodge, Customer Service Representative

**Business Partnerships and Development**
Amy Serafino, Chief Partnerships and Development Officer
Cathy Arrington, Associate Director
Heidi Walsh, Program Director
Dave Worden, Program Director, SkillsUSA Championships
Jim Krejciel, Senior Manager, SkillsUSA Championships
Kaitlin Youngs, Program Manager, SkillsUSA Championships
Helen Carafa, Program Specialist

**Education**
Kelly Harton, Director
Gayle Silvey, Associate Director
Gene Dudley, Senior Regional Manager
Patty Duncan, Senior Manager, Member Services and Assessments
Anita Foor, Senior Curriculum Manager
Kim Hegedus, Senior Education Development Manager
Sylvia Phillips, Senior Manager, Membership Growth and Development
Courtney Ferrell, Program Manager, Professional Development
Taryn Zeigler, Program Manager
Stephanie Bland, Program Specialist
Veronica Gomez, Program Specialist, Member Services
Laura Rauch, Program Specialist

**Advertising/Partnership Inquiries**
Amy Serafino, 703-737-0621

**Board of Directors**
Jennifer Worth (American Association of Community Colleges)
Sam Bottom (Snap-on Incorporated)
Dean Baker (Association for Career and Technical Education)
Brent Kindred (Wisconsin)
James King (Tennessee)
Clay Mitchell (California)
Charles Wallace (Maryland)
Becky Warren (Kansas)
Sarah Heath (Advance CTE)
Darren Gibson (SkillsUSA State Directors Association)
Chris Arvin (Caterpillar Inc.)
John Kett (Insurance Auto Auctions Inc.)
Cheryl Schaef er (State Farm Companies)
Chris Tesmer (Newell Brands)

**National Student Officers/Advisors**

**High School**
Brandon Ramirez/Quinlan Henry (North Carolina)
Kaylee Corvino/Julie Anderson (Virginia)
Amari Brown/Vanessa McClure (Oklahoma)
Adam Cavanaugh/Kathleen Manoogian (Massachusetts)
Tony Peeler Jr./Severo Perez (Texas)
Emily Heiden/Ralph Starace (New Jersey)
Preston Prince/Sherman Axelberg (North Carolina)
Ulamila Uluiviti/Sara Plozay, Jeff Bertke (Ohio)
Janice Oh/Tiffany Carpenter (Texas)

**College/Postsecondary**
Nickolas Joyner/Gary Muller (North Carolina)
Lorena Giesbrecht/Julie Bales (New Mexico)
Guadalupe Cortez/Melody La Montia (California)
Brooke Catchell/Joshua Klemp (Rhode Island)
Timothy Myers/Ryan Ubersox (Wisconsin)

**SkillsUSA Champions Online**
Experience SkillsUSA Champions interactively at: www.skillsusa.org. The digital format responds for viewing on all electronic devices. Teachers receiving this issue in hard copy are asked to share it with their students and others via email and social media. Then see even more champions on:

VOLUME 53, No. 4
SkillsUSA Champions (ISSN 1024-453X) is published four times per school year—Fall (October/November), Winter (December/January), Spring (February/March) and Summer (April/May)—by SkillsUSA Inc. at 14001 SkillsUSA Way, Leesburg, VA 20176. Periodicals postage paid at Leesburg, VA, and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2019 by SkillsUSA. All rights reserved.

POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to SkillsUSA Champions, Attn.: Patty Duncan, 14001 SkillsUSA Way, Leesburg, VA 20176.

The names SkillsUSA, SkillsUSA Championships and SkillsUSA Champions, the SkillsUSA logo, emblem and slogan art are all registered trademarks of SkillsUSA Inc. All rights are reserved, and permission must be granted by the national headquarters of SkillsUSA prior to any use.

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.
Your Own Open-Door Policy

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

Q: I’m about to finish my technical program. How can I stay involved in SkillsUSA and keep growing?
Tim: This issue of SkillsUSA Champions is filled with inspiring stories of students who faced challenges but still pursued big career goals. They didn’t let family obligations, illness or setbacks stop them. Each found success when a door of opportunity opened. That’s one piece of advice I constantly give: Always walk through that door when it opens. You’ll never know what’s on the other side unless you do.

I’m still in awe of the doors that led me to become SkillsUSA’s executive director. There were some risks and challenges along the way, but when those doors opened, I always walked through. I’m extremely grateful that I did and so honored to serve our members and stakeholders. Such opportunities will always be there if you just take that leap of faith.

Speaking of which, our WorldSkills USA team will head to Russia in August, representing you in 20 technical competitions. All of these students completed a technical program and left a SkillsUSA chapter. But, because of their success in SkillsUSA, the door opened, and they were invited back to try out for the internationals. This year, the team has been training all over the world, most recently at 3M headquarters in St. Paul, Minn.

What amazing opportunities for a team whose average age is 19 years old. Follow their journey at: www.worldskillsusa.org.

