

NEWS RELEASE

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Local SkillsUSA Student Wins Scholarship from TV's

mikeroweWORKS Foundation

Jordan Walhof, of Rock Valley, Iowa, a student at Northwest Iowa Community College and an IOWA gold medalist in Automotive Service Technology was the recipient of a mikeroweWORKS Foundation scholarship to attend the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Louisville, Ky., June 20-24. Mike Rowe, former host of the Discovery Channel's "Dirty Jobs" and current host of CNN's "Somebody's Got To Do It," created the foundation in 2008 to, in his words, "give something back and challenge the prevailing definition of a 'good job.' For decades, we have put a premium on a four-year degree, and told an entire generation that trade schools and skilled labor are alternatives to higher education. Hyperbole aside, the skills gap is real. Our infrastructure is crumbling. And, our country is scrambling to put itself back together."

The scholarship provides support for SkillsUSA state contest winners who have insufficient personal resources to travel to and participate in the 2016 National SkillsUSA Championships. This year's scholarship award amounts were determined by the geographic travel distance to Louisville, Kentucky. The winners will also have the opportunity to meet with a member of the mikeroweWORKS Foundation staff during the conference.

This is the sixth consecutive year that the mikeroweWORKS Foundation, in partnership with SkillsUSA, has offered scholarships for SkillsUSA members who compete and place first in their state's SkillsUSA Championships and who otherwise would not be able to attend the national SkillsUSA Championships for financial reasons. The scholarship is awarded based on a student-written narrative describing the need for the scholarship and lack of school or community resources. A student may be nominated with a letter of recommendation written by his or her SkillsUSA advisor or the SkillsUSA state association director.

This year, the mikeroweWORKS Foundation had a priority focus on high school and college/postsecondary students who are working toward careers in manufacturing, construction, automotive, engineering and STEM-related trade occupations.

Since 2011, the mikeroweWORKS Foundation has provided scholarship support to 354 SkillsUSA students, representing an investment of more than \$356,000 in America's future skilled workforce.

About the mikeroweWORKS Foundation

As part of Mike Rowe’s “PR campaign for hard work and skilled labor,” the mikeroweWORKS Foundation was established to provide tool stipends, help fund scholarship programs and support other initiatives that reinvigorate trade school enrollments and industrial arts programs around the country. Recent highlights include: partnering with technical institutions across the country to award more than \$3 million in educational scholarships; a new 2015 “Work Ethic” \$400,000 Scholarship Program administered by Scholarship America; and, for the fifth year, granting \$56,000 to the AED Foundation for 2015 tool scholarships. In addition to his Foundation, Rowe’s website, www.mikeroweWORKS.com, focuses on issues related to the widening skills gap, aging workforce, high unemployment and the millions of unfilled jobs. It also provides comprehensive resources for anyone looking to explore skilled vocations and strives to continue to focus the nation on the real dilemmas facing our trade workers, miners and farmers.

About SkillsUSA

SkillsUSA (www.SkillsUSA.org) is a not-for-profit association that serves more than 300,000 member high school, college and postsecondary students — and their instructors — in trade, technical and skilled service instructional programs. SkillsUSA partners educators and students with business and industry to help ensure the United States has a well-prepared rising skilled workforce. SkillsUSA has the active support of more than 600 companies, trade associations and labor unions at the national level. Founded as the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America in 1965, its annual membership, totaled over 50 years, exceeds 11.9 million. SkillsUSA programs teach leadership, citizenship and character development to complement technical skill training. The organization emphasizes respect for the dignity of work, ethics, workmanship, scholarship and safety.