HOSA
Future Health Professionals

Featuring “My HOSA Journey”
Students Share What HOSA Means to Them

WINTER 2011
The mission of HOSA is to enhance the delivery of compassionate, quality health care by providing opportunities for knowledge, skill and leadership development of all health science technology education students, therefore, helping students to meet the needs of the health care community.
Oklahoma HOSA Women Leave Their Mark in Oklahoma City
By: David Kelly
For the eighth consecutive year, having grown from a small event venue in Oklahoma City to the huge complex of a science museum, EPSCoR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) is bringing girls from around the state of Oklahoma together to celebrate and fuel Women in Science.

The program is based on the fact that historically, the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields have been populated primarily by men, and it is that very fact that Women in Science seeks to antiquate. EPSCoR, funded by the National Science Foundation, endeavors to “promote research infrastructure for students interested in STEM” said Valerie Pogue, Project Administrator for the company. The company’s mission parallels that of HOSA, to build the pipeline to a future health profession. EPSCoR Outreach Coordinator Gina Miller stated that “Women in Science is an effort to build confidence in girls throughout the state”.

Keynote speaker Emily Sutton, a local weather caster, got the girls excited to begin the day with an inspirational story of triumph. She explained how she drew inspiration from “a female chief meteorologist (from Missouri) who paved the way for females in the field”. It was a fitting beginning for a day filled with fun and opportunity at the Oklahoma Science Museum, courtesy of EPSCoR.

Conference attendees had the opportunity to visit with local college recruiters, participate in hands-on activities sponsored by Oklahoma scientists, and hear panel discussions over a wide variety of issues. Callie Osmus, a 3rd year HOSA member, exclaimed that “Women in Science is awesome. Girls from every part of the state get to come together and discover new horizons”. Jennie Croslin, a HOSA Advisor of the Year, attended and commented that “The conference highlights women in the STEM fields, and serves to build confidence in girls throughout the state”.

Puerto Rico Has Record-Breaking NLC Attendance
During June 2011, HOSA Puerto Rico had the proud experience of bringing the largest delegation to the National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, California that Puerto Rico has ever had. The delegation traveled with 25 members, including counselors, teachers and students. Puerto Rico opened new opportunities for students in skills workshops related to health to provide the offering the opportunity for the delegation to grow.

The National Leadership Conference was an extraordinary experience for all of us. As it was time to start from Puerto Rico to our destination, there were many mixed feelings of pride, courage, optimism, and excitement. For some, it was their first time to fly on a plane, so they were nervous, but excited to experience this process.

When we arrived in California we soon began to identify the different members of HOSA from various parts of the United States. During the week, we had the pleasure to meet and socialize with different members of the different delegations that were represented. Despite not having the same language, we were always looking for ways to understand each other. This was a very enriching experience, as many knew both languages and helped us communicate.

During the competition, our biggest challenge was the language and communicating effectively with the judges while applying the teachings of the organization, leadership and confidence in ourselves, we proudly coped well as a large delegation. Most of all we were proud of having the courage and satisfaction of having tried and given 100% of Puerto Rico to HOSA.

Our goals as a delegation for the future are to further strengthen the organization and increase the delegation from Puerto Rico, with students whose purpose is to continue in health-related careers. In the Puerto Rico HOSA competitive aspects, we have excellent resources, despite having the challenge of language, to demonstrate courage and knowledge on the topics presented and evaluated. But, more than anything we want to show that even with Spanish as our first language, we can compete in English. Year after year, we will continue the effort to make the best of every opportunity.

Our achievements as HOSA Puerto Rico were that Brenda Tirado won 2nd place in medical photography, and Carmen Ramirez showed that age is no impediment to belonging to the organization HOSA, by becoming a finalist in Job Seeking Skills with many competitors.

The truth is that for all of us, it was a big thrill to be able to compete with so many health professionals and represent our Island of Enchantment “Puerto Rico.”

South Carolina Chapter Launches Pearls Project
By Chellie Gastreich, BS, RTR
The Airport High School HOSA chapter in West Columbia, SC, started a project called the Pearls Project. The Pearls Project is an effort to promote tolerance and empathy in a school culture where being different can mean social exile. It is designed to allow students to blog with students around the world with genetic disorders. At our high school, a bulletin board has been created with pictures of some of the students from last year. This project started last year and is still in a “pilot” stage so any ideas you have are welcome.

