

From the Executive Director
Jeff Sluss

Hello to all supporters of SkillsUSA Virginia and students enrolled in Career and Technical Education.

I am Jeff Sluss, a former Drafting Student from Christiansburg High School, and a former SkillsUSA (VICA) State Vice President (1985-86) and State President (1986-87). It was as a student and state officer that I learned the value of the programs that SkillsUSA has to offer. A co-curricular Student organization SkillsUSA offers young people the opportunity to not only become proficient in their field of choice, but through participation in leadership events and development programs, can develop the soft skills that are so necessary in today's workplace.

SkillsUSA offers students enrolled in secondary and post-secondary technical programs opportunities to compete in skill competitions at the local, regional, state, national and even international levels. Showcasing their acquired knowledge in a competitive environment against their peers offers students an arena to show to perspective employers their ability to perform at the highest levels under pressure.

In addition, SkillsUSA also asks students to reach outside their skill area to develop lifelong skills in leadership that employers so desperately need. Students can hold a local, district, state or national office which allows those chosen to be introduced to a world few students get to experience. Those students are truly the leaders of the organization in every sense. They are engaged in public speaking, meeting with leaders from business and industry, and running business meetings. Other students can enter competitive events in contests ranging from Prepared Speech to Technical Math. It is through participation in these programs that SkillsUSA is truly preparing students to be the leaders of tomorrow.

How can you become involved?

The SkillsUSA Virginia Foundation supports the programs above both financially as well as hands-on support through hosting competitions, serving as a judge, or in a behind-the-scenes support role. Individuals and companies have donated both their time and expertise as well as funding support to be sure that students have these opportunities both today and in the future.

But we are not just looking for donors, we are looking for PARTNERS.

The foundation acts as a bridge between business and industry as well as the community at large, and teachers, students and administrators. We get our partners involved with curriculum development, pairing business partners with teachers in their local schools, showcase their

businesses at events such as the State Fair of Virginia, or the District and State Conferences. We want to make sure that our partners are receiving a significant return on investment, and the best way we can do that is acting as a conduit to students. Employers are struggling to find quality employees, and we want to provide a pipeline to the next generation of talent.

I ask you to join us in our mission to develop the next generation of young people into productive employees and members of society. SkillsUSA is a proven vessel for that goal. How do I know? I'm living proof.

Contact me today at jsluss@skillsusava.org, or by phone at (540) 824-4750.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to working together for the betterment of CTE students across Virginia!

Jeff