

# Built to Win: SkillsUSA Students Showcase Hot Skills

By Trisha Nardone

LEHIGH VALLEY - More than 1500 students proudly demonstrated in-demand skills they've been learning through their career and technical education at the annual SkillsUSA Council District 11 Championships on Feb. 4.

The Allentown Agri-Plex echoed with the sounds of hammers, drills, and keyboards as high schoolers competed in 33 unique skills demonstrations. Skills like carpentry, CNC machining, plumbing, web design, and many more were on display. Some spectators even watched as criminal justice students de-escalated a mock-disturbance situation. Sites throughout the



Greater Lehigh Valley hosted 29 additional competitions for a total of 62 hands-on skills and leadership competitions.

SkillsUSA is among the organizations that partner with employers and workforce development professionals in the Lehigh Valley to build a pipeline of talent for the future.

"At the heart of every great career is a commitment to craft and character. SkillsUSA Council District Championships bring together students who exemplify both," said Andy Hammer, Executive Director of SkillsUSA Council District 11. "This event honors dedication, determination, and skill. It reminds us that when students are challenged, they rise to the challenge. For the past 40 years, SkillsUSA District Championships have been about more than gold medals. They're about growth, grit, and the pride of a job well done."

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, schools, and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. A nonprofit national education association, SkillsUSA serves middle school, high school, and college/post-secondary students preparing for careers in trade, technical, and skilled service occupations. The Lehigh Valley boasts the only SkillsUSA Council that not only offers all the benefits of SkillsUSA national but also professional development conferences and interest clubs year-round here in the Lehigh Valley.

Participating in the competition were students from Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School, Career Institute of Technology, Lehigh Career & Technical Institute, Monroe County Technical Institute, and Upper Bucks County Technical School.

Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC) was among the sponsors of the SkillsUSA Championships.

At the event luncheon, LVEDC President & CEO Don Cunningham emphasized the importance of a skilled workforce for economic development: "We just won a \$3.5 billion investment from Eli Lilly and Company. Having a skilled workforce right here in the Lehigh Valley was a key factor in us being chosen as the site for that new manufacturing facility."

Students like those competing in this year's SkillsUSA Council District 11 competition are a driving force behind the Lehigh Valley's success over the past 30 years, and they will play a pivotal role in its next chapter of manufacturing growth.

The SkillsUSA Council awarded more than \$200,000 in scholarships to medalists in select competitions.

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Thanks to:

- **MaryAnn McEvoy** for her beautiful handmade "diamond art" bookmarks for book group discussion attendees
- **MaryJane Bookhout** for her handmade cuddly friends for our juvenile patrons
- **Rachel Wagner** for her handmade tiny octopi for the scavenger hunt prize basket

We are touched by your thoughtfulness and amazed by your creativity!  
And thank you to everyone who has donated items for our patrons! Much appreciated!



#### Books and Bites!

Dine at Patsy's on Broadway on Mar. 24th

at 21 S. Broadway, Wind Gap

Order one of the specials and mention BMCL and Patsy's will donate a portion of your bill back to the BMCL! Open 11am-5:30pm. Call 610-881-4261 or scan the QR code.



We are so grateful for the following community members who have already contributed to our 2026 annual campaign:

- Anonymous (multiple)
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  - Shawn and Kristin Kemmerer
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Thank you

THANK YOU SO MUCH

(donors, continued)

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Annual campaign donors (to date)

\$1,000+: 1  
\$500-\$999: 1  
\$300-\$499: 1  
\$100-\$299: 14  
\$50-\$99: 26  
up to \$49: 32

#### New books

##### Adult fiction:

- Exiles (Mason Coile)
- My Husband's Wife (Alice Feeney)
- Goodnight from Paris (Jane Healey)
- Some Bright Nowhere (Ann Packer)
- Night Watcher (Daphne Woolsoncraft)
- The Seven Rings (Nora Roberts)
- Dear Debbie (Freida McFadden)
- Woman Down (Colleen Hoover)
- It's Not Her (Mary Kubica)
- Jigsaw (Jonathan Kellerman)
- Nash Falls (David Baldacci)
- Vigil (George Saunders)
- The Wife Upstairs (Freida McFadden)
- We Do Not Part (Han Kang)
- Last Twilight in Paris (Pam Jenoff)

##### Adult nonfiction:

- Worthy of Your Comeback (Amanda Butler)
- A Marriage at Sea (Sophie Elmhirst)
- The Carpool Detectives (Chuck Hogan)
- Everything to God in Prayer (David Jeremiah)
- Neptune's Fortune (Julian Sancton)
- Framed (John Grisham)

##### Large print fiction:

- The Star and the Shamrock (Jean Grainger)
- Cookie Crumble and Murder (K.E. O'Connor)
- High Tea at the Beach House Hotel (Judith Keim)
- Overkill (J.A. Jance)
- Code Blue (Fern Michaels)
- Close Your Eyes and Count to 10 (Lisa Unger)

##### YA fiction:

- War Stories (Gordon Korman)

##### Juvenile fiction:

- Lucy Goes Green (Danielle Passaglia)

- Let's Go for a Drive! (Mo Willems)

##### Juvenile nonfiction:

- Punctuation (Mary Budzik)
- What a Waste (Jess French)

"The library is like a candy store where everything is free." - Jamie Ford



If inclement weather: check the library website [www.bmcl.org](http://www.bmcl.org) or WFMZ.

#### Here's what's happening...

##### Scavenger hunt for children: insects!

There's a new one posted for March in the children's room. Give it a try, and happy searching!

##### Preschool storytime

Winter preschool storytime, for ages 3-5: Wed., Mar. 4 and 18 at 10:30am in the children's section. Join for stories, songs, and a craft! Space is limited; call the library to register.

##### Book group for adults

Mar. 10 - *Strangers in Time* by David Baldacci  
The group meets at 6:30pm. Email [info@bmcl.org](mailto:info@bmcl.org) to register.

##### Future picks:

Apr. 14 - *The God of the Woods* by Liz Moore

May 12 - *Goodnight from Paris* by Jane Healey

June 9 - *A Marriage at Sea* by Sophie Elmhirst

##### Board meeting

Tues., Mar. 17 at 6:30pm

Please contact the library with your interest in attending.



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