



2023

MODELS *of*
EXCELLENCE

FOR EXCELLENCE IN PERSONAL,
WORKPLACE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

HONDA
The Power of Dreams

June 2023

Dear SkillsUSA advisors, members and advocates,

Welcome to the 2023 Models of Excellence (MOE) celebration. I am humbled to recognize the exemplary efforts of our 23 finalists, representing the highest level of our SkillsUSA Chapter Excellence Program (CEP).

For the past nine years, our MOE chapters have inspired us with their resourcefulness, skills application and meaningful community outreach. During this time, chapters representing nearly 30 states have achieved MOE status, many of them returning to the spotlight for consecutive years! The commitment of these chapters and their willingness to take on challenges, think outside the box and embrace the SkillsUSA Framework has resulted in greater chapter engagement at the local level. Thousands of students have learned and practiced the Personal, Workplace and Technical skills of the SkillsUSA Framework, and each year we see the positive impact this has on member development and career readiness. We applaud every MOE chapter for your role in establishing the lasting legacy of CEP to prepare students for the world of work.

To those who support SkillsUSA at the local, state or national level with your time, talent and financial support, we thank you! The impact of your commitment can be seen on the following pages. The innovative approach, intentional learning and mastery of essential skills by our members is truly inspiring. It leaves no doubt that career and technical education (CTE) plays a pivotal role in preparing students for successful careers in high-demand jobs. I've said it many times before, but there truly is no replacement for the vigorous career preparation that Framework-centered programs provide to our students. It is simply the best!

I am pleased to present our 2023 Models of Excellence schools. My sincere thanks to each of you for exemplifying this year's theme, "SkillsUSA: Our Time is Now."

In gratitude,



Chelle Travis
SkillsUSA Executive Director

2023 MODELS *of* EXCELLENCE WINNERS

Special recognition and congratulations to the top three chapters of the Models of Excellence Program for 2023.

Personal Skills

New Madrid County R-1 Technical Skills Center, Missouri

Workplace Skills

Lynn Vocational Technical Institute, Massachusetts

Technical Skills Grounded in Academics

Upper Valley Career Center, Ohio

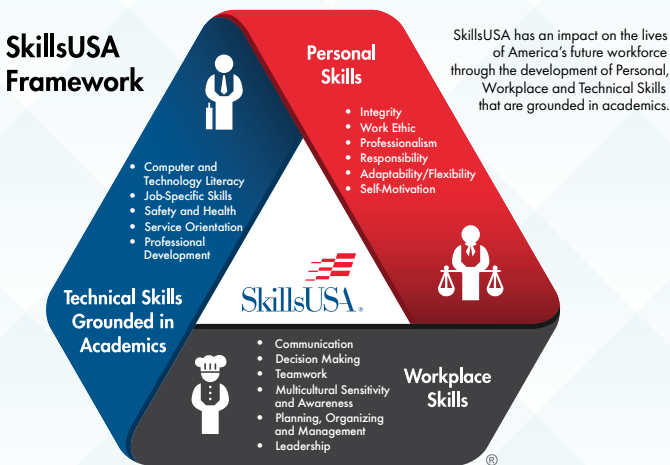


chapter excellence
program

THE SKILLSUSA FRAMEWORK — BUILDING FUTURES, CHANGING LIVES

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** grounded in academics. 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, communication 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 careers. Together, we can address the skilled labor gap while guiding our members on a pathway to fulfillment.



THE CHAPTER EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

The Chapter Excellence Program (CEP) is the single best way to build a successful SkillsUSA chapter and provide meaningful opportunities for individual growth.

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. Within these areas, there are specific Essential Elements tied to each. These 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 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 (MOE). Each level is designed to give chapters a benchmark for success and future improvement, leading to stronger chapters and more prepared students. The more a chapter applies the Framework in a meaningful and measured way, the greater the opportunity for CEP honors.



ABOUT OUR SPONSOR



Honda Corporate Social Responsibility and the Honda USA Foundation

For more than 60 years in the U.S., Honda has been committed to making positive contributions to the communities where its associates live and work. Honda's mission is to create products and services that help people fulfill their life's potential, while conducting business in a sustainable manner and fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. Advancing its corporate social responsibility, Honda and the Honda USA Foundation support this direction through giving focused on education, the environment, mobility, traffic safety and community. Learn more at csr.honda.com.