Our chapter is working alongside Rick Guidotti, founder of a nonprofit group called Positive Exposure. Mr. Guidotti, who has photographed supermodels like Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer, began snapping pictures of children with genetic disorders in 1997. A year later, Life magazine published his photo essay on albinism, titled “Redefining Beauty.” His work with these subjects has also been displayed in galleries, medical schools and children’s hospitals, as well as at Harvard University and at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History.
The first thing people think when they hear “all-girl” is trouble. With the variety of personalities and the potential for numerous petty arguments, the predominant reaction for most people is to cringe with horror. But, that is not the case for Georgia HOSA. On March 5, 2011 an all girl team was elected to their state council and surprisingly, it has been smooth-sailing ever since.

We asked Georgia HOSA State Team if they were surprised by the election of an all girl team. State President, Maria Van Allen stated, “It’s not that I was surprised about the elections, I was just anxious for the year ahead. There was the potential for so much to go wrong. Thus far, nothing has. When it’s time to work, we work, but we trade shoes, belts, and watch outlandish You-tube videos when we’re done for the night. It’s like a constant slumber party...without the sleeping.” In contrast, Post-Secondary VP Lauren Roland and State Reporter Sara Walker both said they were nervous because of the drama that could ensue with clashing personalities. However, they were relieved when they saw how well they all worked with each other. 

State President-Elect, Sabrina Singh responded, “When I found our team was all girls, the first thing that came to mind was that we are going to make an impact on Georgia HOSA. Because Georgia HOSA has never had an all girl team, we were faced with the underlying pressure of upholding the standards of our evolving state association, and I was looking forward to bonding with my teammates.”

The Georgia HOSA State Team has a system: Work hard, Play hard, Cross it off the list. They know that there has to be work done and buckle down when it is time to do it, but at the same time, keep a little fun in the mix to keep the stress away. These girls make it a point to connect with each other. Their relationships go beyond Georgia HOSA, and extend into their daily endeavors.

“This is what I think keeps us close,” said State Secretary, Tamera Martin, “I not only care about the assignments and deadlines in Georgia HOSA but also about who made what team, if somebody got the job they were applying for, or how college applications are going. We give each other tips and support with everything.”

Georgia HOSA has set three main goals for the 2011 year involving post-secondary membership, uniting neighboring schools in their regions, and creating a “greener” Georgia HOSA. They really enjoy working toward their goals and seeing them grow. In the words of Secondary VP, Mary Aghajanian, “We’re like sisters, and it’s our job to make sure each other succeed.”

To sum up the 2011-2012 State Officer team, Georgia HOSA Executive Director, Allen Seigler, said, “In 11 years of Georgia HOSA’s history, we have never had an all-girl officer team, so as you could guess I was anxious to see what was in store for us! I am so happy with this team of officers and impressed with their dedication to improving our organization. Usually you’ll have a few personalities that have to really work to get along, not this year! These girls are incredible and work so well together. I know it’s a bit cliché but this year’s team is truly a family, and I hate to even think it’s going to come to an end in March.”
Bell High School Attends NAP Conference

The Bell High School HOSA Parliamentary Team attended the National Association of Parliamentarians Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida on Saturday, September 24, 2011. The team consisted of Amanda Dennis, Olivia Bailey, Sarah Hunter, Victoria Waldron and Courtney Whitby. Their advisor, Katrina Havelock, took time out of her Saturday to accompany the team to this competition. The team was a little nervous knowing that they would present in front of a crowd which is not their usual procedure. However, this was a great experience for them to expand their knowledge about Parliamentary Procedure.

The teams had twenty minutes of planning and after each team was done presenting, the Bell High School HOSA team was awarded second place. After the presentations, the Judges made comments on how the team could improve their skills. The team was happy knowing that the judges were willing to help. The team was very excited of having the pleasure to meet and take a picture with Henry M. Robert III and Thomas J. Balch, two authors of the book Roberts Rules of Order. Mr. Henry gave each member of the participating team a brand new edition of the book Roberts Rules of Order and autographed them. Overall they greatly appreciated the invitation to the National Association of Parliamentarians Conference to represent HOSA.

The National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP) is a dynamic, growing organization concerned with the practical problems parliamentarians face today. They partner with several student organizations to develop and enhance educational programs, and HOSA is one of those lucky organizations. The NAP Biennial Convention took place from September 22 to September 26 in Saint Petersburg, FL. At the convention major business was in order for the biennium: the gathering of over four hundred NAP members, bylaw revisions, and the much anticipated release of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th Edition.

Sara Sapp, National Postsecondary/Collegiate Vice President, represented HOSA as an intern at the convention. There were six interns in attendance from FBLA, PBL, FCCLA, BPA, NAP Education Foundation, and HOSA. They served at the NAP as pages during general body meetings. Being a page entails serving the approximately four hundred person delegation by collecting motion forms, sending messages, and answering questions during business meetings. Throughout the conference the interns learned ample amounts about parliamentary procedure and leadership through keynote speakers, workshops, and the exciting release of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th Edition.

