



NORWALK-LA MIRADA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 8, 2014

Contact: Valerie Martinez
Christina L. Cárdenas
(909) 445-1001

Welding, marketing students take top honors at SkillsUSA conference

La Mirada Students Score Silver at National Competition

A group of talented students from La Mirada High School proved they are among the best in the nation as they took home silver medals from the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference, a competition of 15,000 students from around the country that showcases their expertise in a variety of leadership and skills tests.

SkillsUSA – a partnership of students, teachers and industry partners working together to ensure the United States has an accomplished workforce – tested the students’ expertise in a wide variety of career- and technical-education skills that range from automotive technology and welding to broadcast news production and nursing. The national competition was held June 21-27 in Kansas City, Mo.

Makenzie Bentley, a freshman from LMHS, took home the silver medal in the Welding Sculpture category. Facing more than 30 competitors, Bentley was charged with demonstrating her ability to design, produce and give a presentation regarding all aspects of her sculpture.

“There were 30 other sculptures there and I thought, ‘If I don’t place, that will be OK,’” Bentley said. “Then I heard my name at the awards ceremony and I heard [LMHS Welding Adviser Brent] Tuttle behind me; it was cool hearing him be proud of me. It was crazy. It didn’t even hit me that I was in front of 20,000 people.”

Bentley’s design, which is an anchor that symbolizes her faith and her parents’ support, also won the gold medal at the SkillsUSA 47th Annual State Leadership and Skill Conference in April. She was interviewed regarding the aspects of her design and creation of her sculpture and came out as the second-place winner based on her sculpture, presentation and notebook documenting her work.

“Her presentation was really good,” Tuttle said. “She wants to get the gold now.”

A team of students, also from La Mirada High School, took home silver in the Career Pathways-Business Management and Technology category. Seniors Raymond Pedigo, Matthew Botello and Celeste Gomez earned second-place honors for their presentation on Karing Handz, a community service organization founded by La Mirada High students who sell pieces of welding art. For each piece sold, Karing Handz donates a T-shirt to a special-needs child.

“The Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District is ripe with so much talent and I am awfully proud of these students,” said District Superintendent Dr. Ruth Pérez. “I admire their tenacity and their dedication to their crafts. Taking national honors is definitely a feather in their cap.”

The students who competed in the national competition earned gold at the state level. Aside from Bentley, Pedigo, Botello and Gomez, LMHS students Evan Cooper, Michael Gilman and Brandon Remedios competed in the manufacturing competition; seniors Elena Del Toro, Chayenne Leeder and Rebecca Marmolejo competed in the human services category; and juniors Jorge Paiz, Lewis Pedigo, Jesus Asencio and Stefani Carranco competed in the entrepreneurship category.

“SkillsUSA nationals brings together the best of the best in the country. To have our students among them is an honor in itself,” said Board of Education President Margarita Rios. “But to have our students actually earn top spots in the competition is a feat to be acknowledged, admired and celebrated. We are all very proud of their accomplishments.”

Photo Caption: La Mirada High School freshman Makenzie Bentley poses with her welding sculpture, an anchor that symbolizes her faith and parents’ support. Bentley, 14, won the silver medal at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in June. Her classmates – seniors Raymond Pedigo, Matthew Botello and Celeste Gomez – also won silver in their category, Career Pathways-Business Management and Technology. They earned second-place honors for their presentation on Caring Hands, a budding community service organization founded by La Mirada High students who sell pieces of welding art.

###

Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District • 12820 Pioneer Blvd. • Norwalk, CA 90650
(562) 868-0431 • www.nlmusd.k12.ca.us

Where Every student is given Every opportunity to demonstrate Excellence!