CONGRATULATIONS, 2023 MODELS OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

Personal Skills

Massachusetts	Cape Cod Regional Technical High School
South Carolina	Center for Advanced Technical Studies
Maryland	Dorchester Career & Technology Center
Arizona	Douglas High School
Massachusetts	Greater Lowell Technical High School
Missouri	New Madrid County R-1 Technical Skills Center
Ohio	Vanguard-Sentinel CTC – Vanguard Campus

Workplace Skills

Michigan	Bay Arenac ISD Career Center
Maryland	Center of Applied Technology North
Massachusetts	Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
Massachusetts	Lynn Vocational Technical Institute
North Carolina	Nash Community College
Tennessee	Tennessee College of Applied Technology – Harriman
Arizona	Valley Academy for Career and Technical Education
New York	WEMOCO Career and Education Center

Technical Skills Grounded in Academics

Alabama	Auburn High School
Ohio	Buckeye Hills Career Center
Oklahoma	Gordon Cooper Technology Center
New Mexico	Hobbs High School
New York	Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES CTEC
Arizona	River Valley High School
Tennessee	Tennessee College of Applied Technology – Pulaski
Ohio	Upper Valley Career Center





BOOK DRIVE FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

RESPONSIBILITY



Cape Cod Regional Technical High School, Massachusetts

SkillsUSA members at Cape Cod Tech took a three-fold approach to applying responsibility — individual, team and community — while supporting Habitat of Humanity. The chapter has worked with Habitat since 2017, and were called upon to build children's bookcases for new homes. Donating bookcases without books and other items seemed inadequate, so members commenced a book drive to collect age-appropriate books, craft kits, games and toys. Members obtained donated collection boxes, decorated them and placed them in each shop. They also created posters with brief bios of the children who would be living in the homes, including their age, gender and interests. An advertising campaign using informational slides on digital monitors throughout the building, morning announcements, emails and social media blasts created interest. Thanks to several academic teachers and cafeteria staff, donations poured in with over 300 books and 35 toys and games! Items were carefully selected for each bookshelf and other organizations received the surplus. Best of all, members had the opportunity to meet each family at the home dedication ceremony.

The application of responsibility was seen in both a positive and negative light during this activity. Some members excelled at meeting their individual assignments, while others did not. This had team implications, which prompted a valuable discussion for the betterment of the chapter. Students also realized some things they would do differently for future activities. In the end, each student learned about the importance of personal responsibility and its collective impact on the team. They also learned that taking responsibility for the smallest tasks can make a huge difference for the community. Lessons for life!



HOLIDAY TREE FESTIVAL

SELF-MOTIVATION



Center for Advanced Technical Studies, South Carolina

SkillsUSA members at the Center for Advanced Technical Studies turned a holiday tree festival into a Self-Motivation skills showcase to benefit local charities. Each CTE program was tasked with decorating a tree that represented their technical area to raise money for local charities. The chapter created a list of charities, set a budget of \$80 per tree, promoted the event through digital and social media platforms, and planned family-friendly activities, food and beverages. Committees were responsible for each aspect of the festival. Expectations soared with 15 programs participating (representing 95% of chapter members) and over 600 people viewing the trees. Attendees voted for their favorite trees with cash donations placed in tamper-proof boxes. A total of \$545.52 was raised and dispersed among various charities. In addition, the festival enabled students to explore all programs at school and hear from their peers. And let's not forget the fun of friendly competition and bragging rights that go along with winning! Students are already planning tree displays for next year, and the community is buzzing with anticipation.

Members learned that if given the proper tools, they will find ways to motivate themselves and others. After years of change, quarantine and virtual schooling, this activity had an immediate impact on participation and student-led initiative. Members exhibited self-motivation in creating displays, cooperating with school administration, collecting donations, working with charities and engaging the community. A pre- and post- assessment measured growth quantitatively and qualitatively, and each member could explain how they applied Self-Motivation to this endeavor. Chapter officers shared feedback on ways to support fellow students in the future and build upon this activity. This was a "tree-mendous" success!



RESUME WRITING WORKSHOP AND MOCK INTERVIEWS

PROFESSIONALISM



Dorchester Career & Technology Center, Maryland

Building upon an existing partnership with their local chamber of commerce, members at the Dorchester Career & Technology Center honed in on the Framework skill of Professionalism. Each year, the chapter conducts a mock interview session with community leaders to prepare students for the workplace. Feedback from last year indicated that participants needed to improve their professional dress and resume writing. Planning occurred over several months, with the resume workshop held three weeks before the interviews. Students worked with school administration on coordination and scheduled the resume writing workshop with the literary coach at their home high school. The workshop and mock interviews were advertised with flyers and on daily announcements. The chapter president confirmed attendance of 14 business partners for interviews and developed a schedule based on the number of students planning to attend. The resume writing workshop occurred in mid-January with a feedback session a few weeks later in preparation for interviews during SkillsUSA Week in February. All in all, the event was a resounding success for those who took part. Students noticed immediate benefits from adding the resume writing component, and business partners witnessed a meaningful improvement.

While the chapter was disappointed by the lack of member participation, the focus on Professionalism delivered solid results. Each student received a rubric developed by the chamber, evaluating their resume, interview skills, professional dress and demeanor. Students recognized the broad scope of Professionalism and were motivated by feedback. The resume writing clarified expectations and positioned students to take advantage of future opportunities. The officer team has already met with school administrators to strengthen participation in the future. Career-focused incentive!