At the Youth Committee Luncheon the Bell High School HOSA Parliamentary Procedure Team performed a meeting in front of the NAP Education Foundation and the authors of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th Edition. As a reward for their hard work and proficiency in Parliamentary Procedure each member of the team received a signed copy of the book from the authors.

“Where there is no law, but every man does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty.”

While lots of high school teenagers were spending their summers lounging at the pool or watching their favorite reruns, Alexa Mills, a HOSA member from Grand Junction High School in Colorado, was making a difference. Alexa spent the summer in a rural part of Guatemala vaccinating children, screening for pre-eclampsia and much more.

Alexa participated in The Global Public Service Academy for Health (www.gpsa.org), a summer program for high school students interested in health occupations. GPSA for Health is a four week program in Guatemala where students work with some of the best faculty in the nation to help a community in need.

The GPSA programs are patterned after the successful Duke University – Engineering World Health (www.ewh.org) summer program. Both GPSA and EWH were founded by Dr. Robert Malkin, a professor at Duke University. Like Duke-EWH, The Global Public Service Academy for Health (GPSA) is a summer experience. GPSA is targeted at high school sophomores and juniors. Participants are planning on becoming doctors (MD), nurses (RN, LRN), pharmacists, biomedical engineers (BME), dentists and many other professions.

Alexa’s trip began a few days before departing the US. Along with thirteen other participants, Alexa learned to facilitate screening measurements in cross-cultural environments (height, weight, temperature, blood pressure, heart rate, etc) and developed her engineering skills building a sleep apnea monitor.

Then, the entire group, including students, faculty from Duke, college students from Duke and MIT and the high school students, including Alexa, departed for Calhuitz, Guatemala. Far from any city center, Calhuitz is a peaceful Mayan village in the hills of Guatemala. Very poor - the average income is fifty cents per day - and steeped in tradition, the indigenous Mayan’s are struggling to bring modern medicine to their village. “The streets were dirt and many people lived in dirt houses. But, it was amazing to see what the Casa Materna was accomplishing,” said Alexa, referring to the clinic where she and her colleagues were stationed.

Together with the other high school students, Alexa was able to vaccinate nearly 100 children, give nutritional supplements to nearly 200, screened nearly 100 women for pre-eclampsia and much more. “It was amazing to see the babies born and to help so many people” recalled Alexa.

Alexa summarized her experience in one word: “Awesome”. We got to make a huge difference but we also had fun and made new friends. Conditions were simple but it was worth it.”

The GPSA for Health program really is awesome. The exposure to internationally recognized faculty in the health careers, the opportunity to apply math and science to directly help a community or individual in need and the chance to be immersed in a foreign culture combine to make this an exceptional opportunity for any HOSA member.
Tazia Statucki wants nothing more than to someday make medical history.

The 17-year-old senior at Southwest Career and Technical Academy in Las Vegas says she has known since she was a little girl that she is destined for a career in medicine.

“I just love being able to help people,” she says.

The desire to assist others, she claims, is also what interested her in joining Health Occupations Students of America. According to its website, hosa.org, the national organization’s mission is “to enhance the delivery of compassionate, quality health care by providing opportunities for knowledge, skill and leadership development of all health science technology education students, therefore helping students to meet the needs of the health care community.”

HOSA boasts upwards of 120,000 members in its more than 3,200 high school, postsecondary and collegiate chapters throughout the country. Nevada is home to 29 chapters, 10 of them in Clark County. Statucki is the 30th official HOSA chapter in 2007 while teaching at Rancho High School’s Medical Academy magnet program.

She now teaches at Southwest CTA, where she has served as the HOSA adviser since introducing the organization at the campus three years ago.

As posted in the Las Vegas Review-Journal on Monday, October 10, 2011

Smith has been known to bring other chapter members to nationals as well, “because I feel like the leadership skills (taught there) will carry on into life and … I want to give my kids an excellent foundation.”

Southwest CTA senior Camille Maniago won a first-place gold medal last spring at the Nevada State Leadership Conference for the work she did publishing her HOSA chapter’s newsletter.

Health care is in Maniago’s blood: Her physician father formerly owned a clinic in the Philippines, where she spent countless hours as a child watching him treat patients.

That’s good news, since Nevada was ranked 47th in the nation for overall health in 2010 by the United Health Foundation and landed in 46th place in terms of primary-care physicians per every 100,000 people.