In every SkillsUSA chapter, there’s a spirit of leadership, cooperation, service and integrity. It’s shared by every member, instructor and industry partner. Once you finish school, carry that spirit forward. Become part of your local, state and national alumni network. That way, you can still read SkillsUSA Champions magazine. Joining is free, and it’s a great way to stay connected! Visit this link: www.skillsusa.org/get-involved/alumni/.

As a former welding instructor and state SkillsUSA director, one of my greatest joys was hearing from former students about how they were doing. Stay in touch with your teachers. Drop by for a visit, send email, come back to help your local program or be a state conference volunteer. Give back to the system that helped you build SkillsUSA Framework skills and find your purpose and passion in life.

Let’s keep spreading the good, walking through doors of opportunity while opening them for others that we can help along the way. I hope I’ll see you at our national conference in June.

Got questions about SkillsUSA or other topics? Email anyinfo@skillsusa.org or send a letter to the address on the facing page. Put “Ask Tim” in the subject line or mail address.
National Conference Sparks

New Dreams
All Over Again

When it comes to SkillsUSA’s National Leadership and Skills Conference (NLSC), you’ll never hear, “If you’ve seen one, you’ve seen ’em all.” That’s because, every year, the NLSC is born anew, blooming with fresh faces and blossoming with unique experiences.

Sure, some of the main attractions are back this year: the majestic opening ceremony, the buzzworthy SkillsUSA TECHSPO, the awe-inspiring SkillsUSA Championships and the goosebump-inducing awards ceremony. So what makes this NLSC different, you ask?

For one, it’ll be the biggest ever, including the most competitors in the most competitions ever held. Additionally, it’ll showcase thousands of first-time reactions to personalized, life-changing milestones. Maybe one will belong to you.

It all happens again — and for the first time — June 24-28 in Louisville, Ky.

Spotlighting Selfless Heroes

One of the most emotional highlights of each national conference is SkillsUSA’s announcement of the National Advisor of the Year at the opening ceremony.

The winner will be chosen from the following six regional finalists: Jason McCuish, Lynn (Mass.) Vocational Technical Institute, Region 1; Rita Yeary, Southampton (Va.) High School, Region 2; David Urlaub, Bay-Arenac ISD Career Center, Bay City, Mich., Region 3; Jeanne McClish, Moore Norman (Okla.) Technology Center, and Becky Dickerson, Eldon (Mo.) Career Center, both Region 4; and Norman Champagne, Kofa High School, Yuma, Ariz. (Region 5).

Stay updated on every moment from this year’s NLSC — including photos, videos, live streams and more — at: www.skillsusa.org. Follow us on social media, too.
JOINING FORCES TO PROCLAIM OUR STRENGTH

Advance CTE is a national nonprofit organization that represents state leaders responsible for secondary, postsecondary and adult career and technical education (CTE) across the country. Like SkillsUSA, Advance CTE is always looking for opportunities to advocate on behalf of career and technical education students, and its new “I Support CTE” campaign does exactly that.

The year-long campaign, launched in February, aims to collect signatures from employers to urge Congress to double the federal investment in CTE programs. Advance CTE is pursuing sign-ons from small businesses to large corporations representing every state and every industry. It’s also looking for stories of what successful CTE programs look like in your state, stories that reflect why increasing the investment in CTE programs is important. To learn more, visit: http://isupportcte.org.

Training to strengthen your program
SkillsUSA is offering professional development training to state associations this summer for teachers and administrators. The training plans to highlight two topics: SkillsUSA’s new Career Essentials suite and its Chapter Excellence Program. That said, the organization is willing and able to customize training based on your specific needs.

These training sessions can be stand-alone experiences or part of your summer professional development conferences. To schedule, visit: tinyurl.com/skillsusa-training.

Helping the Past Shape the Future

The SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association is completely overhauling its strategic plan for growing alumni membership within the organization. To that end, a task force of teachers, business partners, state directors and students recently met to formulate a three-year plan. The aimed result of that plan is to help every local chapter develop an active and engaged alumni chapter that provides resources, guidance and support to current SkillsUSA classrooms. To learn more about SkillsUSA’s growing alumni association and stay up to date with the coming changes, visit: tinyurl.com/alumni-skillsusa.

Design winners leave their mark on the big event

The winners of this year’s National Pin Design Challenge and National T-shirt Design Challenge have been selected, and their designs are ready to set the tone at SkillsUSA’s National Leadership and Skills Conference (NLSC).

Paravi Das supplied the winning T-shirt design (top). Das is a graphic communications student at the Academies of Loudoun in Leesburg, Va. Her SkillsUSA advisor is Pam Smith. (Coincidentally, Das was also chosen to perform the national anthem at this year’s conference.)

The winning pin design (bottom) comes from Cameron Moore, a graphic communications student at Cass Technical High School in Detroit. Moore’s advisor is William Brown. Thousands will wear these designs at the NLSC this June.
SkillsUSA Week
A Capital Event for Students

Excitement around SkillsUSA Week continued to build this year, as members reported on activities nationwide with their photos and videos.

