

## **Makyla Bevele, Ypsilanti Community High School**

I would like to introduce you to 17-year-old Makyla Bevele from Ypsilanti, Michigan. She is currently a senior at Ypsilanti Community High School and a second year student at Regional Career Technical Center (RCTC) studying culinary arts and bakery science. Makyla is a stellar example of what CTE education along with leadership opportunities like SkillsUSA can do for a struggling student.

Makyla struggled a great deal in middle school. From falling behind in work to low attendance. She found herself in position to enter ACCE (Achieving College and Career Education), our local alternative high school, instead of the traditional high school, at the beginning of her freshman year. Through her first two years at ACCE, Makyla worked hard at recovering credits and impressing teachers and administrators with her self-motivation and dedication. During a summer school program where students prepared a meal individually, some of her teachers noticed her skills and enjoyment, and recommended attending the RCTC Culinary Arts & Bakery Science program

Entering my program Makyla was an ambitious 11th grader who was gaining valuable experience in the culinary program at RCTC while still recovering credits at ACCE. She consistently demonstrated a strong interest and passion for culinary arts. After talking with her about her future plans she expressed an interest in taking on leadership roles with SkillsUSA. Makyla continued growing as a young culinary professional by making the ProStart competition team and SkillsUSA culinary team. Her hard work and dedication paid off by leading her ProStart team to a 7th place finish in the state and a 5th place finish at the SkillsUSA regional culinary competition. Her 11th grade year was capped off by being elected a SkillsUSA Michigan State Officer by hundreds of CTE students from across the state at the SkillsUSA Michigan State Leadership and Skills Conference.

At the beginning of her senior year Makyla had recovered all the credits she was behind and a few more. She chose to spend her last year at RCTC and Ypsilanti Community High School continuing to study culinary arts and college prep classes. After being elected Historian of SkillsUSA Michigan, she and the entire state office team traveled to Washington, DC in September to meet with Senator Debbie Stabenow and other lawmakers. During these meetings Makyla spoke to the importance of CTE education and SkillsUSA. After returning, Makyla set her eyes on competing at the American Culinary Federation college competition at The Culinary Institute of Michigan in Muskegon. Even though she is only a high school senior, Makyla put her skills to the test and came home with a silver medal, out-scoring many college students. After that success she and the state office team held the SkillsUSA Fall Leadership Conference for more than 700 CTE students from across the state. Even now Makyla is practicing every day for her upcoming ProStart and SkillsUSA competitions where she will undoubtedly lead her teams to great success.

Makyla has shown a great deal of growth and self-confidence, expressing herself through her cooking and exploring new activities with great enthusiasm in my class. Her self-confidence and direction can be seen in how she successfully progressed through her CTE program and high school over the past four years. Her hard work has paid off time and time again. She will

continue to do well while exploring the possibility of continuing her culinary studies in the military or in college and beyond! I am a very lucky and humbled instructor to have had such a remarkable student over the past two years.

Chef Aaron Gaertner (he/him)  
RCTC Culinary Instructor  
ProStart Instructor and Proctor  
ServSafe Instructor and Proctor  
SkillsUSA Alumni  
SkillsUSA Michigan Past President 2022/2023  
SkillsUSA Michigan President 2019/2022





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