



PRESS RELEASE

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Fontana High Welding Program Takes Top Honors in American Welding Society, SkillsUSA Competitions

FONTANA, CA – Fontana High School welding students scored top honors at recent regional and state competitions, showcasing the highly regarded program’s range of strengths.

At the SkillsUSA California State Leadership and Skills Conference, held April 27 at UTI, Rancho Cucamonga, FoHi sophomore Angel Garcia and senior Eduardo Perales won gold and silver medals respectively in shielded metal arc welding (SMAW), while senior Steven Nava won gold in gas tungsten arc welding (GTAW).

At the American Welding Society (AWS) Los Angeles/Inland Empire Welding Competition and Career Fair, held April 7 at Fontana High, junior Christian Garcia won first place and a Fronius multi-process welding machine while Steven Nava took fourth place in a SMAW welding event.

“Fontana welding students showed remarkable skills and poise, we are all so proud of them,” FoHi CTE welding instructor Robert Moreno said. “Professional welders are in great demand, especially for students who are willing to travel to where the work is. FoHi welding students are developing the skills they need to compete for these high-paying jobs.”

Moreno, who is both a certified welding educator (CWE) and inspector (CWI), has overseen the FoHi CTE program since 2009, teaching nearly 100 students each year and assembling the welding shop that helps prepare students for employment in the manufacturing and structural steel industries.

Moreno’s students receive comprehensive training that covers nearly every skill needed to be a professional welder or fabricator using such processes as stick (SMAW), wire (GMAW), flux-core (FCAW), oxy-fuel (OAW), GTAW, fabrication and processes using metal inert gas (MIG) and tungsten inert gas (TIG).

Fontana welding students who have completed Moreno’s entry level welding class with a B grade or higher have the option of articulating with San Bernardino Valley College, allowing them to earn college credits while completing AWS certification requirements in SMAW, GMAW and FCAW in their senior year.

Angel Garcia is a sophomore and second-year welding student who is hoping to follow in the footsteps of his older brothers, FoHi grads Adrian and Arturo, both former SkillsUSA medalists who acquired their welding skills at FoHi, on their way to becoming professional welders.

“Both of my brothers learned welding at Fontana High and it seemed interesting,” Garcia said. “My goal is to get AWS certifications in SMAW and GMAW, then either study welding technology at the community college or join the pipefitters union.”

Under Moreno’s guidance, the FoHi CTE welding program has gained prominence, as affiliations with AWS and SkillsUSA have brought prestigious competitions to Fontana. AWS tapped FoHi to host its Los Angeles/Inland Empire section career fair for the first time in 2018, hosting 50 student competitors from high school, college, ROP and apprenticeship programs, along with a separate competition for welding instructors. During the career fair, the students networked with industry and union representatives looking to hire welders.

Moreno, who is assisted by his wife Christina, was first hired by FUSD Adult Education Department in 1996. He also teaches welding at San Bernardino Valley College.

“Career technical education is a critical element in preparing students for college and career, and is supported by the District through partnerships with San Bernardino Valley College,” Fontana Unified Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said. “Through the dedicated leadership of professionals like Roberto Moreno, we are providing Fontana students with the skills necessary to compete for the careers of today and tomorrow.”

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

050718_FUSD_WELDING1: Fontana High School welding students ready themselves for a SkillsUSA regional championship at FoHi in January. FoHi’s career technical education welding program offers students comprehensive training that can lead to American Welding Society certifications in stick, wire and flux-core welding.

050718_FUSD_WELDING2: Fontana High School senior Steven Nava captured a gold medal in GTAW welding at the 2018 SkillsUSA California State Championship, held April 27 at UTI. FoHi sophomore Angel Garcia and senior Eduardo Perales, not pictured, won gold and silver medals respectively in SMAW welding.