Kicking off the annual celebration in February, SkillsUSA's national officers visited the U.S. departments of Education and Labor in Washington, D.C., accompanied by representatives of the event's lead sponsor, Channellock Inc. Next, the group headed to Capitol Hill to advocate for career and technical education with elected representatives including Sen. Bob Casey Jr. of Pennsylvania (top photo).

Later in the week, the national officers were accompanied by Channellock on a school tour in Meadville, Pa., the company's home base. The next day, the officers visited Catawba Valley Community College in Conover, N.C.

Meanwhile, officers from SkillsUSA Texas visited the state capitol building in Austin (middle right).

In Minnesota, state officers gathered for advocacy training, then met with legislators in St. Paul before touring their capitol with State Sen. John Hoffman (bottom right). For SkillsUSA's Advocacy Day, Gov. Tim Walz issued a proclamation for Career and Technical Education Month.

SkillsUSA Indiana officers joined a legislative breakfast with the state's other career and technical student organizations. State Sen. Ron Grooms presented them with Concurrent Resolution 12 for all CTSOs and CTE Month (bottom left).

And in Georgia, Apalachee High School SkillsUSA members visited the state capitol in Atlanta (middle left).

Visit tinyurl.com/skillsusa-week for more photos and coverage of the week’s events. — by Craig E. Moore
Dozens of SkillsUSA partners, including some of the nation’s largest employers, are ready to showcase their companies and talk to you about career paths, employment opportunities, internships and apprenticeships.

**Participating employers include:**

- 3M
- Camden Property Trust
- Centuri Construction Group
- Distribution Contractors Association (DCA)
- Equipment Depot
- Ferguson Enterprises Inc.
- IAA — Insurance Auto Auctions
- Leadec
- Magna International
- Matcor Metal Fabrication
- NASSCO
- Nexstar Legacy Foundation
- Nissan Motor Corp. in USA
- Rogers (Electric)
- Spirit AeroSystems
- Textron Aviation
- The Raymond Corp. and Raymond Storage Concepts
- TIC — The Industrial Company
- VCC USA

**Open to all 2019 NLSC attendees**

Bring plenty of résumés. No appointment needed!

For more information, visit: [http://meettheemployer.skillsusa.org](http://meettheemployer.skillsusa.org)
A car accident left Angela Philpot in excruciating pain and led her to a career in radiologic technology.

Photo Lloyd Wolf
In extreme pain, Angela Philpot was bedridden for two years. For a long time, the reason why was a mystery. The student had been in a car accident, but despite being thrown against the vehicle’s center console, sustaining nerve damage to her left chest wall, no bones were broken. Nothing showed up on diagnostic imaging. Doctors and medical specialists kept working to determine the extent of her injuries.

Finally, Philpot was diagnosed as having intercostal neuralgia and had to withdraw from Gwinnett Technical College in Lawrenceville, Ga., to recuperate. It gave her time to think about her career path. “Although my bones weren’t broken, I was in a lot of pain, and some people just thought I was faking this. So, I wanted to be that person who doesn’t discredit someone’s pain and show them the level of empathy that they deserve,” she explains.

“I was headed for bioscience technology, for research. But then, once I was in the accident, I saw the level of patient care that I received and the level I didn’t receive depending on which area, which specialists I had to go to.”

Her path became clear. “It was within this traumatizing experience that I realized how vital a career in health care truly is,” she says.

“The radiology staff was so kind and empathetic to me during this time. I will never forget their impact on my life. I knew from that moment on that I would need to figure out how to get the education I needed to have the skill set to pursue radiologic technology.”

**Back where she started**

Her lengthy recuperation didn’t discourage Philpot one bit; she knew she belonged in health care. After researching radiologic technology programs, she ended up returning to Gwinnett Tech.

“I made sure, every day, to tell myself that no matter what, I was going to get back. No matter how long it took, I was going to get better,” she remembers. Eventually, the pain subsided. “It’s never fully gone away, but I still just keep going. I just keep pushing through.”

At school, Philpot had been involved in the Students’ Toastmasters International club, where she’d served as vice president of education. That visibility led instructors to point her toward SkillsUSA.

“Once I found my way to SkillsUSA, it just — it felt like a family,” she says. “I wasn’t in it alone, and it wasn’t just about communicating better, it was about, ‘Can I be the best that I can possibly be in my field?’

---

**ON THE WEB**

- Learn about the trends in the health-care workforce at: www.bhw.hrsa.gov
- Find out more about multiple sclerosis and how you can help at: www.nationalmssociety.org/
- See techniques to open the lines of communication with your health care provider: https://bit.ly/2lftFnJ
Samantha Jinnah’s path into health care has been gradual. Trips to her uncle’s neurology lab piqued her interest. She considered becoming a doctor. “I didn’t know if I was going to be able to do that, because I was never a blood-and-guts type person,” Jinnah says.