“Nevada is behind every other state in advancement” in the medical field, Smith contends. Involvement with HOSA may prompt students to “go on to postsecondary (training) … and find something that they really love by doing it.”

Through HOSA, members are exposed to hundreds of health care and related career paths via guest speakers, special training events, community service projects and leadership conferences. There, they compete against other members in dozens of categories ranging from medical photography and extemporaneous speaking to leadership opportunities, “an interest in the health care field,” explains Randi Hunewill, state HOSA adviser for the Nevada Department of Education.

HOSA membership is open to any high school or post-secondary student (regardless of age) who displays an interest in the health care field, provides special training events, community service projects and leadership conferences. There, they compete against other members in dozens of categories ranging from medical photography and extemporaneous speaking to leadership opportunities, “an interest in the health care field,” explains Randi Hunewill, state HOSA adviser for the Nevada Department of Education.

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HOSA trains students for careers in healthcare, cont.

Also at the spring state conference, senior Raina Benford placed second and took home a silver medal in the job-seeking skills category. Unlike many of her peers who say they hope to some day practice pediatrics, 17-year-old Benford claims she’s looking forward to a career in gerontology. “I just love old people,” she says with a broad smile. “I chose HOSA because I wanted to get a better feel for healthcare. I’ve learned a lot about getting a job and going out in the health care field,” she explains.

Attending HOSA meetings at Southwest CTA is “one of my favorite parts of the week. … I love getting other people excited about health care, too.”

Smith says two of her former students and HOSA members are currently organizing a chapter at the University of Nevada, Reno; another is forming a local chapter at the College of Southern Nevada.

Yet another of her students, Rancho High School graduate Sean Sheffer, has served as HOSA’s national president since 2010. He frequently travels around the country acting as the organization’s ambassador, promoting HOSA at national health care events and overseeing its annual leadership conference, among other duties.

Sheffer says his involvement with HOSA has been a “critical, life-changing” experience. “You actually get to step out and see what the medical field and the health profession is all about. You get to dress in scrubs if you want to be a CNP (clinical nurse specialist), and there are competitions that reflect how the industry is and … you’re competing in them, and you’re expected to know how to best practice general nursing skills, whether it be at the bedside with the patient, or washing your hands,” he explains. “They try to mirror the actual health field before you go into it.”

He suspects HOSA probably enlightened many young people about the nation’s health care crisis. “It makes us aware of what are the shortcomings of the health care system right now,” 19-year-old Sheffer says, and “know that there’s all this chaos going on in terms of legislation and trying to solve how it’s going to work in the future. At least you’re aware that there are problems, so that later on you are prepared to tackle them with your solutions.”

Sheffer is pursuing dual nursing and business degrees through a special health care management program at Ivy League schools the University of Pennsylvania and the Wharton School of Business. He says his dream is to eventually become chief executive officer at a hospital, possibly in Las Vegas.

“I really do want to come home and see if I can reflect some of the positive practices” happening at medical facilities elsewhere “into the hospitals in Las Vegas,” he explains, and “join the team of other professionals there who are trying to improve systems and work with them.”

Smith says Sheffer is a shining example of what happens when teens are exposed to what she calls the “oohs and aahs” of health care through HOSA. As a chapter adviser, “What I can do is excite them about going on” to build a career in the industry. She keeps the 120-plus members of her HOSA chapter busy throughout the school year with various community volunteer and fundraising events. Besides its efforts raising funds for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the chapter also works with Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Las Vegas, cooking and serving meals to families who stay there while their ailing children receive medical treatment.

Meanwhile, Southwest CTA HOSA members held a fundraiser last year benefiting the local Shade Tree Shelter for women and children.

Nationally, Smith says, “We’ve been going through this phase where people don’t volunteer like they used to. … What HOSA will do is teach (members) what they need to do to volunteer.”

She also encourages teens to lend a hand at area hospitals “and learn a little bit more about health care” while giving back to the community. On Saturday, the chapter hosted a “community fair” event, featuring various food and merchandise vendors, in Southwest CTAs parking lot to help raise funds to cover costs for its members to attend HOSA’s State Leadership Conference, to be held in March in Las Vegas, and the National Leadership Conference, scheduled for June in Orlando.

Smith will break new ground again this year when she and her students establish a Medical Reserve Corps HOSA unit at the school. Nationally, MRC is sponsored by the Office of the Surgeon General and is comprised of medical, public health and other volunteers who assist during emergencies and natural disasters.

“With MRC, what we want (to teach) people to do is be prepared in their own homes,” Smith says, explaining that her students will soon begin making and selling various types of emergency preparedness kits, as well as developing emergency instructions that families can use in their homes. “Education is our first goal.”
HOSA trains students for careers in healthcare, cont.