A NOT SEW DREAM COME TRUE COMMUNITY TRUNK-OR-TREAT

WORK ETHIC



Douglas High School, Arizona

The SkillsUSA engineering chapter at Douglas High School hosted a brilliant community trunk-or-treat with a Coraline-themed haunted bus, walk-thru tunnel and mouse circus tent. The chapter employed a pragmatic application of Work Ethic with officers clearly defining objectives and committee assignments, all tied to weekly self-assessment. The admin committee was responsible for the schedule, budget and candy collection. The mouse circus committee engineered a robotic chicken to distribute candy, circus mice, cannons and fake cotton candy. The haunted bus committee created the Coraline tunnel, a spooky forest with trees and a robotic “Other Mother” hand. The alternative tunnel committee designed a replica of the haunted bus for disabled and small children. With a tight timeline of six weeks, members collectively excelled at weekly tasks. The chapter surpassed every metric in terms of member participation, candy donations, pre- and post-event support. The result was “spooktacular” as the SkillsUSA attraction was crowned fan favorite with approximately 5,000 adults and children taking part! It was a memorable experience for all, including children with autism and ADD/ADHD.

Members evaluated themselves each week on a sliding scale of 1 (rarely) to 4 (always) according to the following: 1) I engage in meaningful work that contributes to success; 2) I am productive through the workday; 3) I reflect upon and evaluate my work; 4) I am consistent in my work performance; 5) I don't quit until the job is done; and 6) I can continue working through obstacles in challenges. From weeks one through six, there was a steady increase in student evaluations, reaching 94% of members. A post-event discussion revealed the intrinsic value of having assessments parallel weekly assignments. A HUGE win for work ethic!



SKILLSUSA CAREER ESSENTIALS FUN FAIR

SELF-MOTIVATION



Greater Lowell Technical High School, Massachusetts

As a SkillsUSA Total Participation Plan (TPP) chapter, members at Greater Lowell Technical High School continually pursue opportunities to exercise Self-Motivation. This year, that self-motivated philosophy transformed an annual membership pizza party into a vibrant demonstration of student leadership, SkillsUSA Framework learning and member engagement. Taking inspiration from a state conference, members included six “Minute to Win It” game stations that incorporated Framework language and SkillsUSA Career Essentials materials. From planning to day-of execution, chapter leaders applied Self-Motivation to individual and team tasks, connecting mastery of the essential elements to career and life success. This positive approach reached 80 students, alumni and staff who participated in games ranging from a balloon pop to a blindfolded toss. Students had to partake in a minimum of three games, making personal framework connections using a reflection sheet at each station. The fun continued during whole group games held during a post event session. Since there were no wrong answers, members were free to learn, explore and ask questions while enjoying pizza.

The impact on individuals and the chapter has been remarkable. After the event, 100% of members indicated a strong understanding of the SkillsUSA Framework and how it applies to success in all aspects of life. Ninety percent said this understanding will self-motivate them to participate in future SkillsUSA activities. That feedback is already being acted upon! Over 50% who attended are now serving as SkillsUSA shop reps; ensuring all Greater Lowell chapter members have access to SkillsUSA events and opportunities. Professional members have become more self-motivated, and member participation has surged in comparison to the previous school year. Framework pizza truly is delicious!



CHANGE THE COMMUNITY DAY

RESPONSIBILITY



New Madrid County R-1 Technical Skills Center, Missouri

New Madrid County R-1 Technical Skills Center SkillsUSA members demonstrated that changing the world starts in your own community. Focusing on the Framework skill of responsibility, members from every technical program volunteered to support the chapter's Change the Community Day. To fund this initiative, chapter officers applied for and received a Lowe's grant. With funding secured, students organized activity plans, committee assignments, safety training sessions, meetings with community leaders and worksite logistics. They also held weekly "Train Hard Tuesdays" with Framework lessons on responsibility and learning assessments. Their planning and implementation made a significant difference! Members built 25 beds for foster children, three benches for a local nursing home, three wheelchair ramps for veterans and special needs families. They also bagged cans to purchase 10 bicycles for at-risk youth, collected hygiene supplies, and cleared a yard for a senior citizen. The latter individual referred to students as "angels for helping a stranger like me." Local firefighters and police officers prepared meals for volunteers and connected with students. Advisory board stakeholders and other businesses joined student teams in completing tasks. The event was so appreciated that two local businesses have already donated \$1,000 each to ensure a second Change the Community Day.

In applying Responsibility, students learned the value of showing up on time, completing tasks, and being accountable. The weekly lessons strengthened their individual understanding of responsibility, directly translating to their responsiveness during the project. In addition, every student volunteer was successful in sharing a framework story to explain how their personal application of responsibility grew during this activity. Many stories were shared on social media platforms, and members cannot wait for the next opportunity to give back. #Awesome!



SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

INTEGRITY



Vanguard-Sentinel CTC-Vanguard Campus, Ohio

After a SkillsUSA assessment, members at Vanguard-Sentinel CTC prioritized the importance of Integrity on the job. The chapter chose to focus on making good choices, and how impairment and substance abuse influences workplace safety. In preparation for this school-wide activity, members reached out to their local drug task force agency, mental health counselor, police department, and community leaders. They created a plan of action, attended meetings, wrote letters, invited guest speakers and coordinated workplace simulations. Students challenged themselves with scheduling, outreach, donation procurement and healthy dialogue with peers. They also sought to increase enrollment in DFCA (Drug Free Clubs of America). Despite some initial pushback, they achieved a 92% increase! On the day of the event, the personal stories shared by students, staff and community members about drug and alcohol-related incidents resonated. Students especially benefited from simulated work activities while wearing the fatal vision goggles. Relatable testimonies prompted many questions and meaningful reflection. Simulated experiences while wearing goggles, such as hammering a nail and providing a manicure, led 100% of participants to understand increased safety risks. This interaction coupled with statistical data and real-world scenarios created an impactful experience.

Students leaders took a risk by addressing a difficult topic. Not only did they show personal integrity by doing so, but they inspired their peers to view workplace integrity through the lens of safety and the imminent dangers of substance abuse. A pre- and post-assessment measured learning, and the entire student body was engaged during the presentation. Post survey results indicated that 100% of students were positively influenced by this activity. Workplace integrity is always a good choice!



TOY DRIVE TO TEACH PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND MANAGEMENT

PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND MANAGEMENT



Bay Arenac ISD Career Center, Michigan

A toy drive for a local rescue mission provided SkillsUSA members in Michigan with an immersive lesson in Planning, Organizing and Management. Prior to initiating the drive, chapter officers visited the rescue mission to tour the facility and learn more about how volunteers and staff efficiently run their operation and serve 90 guests daily. Examples included sorting and organizing clothing donations according to size and season, and food pantry management to ensure guests receive three meals per day. Officers took this knowledge and developed a master plan to execute the toy drive and involve chapter members. They set a budget, delegated responsibilities, created a publicity plan and established timelines. Those in charge of communication then developed scripts to be read in SkillsUSA classrooms and during school-wide morning announcements. Graphics and printing students created fliers and posters to display around the school. Toy collection containers were strategically placed and officers frequently revisited the master plan to review final details such as toy wrapping and delivery. Their efforts culminated in the donation of more than 300 toys! Each child at the mission received a large gift bag full of wrapped toys, with additional toys donated to children at a women's shelter.

This project is an excellent example of how student-led initiative encourages positive outcomes. Chapter officers took it upon themselves to gain first-hand exposure to planning, organizing and management by visiting the mission and observing their operations. This prepared them to go back to the chapter, apply understanding, and transfer SkillsUSA Framework learning to members. An organized and systematic approach along with clearly identified goals then inspired school-wide involvement. Peer leadership at its best!



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STATE CONFERENCE COOKIE PRODUCTION

PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND MANAGEMENT



Center of Applied Technology North, Maryland

The baking and pastry section at the Center of Applied Technology North provided a valuable service to SkillsUSA Maryland while advancing industry expertise. Tasked with supplying cookies for the SkillsUSA Maryland SkillsUSA state conference, members put workplace skills to the test while working under pressure. They started by conducting a trial with three popular cookie varieties: brown butter chocolate chip, ginger molasses and funfetti sugar. Staff and students were surveyed based on taste preferences, and each cookie was graded on production difficulty, flavor and allergen warnings. Funfetti sugar cookies emerged as the winner! Students calculated a base recipe, which was tested and evaluated for accuracy. A production schedule was developed that outlined individual job responsibilities and team goals to ensure all cookie dough pieces were produced, frozen and ready for baking the day before conference. In addition, the cost per cookie was carefully estimated and presented to the Maryland board of directors. Students factored ingredient costs and retail selling price to an exacting number. More than 700 funfetti cookies were served with another 600 pieces available for sale to support program funding. Business and industry partners were amazed by the members' professionalism, capacity to support such a big event, and consistent cookie quality.

Each aspect of this initiative had to run like a well-oiled machine in order to fulfill both quality expectations and budget parameters. Members broadened their industry knowledge as they merged baking talents with the business skills associated with running a successful shop. An impressive outcome, baked from scratch!



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COLLABORATION

MULTICULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND AWARENESS



Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School, Massachusetts

SkillsUSA members at Greater New Bedford RVTHS fostered a healthy respect for all people during a schoolwide diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) collaboration. Focusing on the workplace skill of Multicultural Sensitivity and Awareness, members worked with the school's DEI specialist to create morning announcements for the month of January. Members researched significant dates, historical events and influential figures to support a broad representation of cultures and holidays. Announcements were drafted and presented to the DEI specialist for approval. A responsibility chart with corresponding due dates kept every member on task. Chapter officers enlisted fellow SkillsUSA members to read announcements; many overcoming the discomfort associated with public speaking. Each broadcast was thoughtfully written and presented, making January holidays such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day especially profound. Engaging facts inspired cultural learning, which encouraged a more positive school environment in terms of language and respectful behavior. The peer-to-peer outreach helped students gain an understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion at school and in the workplace. Many staff members reached out with positive feedback, including praise from the DEI specialist regarding the quality and variety of announcements.

