This past FY21 (September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021) will be remembered as SkillsUSA’s first fully-virtual year due to the pandemic. SkillsUSA’s approach was a proactive and comprehensive effort designed to build affinity and keep members motivated. The year had many positive highlights including a new “Connect to My Future” virtual career conference, a National Signing Day that saw SkillsUSA featured on “Good Morning America,” and a culminating celebration 2021 National Leadership and Skills Conference that virtually honored national medalists in 107 skilled and leadership competitions.

Generous donors thought of SkillsUSA often and in numerous ways (through direct gifts, donor advised funds, monthly employer giving, #GivingTuesday participation, Facebook fundraising campaigns, and tribute gifts). Thanks to these donations, SkillsUSA achieved 99% of our individual fundraising goal. Your donations provided resources to America’s resilient educators as they navigated a virtual learning environment. You enabled continued success of our mission to empower our members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible citizens.

This year proved just how vital the skilled trades are to keep our nation moving. And so is your continued commitment to SkillsUSA. Your time, energy, participation, involvement, volunteer hours and financial contributions shaped today’s students and tomorrow’s future employees. Our accomplishments were possible because of you. SkillsUSA members and their skills are—and always will be—essential.

SKILLSUSA SPOTLIGHT: #ChampionsAtWork

SkillsUSA: Designing a Better Life
Anthony Cofield

SkillsUSA alumni member Anthony Cofield has worked in the mechanical design field for over 20 years. He initially experienced resistance from family and friends when he wanted to leave his advanced honors path in high school and pursue construction-related education at a technical school. Construction was an area he was passionate in, especially the architectural side of things. He excelled and ended up starting his own business and changing his mother’s mind. Cofield, a mechanical designer for Nimbus Inc., says SkillsUSA was a game changer for his professional development, life skills and leadership characteristics.

“SkillsUSA had a profound impact on my life. It provided a training ground for industry fundamentals and served as a character and professional development tool that has allowed me to advance in my career field. I use the public speaking skills gained during my tenure with SkillsUSA regularly.” To learn more about Cofield’s career foundation that was established in SkillsUSA, go to: www.skillsusa.org/bio/anthony-cofield/

Share your SkillsUSA engagement/alumni story here.
Hosting our first-ever fully virtual National Leadership and Skills Conference in June of 2021 was a true achievement and it was only possible because of your support and the efforts of our corporate partners, board, state directors, staff and volunteers. We’ve also received a lot of great feedback about the impact the event had on our members.

The statement below came to us from a proud parent of one our 2021 gold medalists:

“My gratitude has little to do with his winning. The entire process, and the efficiency, professionalism and organization of SkillsUSA was remarkable, especially having to do it via Zoom.

Conor winning the state competition was amazing, and winning the national contest was surreal. But win or lose, SkillsUSA gave Conor a sort of validation — we’ve always been supportive, but SkillsUSA, and his truly-above-and-beyond teachers, did so much for him. Please don’t ever underestimate the value of your organization.

Several Massachusetts news organizations did stories on his winning. One of the things Conor is quoted saying in one of the articles (he submitted his answers in writing) sums it up far better than I can:

‘SkillsUSA is an amazing organization that provides a great way for you to really be motivated to better yourself in areas like carpentry, electrical, etc. There are typically no competitive events for things like carpentry the way there are for sports, music and academics. which sometimes leaves out kids who are interested in different things and try to better their craft. The 650 private business organizations that fund SkillsUSA promote technical-school students like me the way that state and federal aid and scholarships promote kids going right to college.

My favorite part, though, was seeing how much the people at SkillsUSA put in to give me the opportunity, and especially how my teachers put in so much time doing this just for me, and allow me to have so much fun. I would have felt this way regardless of whether I won anything.’

I think he said it well, and in a mother’s words, thank you from the bottom of my heart for being such a great organization.”

Learn more about SkillsUSA student success stories here.

SCHOLARSHIPS UPDATE

Thanks to your continued support, SkillSUSA provided 83 amazing scholarship opportunities—including four new scholarships—to deserving students so that they continue their education and careers in the trades. The following scholarships were awarded during the 2020–21 year:

**Marsha Daves Scholarship** | The Marsha Daves Scholarship offers one annual merit-based $1,500 scholarship for college/postsecondary education to a SkillsUSA state officer in memory of Marsha Daves and her lifelong involvement with SkillsUSA and its mission.

**Sharon Melton Myers Memorial Scholarship** | The Sharon Melton Myers Memorial Scholarship offers two merit-based $500 scholarships for college/postsecondary education to SkillsUSA members.
Just a few of the 2020–21 Scholarship Recipients: (Left to Right) Bailey Brown, drafting student at Richlands (NC) High School received a 2021 Sharon Melton Myers Memorial Scholarship; Cristian Veloso, carpentry student at Utah State University (TX) received a #KeepCraftAlive scholarship; Tarik Barnes, health sciences student at Cleveland (TX) High School received a 2021 Sharon Melton Myers Memorial Scholarship.

(Scholarships Continued)

#KeepCraftAlive Scholarship | This scholarship is offered by Fine Homebuilding magazine and SkillsUSA to high school or college/postsecondary students continuing their education or certification programs in construction-related fields. In 2020-21, 11 one-time scholarships of $2,500 were granted to support continuation of education in the recipients’ trade at the college/post-secondary level.

Signing Day Scholarships: (New Scholarships) | In May 2021, SkillsUSA celebrated SkillsUSA National Signing Day, working with industry partners to highlight the value of skilled trades careers. The nationwide events recognized career and technical students for their dedication to career readiness and their commitment to their future career plans. Hundreds of SkillsUSA schools in 27 states and Puerto Rico participated in the 2021 event — most virtually, but some in-person — honoring students across the country. With keen emphasis on our students’ futures, both The Home Depot Foundation and 84 Lumber issued scholarships to 2021 SkillsUSA program participants.

Bob Westphal Memorial Scholarship (New Scholarship) | The Bob Westphal Memorial Scholarship is presented in partnership with North American Oil & Gas Pipelines (published by Benjamin Media Inc.), Continuum Capital, and SkillsUSA, offers merit-based $2,500 scholarships to four high school or college/postsecondary students continuing their education to pursue a career in energy construction. Scholarships will be awarded annually over five years to provide tuition support.

AHRI Clifford “Ted” Rees Scholarship | The Clifford H. “Ted” Rees, Jr. Scholarship Foundation, an AHRI Charitable Foundation, in partnership with SkillsUSA, offers eight one-time, merit based $2,500 scholarships to SkillsUSA members who are currently enrolled as a high school junior, senior or college/postsecondary student in a HVACR or a general construction program.

Larry Rash Memorial Scholarship (New Scholarship) | In partnership with SkillsUSA, the Larry Rash Memorial Scholarship Fund awarded two $2,500 scholarships in 2021, both of which can be applied to any college, university, or post-secondary program in architecture or a related field.

Robert Flint Foundation Scholarship (WLTI) (Leverage) | This scholarship provides financial support for students who are recognized for having strong leadership potential and who would greatly benefit from national leadership training, but do not have the sufficient resources to participate in the Washington Leadership Training Institute (WLTI) in the fall or Leverage in the summer. A total of 39 students received Robert Flint Foundation Scholarship support in 2021.

To view a complete list of the 2020–21 scholarship recipients, click here.

STAY INSPIRED, stay connected:

To support SkillsUSA, share ideas and inquire about engagement opportunities, contact the Office of Business Partnerships and Development at BPD@skillsusa.org.

Explore the impact of our donors in the 2020 Impact Report.