A graduate of Olympic High School in Charlotte, N.C., she tested the health-care waters by earning a certified nurse aide (CNA) license at Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro. She took a job at Wilkes Regional Medical Center on the medical-surgical floor.

Soon after, she moved to Louisiana to care for her grandmother, who’d been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease. She enrolled in the licensed practical nurse (LPN) program at Northshore Technical Community College in Bogalusa.

Before she left North Carolina, Jinnah had sought treatment for unusual gastrointestinal symptoms. And within six months of moving to Louisiana, she woke up one morning experiencing numbness on her left side.

From a medical perspective, she was intrigued, thinking, “This is new,” as she probed the numb areas.

Jinnah went to the hospital, where a CT scan showed two abnormalities in her frontal lobe. An MRI was ordered, revealing spots that her doctor said looked to be multiple sclerosis (MS).

The young woman stepped outside the hospital and called her parents, who live in Washington, D.C. On her own and about to be hospitalized for an extended time, she was scared. However, the nurses helped her understand the

“A LIGHT IN THE DARK”

Perseverance, learning helped ease the panic of her diagnosis

“This education is awarding me an invaluable skill, but more importantly, it is awarding me the chance to help others to the best of my ability.”

Today, Philpot’s job prospects look as good as her perspective on life. “Anything worth the end result is a lot of work,” she says. “My intercostal neuropathy will always be with me, but I continue to push through. The pain isn’t constant like it used to be, but it comes back in unexpected waves. Nevertheless, I am still fully capable of physically conquering each day with a smile and continuously working hard toward all of my future endeavors.”

A firm believer in paying it forward, Philpot adds, “I look forward to having the skill set necessary to help my future patients get diagnosed accurately.”

“Really, the whole dynamic of SkillsUSA,” she adds, “it’s just a very positive, empowering group, and I’m very thankful to be a part of it.”

That includes competitions. “Because SkillsUSA challenges you, I think, far more, to compete not only with yourself, but at a state level, at a national level, to see how far you can go to be ... the best that you can be. I don’t think there’s anything more empowering than that.”

In 2018, Philpot earned a national silver medal in Health Occupations Professional Portfolio. She’s also competed in Job Interview. Besides SkillsUSA, she is a member of the National Technical Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society and Lambda Nu Honor Society. She graduated this spring from Gwinnett Tech.
tests and made grasping the situation manageable.

Jinnah has always wanted to touch lives and make a difference. For two years as a CNA, she worked on a surgical unit and both enjoyed and was recognized for her direct patient care. "Then I started getting sick," she says.

Caregiver, now patient
"I didn’t know what was happening to me. All of a sudden, I was the patient,” Jinnah explains.

"I had amazing nurses who held my hand, cried with me and encouraged me on the road to diagnosis," she adds. "That’s when I realized how much I was impacted by great nurses, and that was where I was supposed to be."

Jinnah has relapsing-remitting MS (RRMS). Her treatment has changed three times, most recently to a more aggressive protocol. She says support from family, friends and her health care team have made a huge difference in her journey with the disease.

Her positive outlook helps, too. She recalls her dad’s response to the news of her diagnosis.

“Wow, you’re handling it well,’” he said, “and I’m like, ‘Well, am I supposed to be freaking out about it? That’s not going to change anything.’”

It’s this stoic acceptance and calm information-seeking that keep her grounded. “I learn something new about it constantly and build on that,” Jinnah says.

“You can do one of two things, and this is the outlook that I have. When you have a disease like multiple sclerosis or lupus or anything like that, you can own the disease and say, ‘Yeah, I have it,’ or you can have the outlook of ‘My disease owns me.’”

Nothing owns Jinnah. But, when her nursing instructor, Shanda St. Pierre, urged her to compete in SkillsUSA’s Medical Math contest, she hesitated — in high school, she’d needed tutoring in math. Nevertheless, Jinnah competed in the event. Now she smiles at being recognized as her state’s gold medalist. She earned bronze in Medical Math at nationals and says the experience has boosted her confidence.

Jinnah graduated in December and passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) to earn her LPN. She started working at Resthaven Living Center in Bogalusa and now has a position in the medical surgical department at St. Bernard Parish Hospital in Chalmette. Her next step is becoming a registered nurse, then an integrative medicine nurse practitioner with a focus on chronic illness.

“Treating chronic illness can be extremely difficult,” she notes, “but I feel that being a patient myself, it allows me to better relate to my patients and tailor an integrative treatment plan to meet their needs.

“You never know what someone is going through, both medically and psychologically. I chose to pursue nursing, because if I can be the light in the dark for even one person during their time of need — their journey — I have done what I set out to do.”
Fast Track to the Trades

We’ll guide you, step-by-step, on your journey to a successful career in the trades.