Chapter leaders engaged fellow SkillsUSA members and the entire student body with important conversations surrounding Multicultural Sensitivity and Awareness. By collaborating with the DEI specialist, members were able to learn about and succinctly present thought-provoking information. Everyone learned something new! Members measured understanding before and after the activity with a self-reflection assessment that showed growth in knowledge of other cultures, in valuing diversity and in treating everyone with respect. Members also learned that preparation and teamwork provides much-needed confidence to deliver an impactful message, even over an intercom!



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FINANCIAL WEALTH EXPO

PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND MANAGEMENT



Lynn Vocational Technical Institute, Massachusetts

As the culminating activity of a WEALTH project series, SkillsUSA members at Lynn Vocational Technical Institute partnered with the chapter's SkillsUSA alumni organization to present a day-long financial wealth expo. Student leaders worked with alumni to identify workshop topics by prioritizing financial literacy needs in the community. Three workshops were developed, each offered with two levels of learning. Workshops addressed job interviews and resume writing; banking, budgeting and credit; and the stock market. The chapter used a media campaign to advertise the event via Eventbrite and social media. Sponsorship from the alumni association enabled the chapter to gamify the entire day in an arcade-style format, providing participants with "SkillsUSA bucks" to enhance learning. In addition, members were pragmatic in planning the flow of the day, reserving classrooms and technology, selecting a keynote speaker and coordinating panel discussions. On the day before the event, 200 community members had signed up! Mother nature did not cooperate with sub-zero temperatures slashing final attendance to 105. Despite this disappointment, those attending experienced several "aha" moments and were excited about applying new financial insight in their daily lives. The interactive element of using SkillsUSA bucks received an enthusiastic response as participants cashed in on prizes and gift certificates at the end of the day.

The expo provided an excellent venue to engage workplace skills while building strong connections with SkillsUSA alumni and the community. Members applied Planning, Organizing and Management internally by creating a well-structured event with relevant financial topics to help others. They applied this essential element externally by actively collaborating with the alumni association and supporting community members during the expo. That's a great return on investment!



TURN OVER A NEW LEAF

TEAMWORK



Nash Community College, North Carolina

SkillsUSA members at Nash Community College exemplified what it means to “turn over a new leaf” by using teamwork as the basis for SkillsUSA Framework-based chapter engagement. The campus-wide initiative supported the insertion of all 17 essential elements into coursework while involving every stakeholder in the process. Efforts began in August with students learning about the importance of workplace communication in team collaboration and group dynamics. This was followed by advisor-led discussions and implementation of ideas for increasing attendance at chapter meetings such as advance notification, free food, reminder e-mails and ongoing encouragement. Students furthered their teamwork focus by planning and hosting a campus-wide activity in February to expand learning through team-building exercises. In addition, members applied teamwork in all SkillsUSA activities throughout the fall semester. Their cumulative efforts resulted in a 10% increase in meeting attendance, a greater awareness of teamwork in and out of class, and a successful team-building event with all stakeholders present including the college president and provost. One team-building exercise required participants to write down a word reflecting a bad work experience on paper, stand on it, and then apply teamwork to turn over the “leaf.”

The intentionality of teamwork in chapter activities and classroom instruction, along with the vested interest by stakeholders affirmed the importance of Framework skills application. Not only did members engage in successful teamwork among themselves, but they expanded that reach to include administrators, department chairs, career and development directors and other community members. This stretched members and instructors to assume new leadership roles, gain a broader understanding of teamwork’s influence on success and facilitate new opportunities infused with the essential elements. Way to go, team!



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ROANE COUNTY LIGHTING OF THE TREE

TEAMWORK



Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) – Harriman

Thanks to a multi-team approach, SkillsUSA members at TCAT–Harriman made the Roane County Lighting of the Tree extra special. As a first-time participant in the annual community event, advisors and members decided to build a sleigh and offer sleigh rides. The chapter designated teams to complete assignments, each responsible for providing advisors with a timeline and supplies list. Construction students managed sleigh design and fabrication, utilizing the school trailer as a base and building the body using an online blueprint. The sleigh decorating team applied lights, bunting and trimmings. The ornament team used a laser printer to print images on circular wood cut-outs and added ribbon. The face painting team oversaw face painting logistics. Finally, the sleigh ride team helped children get on and off the sleigh safely and handed out ornaments. When all was said and done, the chapter delivered a beautiful sleigh that stole the show! Santa enjoyed the sleigh's inaugural journey, riding into the crowd on his way to light the Christmas tree; an event first! This was followed by over 125 boys and girls enjoying sleigh rides, having their faces painted, and receiving handmade ornaments. It's no surprise that SkillsUSA has been invited back next year.