Southwest CTA senior and former HOSA chapter president Marclem Hernandez spent two years researching the MRC program and approached Smith about bringing it to campus. He has been charged with organizing the unit to get it up and running in the coming months.

"I want to leave something for the school, for them to build on," after he graduates next year, he explains of his motivation to found the unit.

"(Participation in HOSA) will help you be more responsible," 18-year-old Hernandez says, "not just for yourself but for other people, too, and that's what the medical field is all about.

"It’s a very rewarding profession," agrees his classmate, Statucki. "HOSA is for everybody," she contends. "It’s for the high school students who say, ‘I don’t know what I want to do.’ But it’s also for the alumni members who get to connect and for the professionals who want to get involved and help mentor younger kids. It’s really for everyone in the community.”

Even if not all of her HOSA chapter members go on to pursue careers in the medical field, Smith takes solace in knowing that the training and exposure they received will make them "connoisseurs of health care.

“They’ll know how to go to good physicians, (and recognize) what’s not good; how to seek out second opinions,” she assures, “because they’ll have the understanding and backing of what is needed in health care.”

While I am not a clinician or practitioner, I will share with you from the perspective of my professional passions—culturally and contextually responsive evaluation, research in public health and public policy. For the last 10 years, I’ve committed myself to research and evaluation in the areas of justice, public health, health care and public policy. HOSA was key in helping me grow personally and professionally early in my career.

In 1997, I begged my mother to allow me join the Pocono Mountain High School Allied Health Program housed in the Monroe County Area Vocational Technical School in Bartonsville, PA. Once I was accepted into the program, I was fortunate to be taught by my high school allied health teacher, HOSA advisor and mentor, Mrs. Kathy Catalano. Mrs. C, as we affectionately called her, taught me how to write my first speech. With Mrs. C’s help, I placed second in my state and top ten in the nation in the HOSA Prepared Speaking Competitions. I did not realize it at the time that Mrs. C’s guidance provided me with applied basic research skills that I transferred in my work throughout college and graduate school. I continue to build these skills and I continue to use them today on my job and in my Ph.D. program.

Further, Mrs. C and my allied health peers also played a key role in helping me learn the basic principles of teamwork when they helped elect me to both state and national HOSA offices. Once I became a HOSA officer, I met, Mrs. Rosemarie Dunkelberger and Mrs. Dolores Holman who provided me and my HOSA officer peers with advanced leadership development, guidance, and personal support. I still communicate with my HOSA mentors and peers through Facebook, LinkedIn, and email. In 2009, I was fortunate to give a presentation at the PENN HOSA Annual Conference about a medical and dental career preparation program co-sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges.

In closing, I encourage you to pursue your dreams and allow HOSA’s leaders and members to help you along your journey. HOSA advisors and officers have many experiences and resources that you can explore about careers and about the personal challenges and successes you can anticipate throughout your life. Take a moment to interview a HOSA officer or a current professional in the profession of your choice. Explore a mentorship relationship with that person and you may find mutually a beneficial relationship that lasts a lifetime!
My name is Gurdev Singh Anand, former Vice President of California HOSA. My experience is one that might differ from the normal member. HOSA changed my life. It changed the way I go through my every day activities, it bettered me as a person, it opened me as a student and taught me about leadership and teamwork. HOSA changed me as a person. It changed my way of thinking and made me realize the importance of developing my skills and abilities.

During my first full year, I was elected chapter president. We started off with 5 members, and by the end of HOSA rush week, we had twenty paid members, eleven of which would attend the State Leadership Conference. I was a leader. My teachers told me that, coaches told me that, administrators told me that, but I never had a place to apply it. I was concentrating on school and HOSA. Nothing was going to get in my way. I worked tirelessly with Mrs. Easton to get Esperanza HOSA on the map. We were successful, acquiring medals, and even a state officer. I was fortunate enough to be elected to state office.

Being in state office seemed like the best thing to do. I was a leader. My teachers told me that, coaches told me that, administrators told me that, but I never had a place to apply it. HOSA was the place for me to show my leadership. After being elected and meeting many different members and chapter advisors, it was time for me to get to work. I started off in office overwhelmed with ideas and thoughts. Some seemed so wild I thought it would be impossible to accomplish them. I still worked towards some. One vision I had was to create a social media committee. As committee chair, our team revamped the California HOSA Facebook and Twitter pages. I learned so much from being a state officer. One thing I would encourage to our peers on the facts and statistics about the diseases.

