



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pennsylvania Student Wins Cabinetmaking Qualifying Trial at AWFS®Fair
Daniel Berrios to Represent U.S. at WorldSkills Competition in 2013

COMMERCE, Calif. – July 25, 2011 -- Daniel Berrios, a graduate of Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School in Bethlehem, Penn. won the WorldSkills Cabinetmaking Qualifying Trial at AWFS®Fair and will represent the United States at the 2013 WorldSkills Competition in Leipzig, Germany.

Berrios graduated from Bethlehem Vo-Tech in May 2010 and one month later won Gold in High School cabinetmaking at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Kansas City, MO. After graduation, he was asked to return to his school as an adult education night class instructor. He is still teaching and also is a student in the CAD program at Northampton Community College.

Kaydee Walters from Tooele High School in Tooele, Utah, was Berrios' formidable competitor. After four years of intense training in high school, Walters became this year's SkillsUSA National High School Gold Medalist in cabinetmaking. The daughter of a woodworking teacher (at a different high school), Walters recognized her love for woodworking early on and knew she would want to pursue a career in the field. She will continue her training in the cabinetmaking program at Utah Valley University this fall.

"Kaydee has a high level of skill. We were very impressed with her and it was extremely difficult to identify a winner between these two very strong competitors," said judge Saúl Martin.

Two industry professionals served as judges for the Qualifying Trial: Martin from Architectural Woodworking Company, Los Angeles, and Charles Wilson from Charles Wilson Millworks, Cedar City, Utah. The judges spent AWFS Fair with Berrios and Walters, carefully scoring each of their processes and skills.

"This experience was just as valuable for me as it was for the students," said Wilson. "I was able to see first-hand how the WorldSkills competition works and where the students and SkillsUSA most need industry support. Both of these students are at a world class level."

A third member of the event's management team was SkillsUSA Technical Expert Rob Tobias, instructor at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology in Lancaster, Penn. Rob served as Technical Expert at WorldSkills 2009 in Calgary, and is intimately familiar with the details, policies and requirements that Daniel will need to know in order to do well at WorldSkills.

Together, Martin, Wilson and Tobias created the project plans, tool list and material list for the Qualifying Trial and contributed significant quantities of time and supplies to its success.

Fourteen AWFS Fair exhibitors chose to support this event as sponsors by providing tools, machinery, supplies and materials for the students to use: Amana Tool Corporation, Bessey Tools North America, Bosch Power Tools & Accessories, Colonial Saw Company, Inc., Delta Power Equipment Corp., Dixon Enterprises, Inc., Festool USA, General International MFG CO LTD, Powermatic, Joos USA, Inc., Kreg Tool Company, Rockler Woodworking & Hardware, Royal Plywood and Senco Products.

“We are so grateful for the industry recognition and support,” said SkillsUSA Official Delegate Ada Kranenberg. “We want the woodworking industry to be involved in the process so that we can help produce highly-skilled workers that are ready to enter your industry.”

The sponsors’ enthusiasm led to generous tool prizes for both students. Berrios went home with a Delta 10” table saw and his school received a matching saw. Other prizes included a Lamello biscuit joiner, a Powermatic mortiser and jointer, a Grex pin nailer and an assortment of Bessey clamps. Walters received an impressive Woodcraft workbench, Bessey clamps and a hearty stack of quality wood for her next project.

Beyond the donations, the students had some once-in-a-lifetime opportunities during the AWFS Fair. Thanks to Bessey Tools, they enjoyed a special intimate lunch with Tommy MacDonald, host of the Emmy nominated PBS woodworking show *Rough Cuts with Tommy Mac*. Berrios and Walters also got to share the stage with Scott Phillips, host of the long-running favorite PBS show *The American Woodshop* as he announced the winner.

Berrios still has a long way to go on his journey to WorldSkills 2013. In order to get to this level of competition, he has already proven his skills at local, state and national competitions, but two years of practice lie ahead before taking home any medals in Germany. Berrios says he plans to practice a lot during his free time.

SkillsUSA Technical Expert Rob Tobias has invited Berrios to his shop for some invaluable training time. Next year, Berrios may have the opportunity to compete at the SkillsAmericas competition in South America, which will provide some valuable experience with working under pressure with limited time under the scrutiny of the public -- as is the environment at WorldSkills. Berrios’ SkillsUSA district office will be using this time to secure funding for his travel budget to Germany. All expenses must be paid by industry sponsors for each student attending WorldSkills. Besides cash sponsorship opportunities, industry can also help by providing tool donations. Berrios will need a fully stocked tool kit to take with him in order to be on the same level as his competitors from other countries.

If you would like to get involved with SkillsUSA or WorldSkills, please contact Ada Kranenberg at akranenberg@skillsusa.org.

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