

STILL SKILLED



Jessica Boisclair/Daily Times

LEFT: Back row (l-r): Brett Catlow, Benjamin Cournoyer, Mason Hanna and Austyn Norman. Front row (l-r): Katie Rostron, Rachel Tousignant and Kathryn Brouillette. ABOVE: Rostron, Tousignant, and Brouillette with their gold medals.

Career and technical students fare well again in annual statewide contest

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COVENTRY — Eleven students from the Regional Career and Technical Center at Coventry High School secured a medal in the recent SkillsUSA state championship, and three took home gold and will be traveling to the national competition in June.

A national organization, SkillsUSA provides educational experiences to technical high school and college students alike. It looks to train them in leadership, teamwork, citizenship

and character development.

Students from technical schools across Rhode Island and competed against each other in programs like cosmetology, computer IT, carpentry, early childhood education, health careers, culinary and graphic design.

Kathryn Brouillette, who's enrolled in the culinary program at the high school, received a gold medal in commercial baking.

She said each student competing in that category had to decorate a cake and bake rolls, loaves of bread, pumpkin muffins, and a pie in four hours.

"I was so shocked when I found out I had won, I didn't know what to say; I didn't expect to win," she laughed.

Also securing a gold medal was Katie Rostron in the Nursing Assistant category. Katie, who participated in the competition, last year for medical math, said this is the first time she's received an award.

"I was very surprised; they called my name and I was like, 'Wait, is that really me?'" she laughed. "I didn't place in the competition last year so this is a big step up."

For the Nursing Assistant category, she said,

the students took a the pulse, respiration, and blood pressure of a "patient," and performed other "basic nursing skills."

Currently, Katie works as a nursing assistant but said she plans to attend college and become a Registered Nurse.

The third student to win gold was Rachel Tousignant in the prepared speech category. Each student in this category had to give a speech about their experience competing in SkillsUSA and how it has benefited them.

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Skills of local students on display

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Rachel, who won gold last year for community service, said she was more than excited to win the top spot again.

"I'm the state president so I was the presiding officer over the entire ceremony and it was an honor to win," she added. "I knew I did well and I was nervous but I felt that all my effort and hard work I put into earned me the medal."

Fellow student, Kelsie Lopez, also competed in the prepared speech category and took home the bronze during her first SkillsUSA event.

During her speech, she said, she focused on how the competition has benefited her as a student enrolled in the early childhood development program.

"I was so surprised because I was doing this as a learning experience and I didn't expect to win anything," she said.

Junior Brett Catlow also competed for the first time in the SkillsUSA carpentry category, taking home a bronze medal. He said students enrolled in the category had to measure and lay out rafters, stairs, poles and plate layouts.

Four students, ranging from sophomores to seniors, competed in the Teamworks category and built a bathroom from scratch, securing a bronze medal.

Mason Hanna explained that the competition required the four students — he, Austyn Norman, Paul Langevin and Ben Cournoyer—to build a 4-by-8-foot bathroom.



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Students from the career and technical center show off a booth they will use to try to raise money for their trip the SkillsUSAnational contest in Washington, D.C.

Austyn said each of the students took on a different job — carpenter, mason, electrician and plumber — and assisted in framing the floor and walls.

This year's competition was the first for all four students and Paul said he was excited and surprised that they received bronze.

"I didn't know that two of the guys were in tenth grade so it was surprising but it was good because we had all different lev-

els of skill," he said.

For winning first place, Kathryn, Katie and Rachel will advance to the National competition in Kansas City June 23 through June 27.

Students who placed in the top three spots on the state level received prizes, such as tools of the trade or scholarships to the New England Institute of Technology and Lincoln Technical Institute.