Our HOSA chapter is very active in participating in community service events; we hosted a blood drive to benefit a fellow high school student from another campus. We raised awareness on how important it is to donate blood. The high school I attend responded well, and donated 63 pints of blood. We also conduct breast cancer, diabetes, and Alzheimer’s awareness events and educate our peers on the facts and statistics about the diseases.

Lastly, I believe that HOSA has better prepared me for my future professional goals. It has provided me with the courage to try things that I never would have prior to joining. It has given me that knowledge that there are people with the same interest as me, and that it’s not impossible to achieve them! I have experienced all that it’s like to work in the medical field and without HOSA that wouldn’t have been possible for me. HOSA - Future Health Professionals, one of the most prestigious organizations available to students, is more than just an extracurricular activity. It is a way of life.
California HOSA State President

My name is Nabil Islam, your Region III Vice President. I am a National Ambassador for National HOSA representing 17 states in Region III. Looking back, I can honestly say that I believe that it is our losses and defeats that help us realize our needs and become opportunities for improvement. I hope that by sharing my journey you will be inspired to continue on just as I was.

When I was first introduced to HOSA as a freshman in high school, I did not understand its true potential and what it really had to offer. As I slowly began to realize the importance of this organization, I realized HOSA is not an ordinary club or group. No, it is an organization which guides you towards your future. It is like a family that helps you achieve your goals and supports you through every decision. As a freshman, I decided to run for New Jersey HOSA State Secretary/Treasurer. Being new to HOSA at the time, I did not understand my strengths and weaknesses and decided to take on a huge task that I was truly not ready to assume. However rather than run away, I saw this defeat as a way to strengthen my weaknesses and soon make them my strengths.

I ran for and was elected to serve as a chapter officer in my sophomore year. After gaining experience, I was successful in my second run for a state office position and have grown so much in my role as New Jersey State Vice President. By taking smaller steps, by learning how to lead, I had the confidence to seek national office. I knew that even if not elected, it is the journey that matters to personal growth.

While running for National Office, it was my classmates and HOSA members that encouraged me to go beyond my limits. As I first submitted my application, I realized I had taken the first step in becoming a national officer. It was then I began preparing for the exams containing HOSA history and Parliamentary Procedure. There was not an end to it, but it was my knowledge that had helped me pass my written exam and move onto the next level - interviews. While I was interviewing with the Nominating Committee, the one advantage I had against other candidates was that I was confident in myself, and I knew what I wanted to achieve. I understood what my goal was and what I wanted to pursue, and it was that encouragement that had helped me become slated for Region III Vice President. As the campaigning began, I had visited State meetings introducing myself and my goals as a National Ambassador. It was the encouragement and satisfaction of HOSA members that helped open a door in my life in reaching the top. The day of selections, I was filled with nervousness, but I realized I gave it my best shot and in the end, it wasn't the position or the title, but the opportunity and experience that mattered. When the National President called my name as Region III Vice President, I was breathless. I felt as if I was on top of the world, and it was a dream. The happiness and enthusiasm that ran across the faces of New Jersey HOSA members helped me accept my position.

It was because of their support that I was able to make it this far in the selection process. As days passed by, training sessions were like no other. We worked from 8AM until 12AM every night. I had never experienced working at such a high demand with others with the same desires as mine. At the end of the day, we were tired, but because of our passion to serve our duties, Team 2012 left the boardroom every night with satisfaction and thrill.

My early defeat closed one door in my life, however, it enlightened many new ones and helped me go beyond my expectations and become New Jersey's third national officer as Region III Vice President. Many might believe that one defeat can end their journey; however, from my experience, I can truly say that a defeat is often the best way to get to the top. You understand and discover your needs, and can soon come back as a stronger, better prepared contender. If I had ended my journey after my initial loss, I would not have made it to where I am today. I would not have had the inspiration and encouragement that helped me become Region III and become a National Ambassador for National HOSA. It was due to my initial defeat during my freshman year that I climbed this mountain and reached the top. I encourage each of you to not stumble upon a small loss or defeat, but to view it as the shining star that will lead you to a galaxy filled with opportunities.

My HOSA Journey

Nabil Islam
National HOSA Ambassador

HOSA touched me and shaped me into the leader that I am today in nearly every aspect of my life through, not only the lessons learned from the organization itself, but from the members that comprise it. I first came to HOSA by a small flicker of interest in healthcare. My social and speaking skills were atrocious at best, and I wasn't exactly the most outgoing kid. The very first push I got from HOSA came during my chapter's first election of officers. Something within me, I will never know what, compelled me to take a chance way out of my comfort zone and run, not just for any position, but for president.

