

Leesburg, Va. SkillsUSA celebrated SkillsUSA National Signing Day today, 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. This year's partners for SkillsUSA Signing Day were [The Home Depot](#), [Klein Tools](#), [84 Lumber](#) and [NC3](#).

Today's SkillsUSA National Signing Day saluted students who expressed their commitment to a fulfilling and rewarding career in the skilled trades, says SkillsUSA Executive Director Chelle Travis. Because of our vast partner support, National Signing Day is generating even more awareness that the skilled trades offer rewarding career paths. SkillsUSA is working to help close the skills gap while presenting robust career opportunities for young workers who enjoy challenging work that offers stability and long-term benefits.

On Signing Day, SkillsUSA students were recognized at school ceremonies by administrators, teachers, elected officials, SkillsUSA advisors, family and friends for making the decision to pursue their career in the skilled trades. In a fashion similar to signing day events for student athletes who commit to a college or team, students were applauded as they signed letters of intent for a job offer, apprenticeship or further technical training. Throughout the day, skilled trades supporters nationwide shared their encouragement for these future workers, and these efforts were amplified by media outreach. The Home Depot, Klein Tools and 84 Lumber each sponsored key events.

With keen emphasis on our student's futures, both The Home Depot Foundation and 84 Lumber issued 16 scholarships in all, six from The Home Depot, and 10 from 84 Lumber, to 2021 SkillsUSA program participants, including:

- **Jalen Randolph**, Butler County Career Academy, Ala.
- **Jesse Moran**, Riveroak Technical College, Fla.
- **Kalya Eades**, Cross Keys High School, Ga.
- **Michael Snipes**, East Laurens High School, Ga.
- **Zackery Pitchford**, Lumpkin County High School, Ga.
- **Julianna Zambrano**, Center of Applied Technology North, Md.
- **Trevor Philpot**, Center of Applied Technology North, Md.
- **Nyssa Lewis**, Lynn Vocational Technical Institute, Mass.
- **Brian Lopez Mejia**, Lynn Vocational Technical Institute, Mass.
- **Annayeli Dionisio**, Columbus Career and College Academy, N.C.
- **Justin Yearwood**, Bethlehem Area Vocational Technical School, Pa.
- **Nathan DeBellis**, Career Institute of Technology, Pa.
- **Blade Witt**, Fayette County Career and Technical Institute, Pa.
- **Kayla Gomez**, Fayette County Career and Technical Institute, Pa.
- **Gerson Castro-Rivera**, Monroe Career and Technical Institute, Pa.
- **Luke Overholt**, Upper Bucks County Technical School, Pa.

This combined investment of \$80,000 in scholarships \$30,000 from The Home Depot Foundation and \$50,000 from 84 Lumber will help these students advance their careers.

Additionally, Klein Tools hosted a satellite media tour with San Francisco 49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo and his career electrician father Tony, during which the two spoke extensively to nearly two dozen media outlets nationwide about the importance of National Signing Day and encouraging the next

generation of skilled trades professionals. Afterwards, the Garoppolos participated alongside several guests in a virtual National Signing Day event for SkillsUSA students in Arizona and Nevada.

Working alongside The Home Depot, Klein Tools also sent merchandise and tools to students in their Southeast and West Coast sponsorship regions to assist with preparation for their career journeys.

Members of the 84 Lumber team joined former Pittsburgh Steelers running back Jerome Bettis for Signing Day at the 84 Lumber store in Bridgeville, Pa., which included remarks from SkillsUSA Executive Director Chelle Travis. There, they surprised 10 building trades students from seven schools with \$5,000 scholarships and backpacks filled with iPads and other supplies for their careers.

Good Morning America [highlighted SkillsUSA and National Signing Day](#) on Tuesday in the 8:00 a.m. hour segment of the program, interviewing two of the students surprised with scholarships from 84 Lumber: Brian Lopez Mejia and Nyssa Lewis, both of Lynn Vocational Technical Institute in Massachusetts. The pair flew to Pittsburgh for the event with their advisor Jason McCuish and SkillsUSA Massachusetts Director Karen Ward. Following the 84 Lumber live event in Bridgeville, football great Jerome Bettis also conducted a satellite media tour, which further amplified SkillsUSA National Signing Day to the public as he spoke with reporters from a number of national, sports and local outlets.

Our national partners played a critical role in the planning and delivery of SkillsUSA National Signing Day, each working to highlight the value of a career-ready student who is ready to contribute to the United States workforce, said SkillsUSA Executive Director Chelle Travis.

About SkillsUSA

SkillsUSA is a nonprofit partnership of education and industry founded in 1965 to strengthen our nation's skilled workforce. Driven by employer demand, SkillsUSA helps students develop necessary personal and workplace skills along with technical skills grounded in academics. This SkillsUSA Framework empowers every student to succeed at work and in life, while helping to close the skills gap in which millions of positions go unfilled. Through SkillsUSA's championships program and curricula, employers have ensured schools are teaching relevant technical skills, and with SkillsUSA's new credentialing process, they can now assess how ready potential employees are for the job. SkillsUSA has more than 372,000 annual members nationwide in high schools, middle schools and colleges, covering over 130 trade, technical and skilled service occupations, and is recognized by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor as integral to career and technical education. With the addition of alumni, membership last year was 434,141. SkillsUSA receives in-kind and financial support from more than 650 national partners. They have served more than 13.6 million members since 1965. For more information: www.skillsusa.org.