Everything you need is right here!

www.ExploreTheTrades.org

The skilled trades of plumbing, heating, cooling and electrical keep our country running. Jobs in these industries are in high demand and come with great pay, career opportunities and job security.

At Explore The Trades, we want to help you discover that these careers aren’t just a choice – they’re the best choice.
Many people have a “war story” or two about their first jobs: those low-skill, low-wage, low-ceiling positions begrudgingly accepted just to earn some quick cash and experience. Don’t ask Bryan Glispie to share his stories, however. He doesn’t have any.

This award-winning broadcasting professional landed his first gig at a little California-based outfit called the American Broadcast Company (ABC) when he was just 17. “I never had any other job except something in broadcasting,” Glispie admits today, “all because of what SkillsUSA did for me.”

In 1973, Glispie was a precocious sophomore at Dorsey High School in Los Angeles. Perceptive electronics instructor James A. Martin recognized the young man’s potential and decided to fuel it. “He told me about [SkillsUSA] and said, ‘You’re going to be a member, and that’s all there is to it,’” Glispie recalls.

That may have been all there was to the discussion, but there was so much more to come for Glispie. During his time in the organization, he earned three state medals (two gold, one silver) in the now defunct Radio/Television Repair competition. He served as the state association’s vice president and president, and he eventually earned a spot as national parliamentarian.

As Glispie began planning for post-graduation, a friend offered a tip on a potential job that could help pay for college. “Next thing I know, I’m in an interview with ABC,” Glispie remembers. “They really liked me, but they said I was too young, and they weren’t sure how I’d perform or get along with adults.”

No work history meant Glispie had no résumé, but he was far from empty-handed. “I pulled out the gold and silver medals,” he laughs. “They said, ‘What are those, Olympic medals?’ I said, ‘No. They’re medals I received for doing what you don’t think I know how to do yet.’”

He had his first job and the first entry on his future résumé: supplying engineering maintenance and instant replay for sports around the world with ABC.

It took a “friendly push” to convince a precocious young student to jump headfirst into a new opportunity. Today, this former national officer knows that push from both sides.

**By Tom Kercheval**
‘You can’t take awards to the grave’

So began the career Glispie had coveted since he was 9. He’d win scholarships, Emmys and Golden Mike Awards; he’d edit and produce national TV shows; he’d even become a licensed electrician and amateur radio operator. SkillsUSA became a fond memory ... until Glispie got a call from Moe Broom, technical committee chair for its national Television (Video) Production competition.

Broom asked Glispie to lend his expertise to improving the competition. Glispie was hesitant at first, “but then I started thinking I needed to give something back,” he says. “It was a breath of fresh air. You can’t take awards to the grave. If you don’t pass on something you’ve learned along the way, what’s the point?”

Today, Glispie oversees four of SkillsUSA California’s media arts competitions. His contacts have helped him wrangle industry pros from film, theater, radio and television to help make those competitions first-class events.

Professionally, Glispie is still firing with youthful enthusiasm, and his latest endeavor has brought him full circle. It’s an invention called the “Official Replay and EFX Display Device (O.R.E.D.D.),” designed to help officials in all sports assess instant replays faster and more accurately. “You’re going to be hearing about it in the next six months,” he says.

Of his many accomplishments, Glispie is quick to note how especially proud he is of the SkillsUSA California Alumni of the Year award he received in 2018. “That award tells me that my efforts can still make a difference to students,” he adds.

There are many people Glispie would like to thank publicly for making a difference in his life, but unfortunately, there isn’t enough space here. His desire to redirect the spotlight toward others, though, is indicative of Glispie’s passionate belief in the enduring power of a selfless helping hand. After all, he reflects, “You can never succeed in life without consideration, help and a friendly push from others along the way.”

‘IT WORKED OUT BEAUTIFULLY’

Finding the confidence to do what they love

A little confidence can go a long way. For teammates David Sonnier (below, left) and Sky McMillian (right) of SOWELA Technical Community College in Lake Charles, La., it came in the form of a gold medal in Television (Video) Production at the 2017 SkillsUSA Championships.

“It gave us the confidence that we were lacking to really put ourselves out there,” Sonnier says. “You come and you compete in something at this caliber and you win, and then you know.”

McMillian agrees. “It’s just kind of like validation in the back of your mind,” he adds. “You know that you can be put under pressure and still produce something that can be a national win.”

This victory led to all sorts of things for the two competitors, including the idea to start their own production company, SWLA Media. Most startups like this begin with small jobs for local clients as they work to build a reputation. McMillian and Sonnier — thanks to the reputation their gold medal had already earned them — began with a project for Country Music Television (CMT).

CMT’s “Empowering Education Tour” was designed to bolster the network’s nationwide efforts to help students further their education and develop their skills. When SOWELA was chosen as one of eight tour stops in the state, McMillian and Sonnier were brought in to help produce some supporting media.