That election day, I said my speech and bombed it SO BAD. I had prepared this grand speech that once it came out of my mouth sounded like cotton and bolts slowly dripping from my mouth. Needless to say, I completely lost those elections. At this point I was faced with two options, quit and look down on myself or rise up and take this opportunity to build upon myself.

From that day on, I like to say that I always strived for self improvement. I stuck to HOSA and focused on advancing my leadership skills, including public speaking, and learning as much as I could about everything concerning health care. I participated in as many HOSA activities as I could, including, the State Leadership Conference, the Nominating Committee, and learning as much as I could about everything concerning health care. I participated in as many HOSA activities as I could, including, the State Leadership Conference, the Nominating Committee, and I visited State meetings introducing my HOSA family to represent 17 states in Region III. Looking back, I can honestly say that I believe that it is our losses and defeats that help us realize our needs and become opportunities for improvement. I hope that by sharing my journey you will be inspired to continue on just as I was.

For some crazy reason I decided that I wanted to become a state officer, even crazier I had aspirations to be president. I came into the process relatively in the dark, but excited throughout the whole thing. Running at the next year's SLC was amazing and an experience that I would never forget. I studied, I mingled, and I spoke as I tried with all of my heart to serve an organization that had already given me so much. Through hard work and determination that I had gained from HOSA I was able to serve proudly as a state officer, the office of president.

At that moment I thought I had reached the epitome of what I had to gain from HOSA and that all there was left to give was back, but I was wrong, dead wrong. Being a state officer has expanded my leadership and skills even more! Interacting with a team of other amazing California state officers and getting to interact with other members has enhanced my networking skills and given me a greater understanding of HOSA.

Is my leadership journey over? Never. There are always new challenges. What's next? National Office? One can only hope...

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Is my leadership journey over? Never. There are always new challenges. What's next? National Office? One can only hope...
Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) is defined as dedication, power, opportunity and success. A HOSA member is what I like to call a powerful, successful, dedicated human being that has a world of opportunities. Why? HOSA is what I call an organization filled with open doors that lead to the brightest future one can ever have and that one is me.

I have had a long, hard working, successful journey as a HOSA member from the very beginning to the very end. HOSA was introduced to me by my former health teacher Lucy Rosario back in 7th grade at Palmetto Middle School. Yes, I was a bit skeptical at first joining this organization because I really didn't know what it had to offer me, no matter how many times my teacher told me that it will all be worth it. Now was I glad I joined! As a rookie going into the HOSA, I felt a little scared, maybe a little intimidated but most importantly, I felt confident; especially when regional competitions came around the corner. It surprised me to hear a couple of months later that I finished 1st place in the Career Health Display category didn't shock me due to the fact that it's happened once before. Long story short, after competitions and all the craziness of HOSA was coming to an end for the year; it was the time for me to make the transition from middle school to high school.

It was a shame that I was leaving but I understood that it's all part of growing up. The school that I attended which I am still attending is Miami Killian Senior High School. During my 8th grade year, Killian offered the HOSA program so I wasn't worried due to the fact that I would be able to continue my HOSA journey through high school. Did I think wrong! Over the summer, Dade County Public Schools decided to shut down the HOSA program completely due to budget cuts and what a coincidence that they shut down the program at my middle school as well. You can imagine how I felt when I heard that news. I had no other option but to fight for something that I was convinced would completely change my life. I attempted to attend Killian and at the same time, participate in HOSA at Palmetto High School but that didn't work out so well. Something about HOSA makes me feel so right, makes me feel as if I can fly, as if I can take the world and make it my own. It's disappointing to hear that our schools can't fund programs like this especially when it can open doors to very bright futures. Kids my age all over Dade County are considered the world yet the public school system can't give it to us.

As a sophomore, going two consecutive years without HOSA it is a real shame that I gave it my all from day one for the people upstairs to just take it away from me because there is "no money". That is what I like to call a careless decision made on their part to save money by cutting on things that matter the most and can change the most. We always wonder why our very own students are robbing cars and doing drugs yet we spend all our money on law enforcement officers and security guards but when it comes to what really matters which would be the paths that lead us to the brightest of the bright futures. Instead of worrying so much about the kids doing wrong, maybe it is time to worry on the tactic we can use to keep them from doing things like that. HOSA has turned many potential, wrong doing minds into bright and eager ones that now actually care about where they are going to be 20 years from now. In general, we can all say that HOSA isn't an organization that should dissolve from the face of the earth, if anything it should be enforced which we are failing to do. Unfortunately, my HOSA journey is over for now and who knows, it might pick up again in the near future. Let me be the last person to end my HOSA journey the way it did and let the ones that follow behind me enjoy a full, enriched HOSA journey from the very start, to the very end. HOSA has a lot to offer and it has the potential to change millions of lives but it takes dedication to maintain it. Bring it back and bring it to new schools rather than extracting it and watch the potential minds shine because if it had an impact on me, I wonder how many others it can impact. It's all about dedication, power, opportunity and success if you give HOSA the chance to show it.