Members applied Teamwork in dividing work and fulfilling commitments to complete the sleigh on time and within budget. This required frequent communication and a willingness to adapt as needed. For example, welding students designed handrails but ran out of time to attach them to the sleigh. The chapter compensated by using members to ensure rider safety. They recognized that while each team had a specific role, it took the collective team to make it happen. A jolly good time was had by all!



THE BARN PROJECT

PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND MANAGEMENT



Valley Academy for Career and Technology Education, Arizona

Building a barn is no small feat. SkillsUSA members in Arizona accepted this challenge by dismantling, moving and reconstructing an equine barn for a local bridge program that helps middle school students with behavioral issues. Members met with district representatives and local planning and zoning officials to discuss design ideas and project completion. Chapter officers formed committees that were responsible for specific teams assigned to various phases of the project, including budget oversight, materials procurement, jobsite logistics, and numerous other construction details. In addition, students worked with the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) to receive industry training and job certifications. Six-person teams, representing 100% of chapter membership, handled dismantling of the barn, job site layout, footing installation, rebar fabrication, concrete placement and barn assembly at the new location. Hands-on skills proficiencies earned 90% of members industry credentials in core, jobsite layout and foundation slabs on grade. All of this while providing a valuable community service to a program that assists troubled youth in finding their own career path through equine therapy and training.

Planning, Organizing and Management was paramount to this multi-layered enterprise. Members had to implement everything from structural design to organizing materials and on-site fabrication within an established timeframe. They demonstrated attention to detail, followed standards of quality and professional conduct, set priorities for each project phase and remained on-task. Students gained practical experience in carpentry and masonry as well as teamwork and communication skills. Regular project reviews by the officer team helped keep everything on track, while providing opportunities for members to reflect on and assess framework understanding in relation to the project. A monumental application of workplace skills!



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WORLD TEEN MENTAL WELLNESS DAY (WTMWD)

PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND MANAGEMENT



WEMOCO Career and Education Center, New York

Recognizing mental health struggles among their peers, SkillsUSA members at WEMOCO Career and Education Center planned, organized and managed a mental health outreach initiative and a World Teen Mental Wellness Day celebration. The officer team wanted to spread awareness of mental health issues and distribute helpful materials that the student body could access from anywhere, at any time. Officers explored available mental health resources, and with the help of digital and visual communication students, designed and printed business cards and posters. These printed materials pointed to helpful website information, important phone numbers and effective coping strategies. All students and staff (1,500 people) received a card and 55 posters were distributed for classrooms and offices. This was all done under budget. On World Teen Mental Awareness Day in March, officers visited classrooms to engage 75% of their classmates in discussions about the importance of good mental health practices. Additionally, officers provided Framework learning opportunities to 85% of WEMOCO classes by presenting a series of activities found in the SkillsUSA resources of JumpStart and Ignite.

This effort not only helped chapter officers grow in their ability to manage complex projects effectively, but helped them gain mastery in the workplace skill of planning, organizing and management. Officers had to be detail-oriented, adhere to tight timelines for printed materials, and conscientious in their approach to mental health awareness. They coordinated with school staff to schedule classroom visits, and individual and team preparation was a priority. Officers also recognized other pertinent essential elements such as Responsibility, Self-motivation, and Computer and Technology Literacy. Most importantly, they provided a valuable service to students and staff who may be struggling with mental health. Proactive peer solutions!

CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY THROUGH CONCRETE CHESS BOARDS

SERVICE ORIENTATION



Auburn High School, Alabama

SkillsUSA members at Auburn High School embraced service orientation by fabricating concrete chess boards. Students wanted to showcase the versatility of concrete while enabling others to enjoy the high-level reasoning and strategy associated with playing chess. After researching several nonprofits and evaluating the needs of potential recipients, the chapter chose the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Lee County in central Alabama. Advanced construction students spearheaded the project, using an integrative iterative approach to improve processes and gain a better understanding of their clients. Prior to construction, they practiced and demonstrated safe operation of hand and power tools, completed a unit on the pros and cons of concrete as a material, and reviewed techniques when working with concrete. Once everything was in place, they built the formwork, laid out a check pattern using two-by-two inch backsplash tile, and poured the boards. Social media posts highlighted progression, board completion and donation to the client. Students also made chess and checkers pieces. Thanks to their efforts, the Boys and Girls clubs now have 10 heavy-duty chess boards to help youth learn lessons such as rational decision-making and making sacrifices to achieve a larger goal.

Service orientation was evident in how the students thoughtfully considered several nonprofits, choosing to help youth through the game of chess. By constructing the boards from concrete, they used technical skills to produce a product that is sturdy and resistant to wear and tear. The Boys and Girls Club was so satisfied that they have asked the chapter for more innovative products in the future. This developed awareness through service will also support informed decisions as students graduate into the workforce. Checkmate!