Before a concert held on the school’s campus, “we had to conduct student-success interviews about how SOWELA impacted students’ lives and how it helped guide them,” Sonnier says. “We edited the video, did the voice-over, all that fun stuff, and then CMT showed it at the actual event and ran it on their social media.” Not too shabby for an early client.

Darrell Buck, the students’ SkillsUSA advisor and graphic arts instructor (below, middle), wasn’t surprised by the quick success. “They’ve done extremely well for themselves,” he says. “If there’s one thing these guys have excelled at, it’s doing more than the basic requirements, not being satisfied with ‘just enough.’ The ones who do ‘just enough’ to pass don’t make it.”

Both Sonnier and McMillian have made some detours while trying to find their current path. McMillian has loved video editing since he was 12, but he enrolled
in SOWELA to study process technology. “I knew that would be where the money was [in my area],” he says, “but that wasn’t really what I wanted to do. One day, something in my head kind of snapped, and I changed my major.”

Sonnier has a background in musical theater. When he secured a production assistant job on the TV show “Salem” (which ran on the WGN network in 2013-16), he hoped to become an actor. “I then realized I liked the production aspect way more,” he says. He entered SOWELA to pursue his new passion.

‘You never know what will happen’

In 2018, the students returned to the national Television (Video) Production competition. This time, they earned silver, another impressive addition to their ever-growing résumés. SWLA Media, however, is about to become a past-tense entry on both.

McMillian has graduated and continues to work as a video editor, with SOWELA now one of his clients. Sonnier is in his final year at the school and will once again be competing at the national level this summer, but this time alone and in Photography. His work has already been published internationally, and he’s even photographed a few celebrities, including Chris Hernandez of the “America’s Next Top Model” TV show.

While the professional partnership is ending, lessons both students learned from SkillsUSA continue to guide them. They realize it wasn’t just that first gold medal that built a skyscraper of confidence. Their involvement in SkillsUSA had already laid the foundation.

“Absolutely it did,” McMillian confirms. “[Mr. Buck] really pushed me to compete. He said, ‘If this is what you want to do, you should really try to compare yourself to other people so you can learn from the experience.’”

Sonnier agrees, adding, “SkillsUSA has changed my life. Once I knew I had what it took to achieve my goals, it was easy to dive in head first.”

Any advice for other students? “Don’t be afraid to challenge yourself,” McMillian offers. “It took me two semesters to drum up the courage to join [SkillsUSA]. Be confident in your abilities. You never know what will happen. For us, it worked out beautifully.”

Creativity cultivates new skills for students, his peers, himself

“My teaching philosophy is a lot different from your typical pencil-and-paper assessment,” says Adam Frank (above, center), television/multimedia production instructor at Frederick County (Md.) Career and Technology Center. “We learn by our mistakes, learn collaboratively, try new things, maybe fail, but we grow and support each other.”

Since 2005, his program has earned regional Emmys, five national silver medals and a host of state gold. Most importantly for Frank, it’s also spawned a multitude of student success stories. “I had a kid working on ‘The Walking Dead’, one at Adult Swim, one at ESPN ... I could go on all day,” he says.

As a member of SkillsUSA’s national education team (NET) for the Digital Cinema competition, Frank’s been helping fellow instructors, too. During the two-day competition, students work mostly on their own, leaving advisors forced to kill time while waiting. Last year, Frank helped resurrect that wasted time.

“Our national chair, Keith Emmerich, made some connections with a group called ‘Sneak On the Lot,’” Frank explains. “It’s run by two Hollywood insiders who create curriculum for students trying to get into the industry.”

The group helped judge the competitions but also conducted training sessions for advisors during the downtime. “They basically ran a mini educational session on all aspects of production,” Frank says. “We got awesome feedback and plan to do it again.”

Frank has also been experimenting with joint video collaborations between classrooms using Skype and other technology. “Kids are all about each other’s work,” he says. “They want to see who’s got the good stuff.” As a teacher, it’s clear Frank has plenty of his own “good stuff” to share.
It’s His Turn

Family responsibilities kept Chauncy Walker from many childhood joys. Years later, his path would lead to The Happiest Place on Earth.

By Ann P. Schreiber

At a young age, Chauncy Walker had to become a caregiver and breadwinner. His mother and older siblings have retinitis pigmentosa (RP), a genetic disorder affecting the eyes. Common symptoms include difficulty seeing at night and a loss of peripheral vision.

“They were diagnosed with that, and their vision was decreasing as they got older, so I had to find a job at the age of 13 to help provide for my younger siblings and also my older siblings, and my mother as well,” Walker explains. “My father, he left, so I took it upon myself to step up.”

Walker didn’t have much of a childhood. The job meant not participating in school activities, something he enjoyed. Later, he started working as a busboy at a restaurant, and over 15 years later, he looks back on that time as his first success. It introduced him to the restaurant and hospitality business, and he knows putting his dreams aside helped him get to where he is now.

At Tri-Cities High School in East Point, Ga., he joined SkillsUSA, which taught him to avoid being defined by his situation and gave him the boost he needed. The 10th-grader started learning culinary arts, a step up from being a busboy, and made it to the state competition in that area.