Act now to save HOSA chapters like Alex’s by petitioning your local school board to fund Health Sciences Education
Would you ever consider that a single organization can change your entire view on life? Upon entering County Prep High School, I would have naïvely answered that question with a negative response, not making much of it. Although upon my graduation, I can proudly answer that same question with confidence, enthusiasm, and self-experience and name that organization to be HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America).

When I first entered high school, I was a reluctant and quiet student, who mainly kept to himself. I focused mainly on school, not really knowing what I exactly aimed to do eventually in life. I started looking into joining clubs, and that is when HOSA was introduced to me. I figured it would just be a typical club that talked about a bunch of different topics in medicine, but I soon realized that this ‘club’ was really an organization with thousands of members whose aim is one goal, preparing America’s future medical professional. I decided to start becoming active within the club by assisting with fundraisers for local charities and educational field trips. After a few months, our advisor, Ms. Eileen Garrett, announced that there were numerous upcoming competitions for HOSA. I didn’t think much of this since I knew that I had very little medical knowledge and experience. I was surprised to learn that HOSA was not all about practical medicine; it was also about building professionalism and interpersonal skills. (Skills that I had yet to develop.)

With the assistance of my advisor and local professionals my HOSA Chapter had partnerships with, I began preparing for the Job Seeking Skills competition, my first-ever competition. When the competition came, I felt as if I was a different person, compared to the person I was when I first entered high school. I felt confident, motivated, and ready to succeed in my competition. At the regional level, I surprisingly placed second. After receiving my first-ever medal, I was motivated to continue working hard for the state competition and ended up placing third. I was really motivated to continue working hard throughout the year to prepare to place first the next year. Although I didn’t win the medal that I wanted the first year, I was very thankful that HOSA began to develop me into a new person and realized that the medal didn’t really matter. I started becoming more confident, and the professional and leadership skills that were hidden began to emerge. I began to participate more in school activities and ended up joining many different organizations. I became Class President, eventually assumed leadership positions in a few more organizations.

The following year, I continued to work hard and placed 1st. The year after that I placed 1st as well. During my Junior year, I was able to attend the National Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida, and I can definitely say that is the best experience that I ever experienced and an aspect of my life that I will never forget. Interacting with thousands of professional students who are motivated in the same field is simply amazing. It was a very rare opportunity that I was privileged and thankful to have.

In addition, I realized from these experiences that it was time that I gave back to HOSA. I decided to run for State Officer, and thankfully I was able to join the Executive Council as the State Member-at-Large. Throughout my experience as a State Officer, I was able to interact with the members of New Jersey. Not only did I make friends with my fellow state officers and the membership, I built a network of professional partners who were all inspired by the same organization-HOSA.

How does a self-conscious freshman who tends to fade into the background grow into a confident and motivated leader? HOSA-Future Health Professionals!

As a freshman, I joined HOSA to make new friends and become an active member in my high school community. I never fathomed that through HOSA I would grow as an individual, gain valuable life skills, and become a person who is aware of my own talents and abilities.

In my sophomore year, I got involved in competition and made it to nationals. The experience was one that changed my perspective on leadership. Through the speakers, the events, and just the atmosphere of students working towards their future goals, I felt the desire to become even more involved in HOSA. In my junior year, I served as the local Vice President for my chapter, which was named the largest local chapter in the nation at that year’s national conference.

The community service project that HOSA is involved with has allowed me to give back in ways that would not have been possible without such an organization. Our HOSA chapter’s blood drive has helped save lives, and there is no greater feeling than knowing that you played a part in those miracles.

What distinguishes HOSA from many other extracurricular organizations is its lifetime effects. Through, competition, leadership training, nationals, and service projects, HOSA helps shape students that will be the healthcare workers of tomorrow. Networking opportunities are developed with people who have similar interests and long-lasting friendships are made. HOSA has helped me become a confident leader, ready to step into the world and make a difference in the lives of others.

HOSA is what shaped me into the individual I am today.
What does HOPE look like?

Hope looks like Christine, Jillian, Tres, Jackson and Thomas

Mary Tyler Moore and her young friends have Type 1 Diabetes. Their hope lies in the worldwide research that JDRF is funding and the clinical trials that are underway. They want to be a part of their own cure. For more information on the latest research, go to JDRF.org