EMPLOYABILITY MAKEOVER, INSIDE AND OUT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Buckeye Hills Career Center, Ohio

The term “makeover” took on a whole new meaning as SkillsUSA members at Buckeye Hills Career Center focused on employability, inside and out! Students recognized several important factors for attaining desired jobs: resume writing, filling out job applications, interview skills and appropriate interview attire. The community engagement committee facilitated the project in three phases. The first involved resume writing in English classes and using Google Classroom to complete mock job applications and sign-up for a practice interview with local business partners. The second featured an entertaining chapter meeting with officers dressing for a “Who Would You Hire?” fashion show, allowing members to compare work attire and vote. The third provided access to free clothes from a clothing closet and free cosmetology services in preparation for interviews. The committee also visited four local libraries to promote the school’s involvement in the local ASPIRE program, offering free employability training to prepare a person for the job application process along with free cosmetology services so people look their best. In total, 96 SkillsUSA members participated in the resume, job application and interview process. Over 325 members participated in the fashion show and multiple students took advantage of the clothing closet and hair services.

All participants gained proficiencies in job interviewing and the importance of a professional appearance and 113 students completed a job interview and were hired for early placement in their skilled field. The SkillsUSA chapter continues to work with ASPIRE to promote professional development and offer free cosmetology services. The employability makeovers will be ongoing as the chapter promotes professional and personal growth opportunities. Beautiful results, inside and out!



MARCHING ANGELS

SERVICE ORIENTATION



Gordon Cooper Technology Center, Oklahoma

Actively seeking ways to help others is a hallmark of service orientation. SkillsUSA members at Gordon Cooper Technology Center applied this ideology by building a float for two community Christmas parades. Each of the school's 10 technical programs had to perform work on external projects to raise funds, as well as internal work to build the float and then participate in both parades. Students sold baked goods and candy, provided haircuts, and offered car detailing, engine rebuilds and HVAC services. The carpentry, diesel, business careers and graphic design programs managed the float theme, design elements and construction. Cosmetology, criminal justice, electrical and early childcare prepared gifts for distribution along the parade route. Automotive repair and HVAC programs scheduled additional work to support more fundraising. The chapter's collective efforts raised \$4,000, providing more than enough to build the float, purchase candy and toys and donate \$1,000 to the community service account. During the two parades, students and instructors walked alongside the float, handing out over 1,300 gifts and 700 candy canes to children. The interactive float display featured large, brightly decorated trees on a bed of snow with banners that read, "The gift of love is giving."

External service orientation shined in how students provided much-needed services to the community during their live work projects, and in the generosity shown while distributing gifts to children, many from low-income households. Internal service orientation was visible in how students communicated with each other, delegated tasks and supported each program during the process. This included improving float design, taking on more work for additional fundraising and exceeding their gift goals by 30 percent. Marching angels indeed!



SCHOOL BAND SHOW PROPS

SAFETY AND HEALTH



Hobbs High School, New Mexico

In partnership with the marching band program, SkillsUSA welding students at Hobbs High School practiced health and safety skills while building rolling band props. The band needed the props by mid-September, requiring SkillsUSA members to hit the ground running! They designed and built two working prototypes to test safety and durability. These were presented to band directors for approval. After making suggested corrections, they began fabrication of all 15 show props. During this time, 100 percent of welding students developed their safety and health skills by learning welding and shop safety from the welding advisors, both in the classroom and on the shop floor. All work was based on industry standards with students validating their knowledge through successful completion of the NC3 Welding Certification. Participating students worked during school, after school and on weekends to ensure the project was completed on time. From basic rolling carts to drum line props, the chapter accomplished this momentous task by honing skills that will lead them straight to the workplace.

SkillsUSA members demonstrated work-based safety and health skills that directly correlated to classroom learning. Topics such as the importance of wearing the right headgear, clothing and gloves to prevent burns; methods for preparing metal to reduce fumes; ensuring adequate ventilation; and being aware of surroundings were presented. Students also learned about the importance of reading manuals and preparing for emergencies, as well as causes of electrocution and fires. Even more extraordinary is the fact that welding students were asked to complete all of this in just a few weeks. Despite a tight schedule, they avoided shortcuts and were diligent in their health and safety practices. March on!



SEAT BELT CONVINCER

SAFETY AND HEALTH



Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES CTEC, New York

Unfortunately and surprisingly, many young adults do not consistently wear seat belts when driving or riding in cars. After losing a CTE student to a car crash in 2016, SkillsUSA members in New York focused on the importance of wearing seat belts as their Framework initiative for Safety and Health. Working alongside the automotive technology teacher and advisor, and the state trooper responsible for rollover presentations, members set a date and publicized their event. They also obtained parental consent forms due to nature of the event so students had permission to ride the seat belt convincer. The seat belt convincer replicates a low-impact collision, enabling passengers to experience the force generated at only five to 10 miles per hour. The rollover demonstration uses a simulation vehicle to show what happens during a rollover event. Crash dummies in the vehicle are thrown around inside and ejected out of windows. This close-up experience delivered a strong dose of reality to more than 387 students. The state trooper also provided details about the deadly accident involving the CTE student; explaining that this young man would still be alive today had he been wearing a seat belt.