Walker stuck with SkillsUSA, advancing to the national championships twice. In 2016, he won gold in a team contest, American Spirit. Two years later, he competed in the Pin Design (State Conference) event. He’s also served as SkillsUSA Georgia’s state parliamentarian.

His secret to contest success seems to be his secret to a life well-lived and a harbinger of a career to come. “You know, just be cheerful, happy. Let out your inner child,” he says.
Through SkillsUSA, Walker participated in community service and recruited members. While getting to know new people, he built confidence and honed his skills in hospitality.

He earned three degrees: his first, in culinary arts, is from Johnson & Wales University; a second, in hospitality management, and a third, in design and media technology management, are from Atlanta Technical College.

These education pursuits were not without personal challenge. He was 18 and had to leave the family who’d relied on him for years. “I became depressed, having anxiety attacks regularly, because it felt like I was abandoning them,” Walker remembers. “Although it was terrifying, my mom was my biggest supporter.”

He also had SkillsUSA advisor Dessie Hall (story, right), who he calls his “school mom,” to help him find the strength to keep following his dreams.

“There’s so many times when I cried and felt like giving up, and she didn’t let me,” he explains. “She was like, ‘You have a purpose, and you’ve got to go through these steps to get to your purpose. There’s no such thing as an easy road.’

“And today — every day — it just gets to me, and I really love her. And I’m just one of the success stories that she had. There’s thousands more.”

**Two clicks to joy**

With his degrees and SkillsUSA experience, Walker started his next chapter with an online job search. Clicking on a pop-up, he serendipitously connected with Jennifer Mancy, a Walt Disney World recruiter and SkillsUSA alumna. He was now on a magical path. A phone call with Mancy put him on track to meet the hiring manager, and he was offered a job. He’d never even been to the resort.

“And they pay for my housing, so I’m just overjoyed, because everything had to lead up to this point,” he says. “I had to go through everything to be where I am today, so I wouldn’t trade anything.”

Walker is now working at the front desk of the new Toy Story Land inside one of the Orlando, Fla., theme parks.

“Working for Disney World forced me to be a kid again, smile more and, most importantly, make guests happy,” he notes. “I pride myself every day in doing something different from the previous day of work. Also, having the ability to turn someone’s day around by offering exclusive Mickey-signed merchandise, or just simply granting a ‘little princess’ [guest] access into Cinderella Castle really highlights the magic we as cast members have.”

Within three months of starting, he was promoted twice to operate in multiple areas within Toy Story Land.

“The secret to my success is the SkillsUSA Framework and passion for hospitality,” Walker shares.

Is he having fun? “Yes!” he exclaims. “Every single day. Being a cast member, we are allowed to enter the parks for free, so I take 100-percent advantage of that.”

His family is also sharing in his joy.

“That’s why I planned a Disney trip for my entire family to come down and experience the magic I make every day. Also, I wanted to thank them for giving me the strength to step up and provide,” he says.

Knowing that his two younger siblings can take care of their mother and that his two older siblings with RP are also taken care of is a relief. His family, who clearly means everything to him, has visited the resort four times so far. They love the Magic Kingdom and Animal Kingdom parks the most, Walker adds.

“It’s finally his turn to have some fun. “Yes, I’ve learned to seize every moment, because it’s not always promised,” he says. “And when a great opportunity presents itself, take it!”

---

**Advisor offers a ‘hand up’ to change lives**

Chauncy Walker’s “school mom,” Dessie Hall, has inspired many in over 10 years as a student life coordinator. At Atlanta Technical College, she’s responsible for SkillsUSA and all other student organizations.

In high school, Hall, now 44, was passionate about SkillsUSA (then VICA). It’s still “a big deal” for her students, who are often 25 or older, she says. “It gives them a sense of belonging, and I have seen how it’s changed their lives.

“On our campus, we have dislocated workers. We have veterans. We have single parents, those who are economically disadvantaged, and not everybody wants a handout. They want a hand up. And so, that’s my thing. That’s what I always try to do is to give them that hand up.”

In 2017, Hall’s life was threatened by idiopathic intracranial hypertension (IIH), “in which you have increased pressure in your skull,” she explains.

“I ended up starting a business in 2016, which I advocate for people who suffer with the condition. So, I get people who reach out to me often, before surgery or trying to figure out what they should do. And I tell them what signs to look for, how to communicate with their physicians.”

She offers details on her website, dessiehall.com, and now expands on the topic in her work as a motivational speaker. — By E. Thomas Hall
**Understanding Your Potential Will Help You to Realize It**

SkillsUSA regularly offers a wide variety of scholarship opportunities to its members. You can learn more about the latest at: tinyurl.com/skillsusa-scholarships.