Seeing is believing. A follow-up survey indicated that 93 percent of students agreed with the statement, "After participating in the seat belt demonstration, I am more likely to wear a seat belt at all times." During the planning, students were diligent in getting paperwork completed and providing a safe environment in the auto shop. The chapter created a more personalized experience by offering eight 30-minute sessions to accommodate all CTE programs. They even had 38 students volunteer to ride the convincer. This created lasting impressions and in-depth discussions about the importance of wearing a seat belt. Buckle up!



TRAILER WRAP

JOB-SPECIFIC SKILLS



River Valley High School, Arizona

SkillsUSA members in the Graphic Design program at River Valley High School applied job specific skills as they designed, printed and wrapped a trailer for WAVE (Western Arizona Vocational Education). Seeking the guidance of their business and industry partner Totally Awesome Printing (TAP), job specific skills were applied from the get-go. Students learned to execute the principles and elements of design using Adobe Illustrator. This was followed by several lessons from Doug at TAP on all of the steps involved in wrapping a trailer, including printing, laminating, applying the wrap and sealing it. There was some trial and error, but members excelled in providing technical drafts for WAVE's approval, making a trailer template, designing logos and selecting colors and completing the wrap. During times of adversity, they also learned to take responsibility. During one of the first attempts to laminate a section, a member mistake produced a wrinkle. Rather than trying to fix it themselves, the member relied on Doug's expertise to do it correctly. In the end, WAVE received a high-quality, professionally-finished trailer wrap.

Working with their business partner turned this activity into an apprenticeship-type experience. Having the opportunity to work with a certified master wrap expert created an exceptional opportunity. Members were also able to use TAP's workshop for laminating, mocking up and application of the vinyl trailer wrap. The technical undertaking led to many discussions on how new skills are learned and applied which made a lasting impression on both students and staff. Students left such a good impression that TAP offered job recommendations and even hired one student as a summer intern. That's how you wrap up success!



2022 ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES CAREER EXPO

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) – Pulaski

Exposing middle and high school students to high-demand, high-wage careers is always a good idea. College/postsecondary SkillsUSA members at Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) – Pulaski did just that by assuming a leadership role in an annual career expo. Alongside local business and industry leaders, SkillsUSA members introduced participants to CTE, TCAT and SkillsUSA. Each TCAT program created a display, presentation and live demonstration related to their technical area. Members also had to incorporate the SkillsUSA Framework elements of health and safety, job specific skills, and computer and technology literacy into their exhibits. Examples of demonstrations included mobile robotics, network cabling, household electrical wiring, air filter cleaning, free blood pressure checks, pharmaceutical compounding, and phlebotomy lessons. A total of 92 SkillsUSA members representing 12 TCAT programs and six career clusters took part. Enthusiasm for the event was high, with more 600 middle and high school students attending. Participants were able to ask questions, learn more about specific programs, take part in hands-on activities and meet local employers.

SkillsUSA members grew in their professional development individually and as a team. They gained experience in creating presentations and live demos, public speaking and sharing career knowledge with others in a professional manner. The expo also provided members with an opportunity to interact with industry representatives and build connections. Members set a good example for student attendees as they helped eighth graders with career exploration, and advised high school students on postsecondary education and the value of SkillsUSA. Endless opportunities close to home!



SKILLSUSA HOPE FOR THE HUNGRY: USING OUR SKILLS TO HELP THOSE IN NEED

JOB-SPECIFIC SKILLS



Upper Valley Career Center, Ohio

Recognizing the need for food access in their local district, SkillsUSA members at Upper Valley Career Center designed, constructed and stocked five small food pantries. Originally, the chapter was going to offer two pantries on campus and two in the community. However, a third pantry on campus was requested by the adult education division, further emphasizing the vital importance of this project. A needs assessment revealed that pantries should include clothing and hygiene items. Over 150 members representing 14 school labs participated. Students created a budget, obtained building supplies, designed and assembled pantries and installed them in designated areas. Members communicated with their peers to identify needs, purchase non-perishable food items, and supply an initial inventory of 85 items per pantry. Members also created a schedule to monitor inventory and re-stock as needed. The wood-framed pantries feature shelving, a roof, plexiglass door and mounted base. The chapter used a grant from Harbor Freight to purchase building materials and food items. The pantries are addressing a vital need in the community and have given the chapter a positive footprint in the district.

Multiple job specific skills were required to complete this project. Members identified a need, put forth a plan of action, operated within budget parameters, and employed collaboration across multiple labs. Technical skills were used in the design, building plan, construction and finishing touches to make pantries sturdy and attractive. Project schedules and individual assignments gave each member a meaningful role, connecting skills learned in lab to practical application in service to others. A humble reminder that a small food pantry can make a big difference!

Learn more about the Chapter Excellence Program



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In keeping with a tradition of respect for the individuality of our members and our role in workforce development, SkillsUSA strives to ensure inclusive participation in all of our programs, partnerships and employment opportunities.

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