What if you were offering a scholarship of your own? Let’s say your scholarship read like this: “I’m offering a professionally secure future to one qualified applicant. For consideration, applicants will need to demonstrate the following…”

As a class, split into two groups. Each group will come up with five character traits and five personal accomplishments that should follow the dots in the scholarship’s description. Make sure the imaginary applicant is in the same grade or college/postsecondary level as your class, and write your answers accordingly. Discuss each group’s answers as a class.

For the best chance at a secure future, what kind of person should you be? What accomplishments should you already be aspiring to? SkillsUSA is here to help you become that person and reach those goals. Take advantage of the opportunity.

Good luck is when opportunity meets preparation. Bad luck is when lack of preparation meets reality.

— Eliyahu Goldratt

---

Find the photo, win a prize

No, the picture on the left isn’t abstract art. It’s actually a distorted part of another photo in this issue. Find the original photo and tell us the story or page where it appears to win a SkillsUSA special “sackpack” (first prize) or travel mug (second prize). To enter, email your answer, name, address and phone number to anyinfo@skillsusa.org (include “Photo Contest” in the subject line). Or, send to SkillsUSA Photo Contest, 14001 SkillsUSA Way, Leesburg, VA 20176. One first- and one second-prize winner will be drawn at random from the correct entries. Entries must be received by Aug. 1. Congratulations to last issue’s winners: McKayla Bowers of Fostoria, Ohio, and Amber Pershica of Ardmore, Okla.
A TRUCKLOAD OF FOOD AND MUSIC

Twin brothers from Newark, N.J., used their love and passion for culinary arts to fuel the creation of A&J’s Original Cheesesteak food truck. Anthony and Jonathon Rivera have spent the last four years learning preparation and presentation through the culinary arts program at the Essex County School of Technology. With the profits from the food truck, they aim to give back to their community through an academic scholarship that will further a future student in culinary arts.

Anthony and Jonathon Rivera own and operate TwinBeats Entertainment as well as a food truck for Newark area events.

Building a bridge to success
In Oklahoma City, Metro Tech South Bryant students partnered with Bodine Elementary School to help create a cleaner and safer environment. They worked outside of the school while educating the young students and the community about career and technical education organizations like SkillsUSA. Metro Tech students believe that Bodine Elementary needed a champion of their own, a mentor to help them succeed.

They pony up to party
At Barry Tech BOCES in Westbury, N.Y., students planned a holiday celebration for special needs children at the Jerusalem Avenue School. Funds for the event were raised by selling student-designed sweatshirts and sweatpants to others at their school. The students raised $6,000, which covered the celebration expenses including snacks, arts and crafts, games and certified therapy animals. Leftover funds were donated to the Barry Tech scholarship fund.

Mentors spark a partnership
Thanks to welding instructor Mark Lynch and his students at Sabin-Schellenberg Professional Technical Center in Milwaukee, Ore., the students of Monument School’s shop class got the chance to learn critical welding skills. The tiny town of Monument is home to a new welding program led by shop teacher Michele Engle. During two days of mentoring, its students learned the safety rules and procedures in the shop, as well as techniques in different kinds of welding including gas metal arc and gas tungsten. The Monument School welding program hopes to continue a successful mentoring program with Lynch and his students. For their efforts, SkillsUSA students at Sabin-Schellenberg earned a national silver medal in the Community Action Project competition.

Photo courtesy Angel Carpenter/The Eagle. Used with permission.
SkillsUSA Champions features our members’ photography. We’re looking for images of SkillsUSA chapters in action, or ones that show individual members’ concentration or perseverance. For details, email thall@skillsusa.org (put “Image Photo” in the subject header) or write SkillsUSA Champions, 14001 SkillsUSA Way, Leesburg, VA 20176. The photographer’s chapter is awarded $150.

Ms. Hall helped me realize my true potential and how strong I am, because before I didn’t realize what I was capable of.

Chauney Walker, who works at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., remembers his SkillsUSA advisor, Dessie Hall.

There are so many different things that you can learn from SkillsUSA. Being able to compete in your program area is a plus, because it connects you to people in business and industry that can give you feedback on how you can grow, or it can also produce opportunities for you.

Dessie Hall, student life coordinator, Atlanta Technical College
A pipeline of possibilities await.

The National Association of Sewer Service Companies, better known as NASSCO, is a proud national sponsor of SkillsUSA. NASSCO’s mission is to set standards for the assessment, maintenance and rehabilitation of underground infrastructure and to assure the continued acceptance and growth of trenchless technologies. Or, in simpler terms, to make sure our sewer systems are operating at full capacity and to build awareness of the sophisticated technologies available to identify and fix potential sewer failures before they happen.

To learn more about careers in sewer service technologies visit nassco.org.
In today’s world, it’s not enough to just have technical skills. If you want to advance your career potential and compete in today’s job market, you need to stand out, be distinct and be a step ahead.

The SkillsUSA Career Essentials suite is industry-demanded and industry-validated for career-ready students. For full details on these resources including purchasing information, please visit: www.careeressentials.org